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# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research

VOLUME XVII

(CONTAINING PARTS XLII-XLV)

1901-3

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## Society for Psychical Research

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Small, faint text at the bottom left of the photograph, possibly a studio name or address.

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*John W. H. Myers*

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research.

### PART XLII.

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#### I.

IN MEMORY OF F. W. H. MYERS.

BY OLIVER LODGE, D.Sc., F.R.S.

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*Ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.*

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WHO would have thought a year ago, when our Secretary and joint Founder at length consented to be elected President, that we should so soon be lamenting his decease?

When Henry Sidgwick died, the Society was orphaned, and now it is left desolate. Of the original chief founders, Professor Barrett alone remains; for Mr. Podmore, the only other member of the first Council still remaining on it, was not one of the actual founders of the Society. Neither the wisdom of Sidgwick nor the energy and power of Myers can by any means be replaced. Our loss is certain, but the blow must not be paralysing. Rather it must stimulate those that remain to fresh exertions, must band us together determined that a group of workers called together for a pioneering work, for the founding and handing on to posterity of a new science, must not be permitted to disband and scatter till their work is done. That work will not be done in our lifetime; it must continue with what energy and wisdom we can muster, and we must be faithful to the noble leaders who summoned us together and laid this burden to our charge.

I, unworthy, am called to this Chair. I would for every reason that it could have been postponed; but it is the wish of your Council; I am told that it was the wish of Myers, and I regard it as a duty from which I must not shrink.

The last communication which my predecessor made was in memory of Henry Sidgwick: my own first communication must be in memory of Frederic Myers.

To how many was he really known? I wonder. Known in a sense he was to all, except the unlettered and the ignorant. Known in reality he was to very few. But to the few who were privileged to know him, his is a precious memory: a memory which will not decay with the passing of the years. I was honoured with his intimate friendship. I esteem it one of the honours of my life.

To me, though not to me alone, falls the duty of doing some justice to his memory. I would that I might be inspired for the task.

I was not one of those who knew him as a youth, and my acquaintance with him ripened gradually. Our paths in life were wide apart, and our powers very different: our powers, but not our tastes. He could instruct me in literature and most other things, I could instruct him in science; he was the greedier learner of the two. I never knew a man more receptive, nor one with whom it was a greater pleasure to talk. His grasp of science was profound: I do not hesitate to say it, though many who do not really know him will fail to realise that this was possible; nor was he fully conscious of it himself. Even into some of the more technical details, when they were properly presented, he could and did enter, and his mind was in so prepared a state that any fact once sown in it began promptly to take root and bud. It was not a detailed knowledge of science that he possessed, of course, but it was a grasp, a philosophic grasp, of the meaning and bearing of it all, not unlike the accurately comprehending grasp of Tennyson; and again and again in his writings in our *Proceedings* do we find the facts which his mind had thus from many sources absorbed utilised for the purpose of telling and brilliant illustrations, and made to contribute each its quota to his Cosmic scheme.

For that is what he was really doing, all through this last quarter of a century: he was laying the foundation for a cosmic philosophy, a scheme of existence as large and comprehensive and well founded as any that have appeared.

Do I mean that he achieved such a structure? I do not. A philosophy of that kind is not to be constructed by the labour of one man, however brilliant; and Myers laboured almost solely on the psychological side. He would be the first to deprecate any exaggeration of what he has done, but he himself would have admitted this,—that he strenuously and conscientiously sought facts,

and sought to construct his cosmic foundation by their aid and in their light, and not in the dark gropings of his own unaided intelligence. A wilderness of facts must be known to all philosophers; the true philosopher is he who recognises their underlying principle and sees the unity running through them all.

This unity among the more obscure mental processes Myers saw, as it seems to me, more clearly than any other psychologist; but what right have I to speak on psychological problems? I admit that I have no right—I only crave indulgence to show the thing as it appears to me. For authoritative psychology we must hear Professor William James. He will contribute a memoir, but as I write now I have heard no word from William James. I express only what has long been in my mind.

To me it has seemed that most philosophers suffer from a dearth of facts. In the past necessarily so, for the scientific exploration of the physical universe is, as it were, a thing of yesterday. Our cosmic outlook is very different from that of the ancients, is different even from that of philosophers of the middle of the century, before the spectroscope, before Darwin and Wallace, before many discoveries connected with less familiar household words than these: in the matter of physical science alone the most recent philosopher must needs have some advantage. But this is a small item in his total outfit, mental phenomena must contribute the larger part of that; and the facts of the mind have been open—it is generally assumed—from all antiquity. This is in great degree true, and philosophers have always recognised and made use of these facts, especially those of the mind in its normal state. Yet in modern science we realise that to understand a thing thoroughly it must be observed not only in its normal state but under all the conditions into which it can be thrown by experiment, every variation being studied and laid under contribution to the general understanding of the whole.

And, I ask, did any philosopher ever know the facts of the mind in health and in disease more profoundly, with more detailed and intimate knowledge, drawn from personal inquiry, and from the testimony of all the savants of Europe, than did Frederic Myers? He laid under contribution every abnormal condition studied in the Salpêtrière, in hypnotic trance, in delirium, every state of the mind in placidity and in excitement. He was well acquainted with the



curious facts of multiple personality, of clairvoyant vision, of hallucinations, automatisms, self-suggestion, of dreams, and of the waking visions of genius.

It will be said that Hegel, and to some extent Kant also, as well as other philosophers, recognised some ultra-normal mental manifestations, and allowed a place for clairvoyance in their scheme. All honour to those great men for doing so, in advance of the science of their time; but how could they know all that we know to-day? Fifty years ago the facts even of hypnotism were not by orthodox science accepted; such studies as were made, were made almost surreptitiously, here and there, by some truth-seeker clear-sighted enough to outstep the fashion of his time and look at things with his own eyes. But only with difficulty could he publish his observations, and doubtless many were lost for fear of ridicule and the contempt of his professional brethren.

But now it is different: not so different as it ought to be, even yet; but facts previously considered occult are now investigated and recorded and published in every country of Europe. The men who observe them are too busy to unify them; they each contribute their portion, but they do not grasp the whole: the grasping of the whole is the function of a philosopher. I assert that Myers was that philosopher.

Do I then in my own mind place him on a pedestal by the side of Plato and Kant? God forbid! I am not one to juggle with great names and apportion merit to the sages of mankind. Myers' may not be a name which will sound down the ages as an achiever and builder of a system of truth; but I do claim for him that as an earnest pioneer and industrious worker and clear-visioned student, he has laid a foundation, perhaps not even a foundation but a corner-stone, on ground more solid than has ever been available before; and I hold that the great quantity of knowledge now open to any industrious truth-seeker gives a man of modest merit and of self-distrustful powers, a lever, a fulcrum, more substantial than those by which the great men of antiquity and of the middle ages were constrained to accomplish their mighty deeds.

Myers has left behind two unpublished volumes on *Human Personality*, has left them, I believe, in charge of Dr. Hodgson—has left them, alas, not finished, not finally finished; how nearly finished

I do not know. I saw fractions of them some time ago as they left his pen, and to me they seemed likely to be an epoch-making work.

They are doubtless finished enough: more might have been done, they might have been better ordered, more highly polished, more neatly dove-tailed, had he lived; but they represent for all time his real life work, that for which he was willing to live laborious days; they represent what he genuinely conceived to be a message of moment to humanity: they are his legacy to posterity; and in the light of the facts contained in them he was willing and even eager to die.

The termination of his life, which took place at Rome in presence of his family, was physically painful owing to severe attacks of difficult breathing which constantly preceded sleep; but his bearing under it all was so patient and elevated as to extort admiration from the excellent Italian doctor who attended him; and in a private letter by an eye-witness his departure was described as "a spectacle for the Gods; it was most edifying to see how a genuine conviction of immortality can make a man indifferent to what to ordinary people is so horrible."

In the intervals of painful difficulty of breathing he quoted from one of his own poems ("The Renewal of Youth," one which he preferred to earlier and better-known poems of his, and from it alone I quote):

"Ah, welcome then that hour which bids thee lie  
In anguish of thy last infirmity!  
Welcome the toss for ease, the gasp for air,  
The visage drawn, and Hippocratic stare;  
Welcome the darkening dream, the lost control,  
The sleep, the swoon, the arousal of the soul!"

Death he did not dread. That is true; and his clear and happy faith was the outcome entirely of his scientific researches. The years of struggle and effort and systematic thought had begotten in him a confidence as absolute and supreme as is to be found in the holiest martyr or saint. By this I mean that it was not possible for any one to have a more absolute and childlike confidence that death was a mere physical event. To him it was an adversity which must happen to the body, but it was not one of those evil things which may assault and hurt the soul.

An important and momentous event truly, even as birth is; a

temporary lapse of consciousness, even as trance may be; a waking up to strange and new surroundings, like a more thorough emigration than any that can be undertaken on a planet; but a destruction or lessening of power no whit. Rather an enhancement of existence, an awakening from this earthly dream, a casting off of the trammels of the flesh, and putting on of a body more adapted to the needs of an emancipated spirit, a wider field of service, a gradual opportunity of re-uniting with the many who have gone before. So he believed, on what he thought a sure foundation of experience, and in the strength of that belief he looked forward hopefully to perennial effort and unending progress:

“Say, could aught else content thee? which were best,  
After so brief a battle an endless rest,  
Or the ancient conflict rather to renew,  
By the old deeds strengthened mightier deeds to do?”

Such was his faith: by this he lived, and in this he died. Religious men in all ages have had some such faith, perhaps a more restful and less strenuous faith; but to Myers the faith did not come by religion: he would have described himself as one who walked by sight and knowledge rather than by faith, and his eager life-long struggle for knowledge was in order that he might by no chance be mistaken.

To some, conviction of this kind would be impossible—they are the many who know not what science is; to others, conviction of this kind seems unnecessary—they are the favoured few who feel that they have grasped all needed truth by revelation or by intuition. But by a few here and there, even now, this avenue to knowledge concerning the unseen is felt to be open. Myers believed that hereafter it would become open to all. He knew that the multitude could appreciate science no more, perhaps less, than they can appreciate religion; but he knew further that when presently any truth becomes universally accepted by scientific men, it will penetrate downwards and be accepted by ordinary persons, as they now accept any other established doctrine, such as the planetary position of the earth in the solar system or the evolution of species, not because they have really made a study of the matter, but because it is a part of the atmosphere into which they were born.



If continuity of existence and intelligence across the gulf of death really can ever be thus proved, it surely is a desirable and worthy object for science to aim at. There be some religious men of little faith who resent this attempted intrusion of scientific proof into their arena; as if they had a limited field which could be encroached upon. Those men do not realise, as Myers did, the wealth of their inheritance. They little know the magnitude of the possibilities of the universe, the unimagined scope of the regions still, and perhaps for ever, beyond the grasp of what we now call science.

There was a little science in my youth which prided itself upon being positive knowledge, and sought to pour scorn upon the possibility, say, of prayer or of any mode of communication between this world and a purely hypothetical other. Honest and true and brilliant though narrow men held these beliefs and promulgated these doctrines for a time: they did good service in their day by clearing away some superstition, and, with their healthy breezy common-sense, freeing the mind from cant,—that is, from the conventional utterance of phrases embodying beliefs only half held. I say no word against the scientific men of that day, to whom were opposed theologians of equal narrowness and of a more bitter temper. But their warlike energy, though it made them effective crusaders, left their philosophy defective and their science unbalanced. It has not fully re-attained equilibrium yet. With Myers the word science meant something much larger, much more comprehensive: it meant a science and a philosophy and a religion combined. It meant, as it meant to Newton, an attempt at a true cosmic scheme. His was no purblind outlook on a material universe limited and conditioned by our poor senses. He had an imagination wider than that of most men. Myers spoke to me once of the possibility that the parts of an atom move perhaps inside the atom in astronomical orbits, as the planets move in the solar system, each spaced out far away from others and not colliding, but all together constituting the single group or system we call the atom,—a microcosm akin to the visible cosmos, which again might be only an atom of some larger whole. I was disposed at that time to demur. I should not demur now; the progress of science within the last year or two makes the first part of this thesis even probable. On the latter part I have still nothing to say. On the former part much, but not now.

Nor was it only upon material things that he looked with the eye of

prescience and of hope. I never knew a man so hopeful concerning his ultimate destiny. He once asked me whether I would barter, if it were possible, my unknown destiny, whatever it might be, for as many æons of unmitigated and wise terrestrial happiness as might last till the fading of the sun, and then an end.

He would not! No limit could satisfy him. That which he was now he only barely knew,—for to him not the whole of each personality is incarnate in this mortal flesh, the subliminal self still keeps watch and ward beyond the threshold, and is in touch always with another life,—but that which he might come to be hereafter he could by no means guess: οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα. Gradually and perhaps through much suffering, from which indeed he sensitively shrank, but through which nevertheless he was ready to go, he believed that a being would be evolved out of him,—“even,” as he would say, “out of *him*,”—as much higher in the scale of creation, as he now was above the meanest thing that crawls.

Nor yet an end. Infinity of infinities—he could conceive no end, of space or time or existence, nor yet of development: though an end of the solar system and therefore of mankind seemed to him comparatively imminent:

“That hour may come when Earth no more can keep  
Tireless her year-long voyage thro’ the deep ;  
Nay, when all planets, sucked and swept in one,  
Feed their rekindled solitary sun ;—  
Nay, when all suns that shine, together hurled,  
Crash in one infinite and lifeless world :—  
Yet hold thou still, what worlds soe’er may roll,  
Naught bear they with them master of the soul ;  
In all the eternal whirl, the cosmic stir,  
All the eternal is akin to her ;  
She shall endure, and quicken, and live at last,  
When all save souls has perished in the past.”

Infinite progress, infinite harmony, infinite love, these were the things which filled and dominated his existence: limits for him were repellent and impossible. Limits conditioned by the flesh and by imperfection, by rebellion, by blindness, and by error,—these are obvious, these he admitted and lamented to the full; but ultimate limits, impassable barriers, cessation of development, a highest in the

scale of being beyond which it was impossible to go,—these he would not admit, these seemed to him to contradict all that he had gleaned of the essence and meaning of existence.

Principalities and Powers on and on, up and up, without limit now and for ever, this was the dominant note of his mind ; and if he seldom used the word God except in poetry, or employed the customary phrases, it was because everything was so supremely real to him ; and God, the personified totality of existence, too blinding a conception to conceive.

For practical purposes something less lofty served, and he could return from cosmic speculations to the simple everyday life, which is for all of us the immediate business in hand, and which, if patiently pursued, seemed to him to lead to more than could be desired or deserved :

“ Live thou and love ! so best and only so  
 Can thy one soul into the One Soul flow,—  
 Can thy small life to Life’s great centre flee,  
 And thou be nothing, and the Lord in thee.”

In all this I do not say he was right—who am I to say that such a man was right or wrong ?—but it was himself : it was not so much his creed as himself. He with his whole being and personality, at first slowly and painfully with many rebuffs and after much delay and hesitation, but in the end richly and enthusiastically, rose to this height of emotion, of conviction, and of serenity ; though perhaps to few he showed it.

“ Either we cannot or we hardly dare  
 Breathe forth that vision into earthly air ;  
 And if ye call us dreamers, dreamers then  
 Be we esteemed amid you waking men ;  
 Hear us or hear not as ye choose ; but we  
 Speak as we can, and are what we must be.”

Not that he believed easily : let no man think that his faith came easily and cost him nothing. He has himself borne witness to the struggle, the groanings that could not be uttered. His was a keenly emotional nature. What he felt, he felt strongly ; what he believed, he believed in no half-hearted or conventional manner. When he doubted, he doubted fiercely ; but the pain of the doubt only stimulated

him to effort, to struggle; to know at least the worst and doubt no longer. He was content with no half knowledge, no clouded faith, he must know or he must suffer, and in the end he believed that he knew.

Seeker after Truth and Helper of his comrades

is a line in his own metre, though not a quotation, which runs in my mind as descriptive of him; suggested doubtless by that line from the *Odyssey* which, almost in a manner at his own request, I have placed in the fore-front of this essay. For he speaks of himself in an infrequent autobiographical sentence as having "often a sense of great solitude, and of an effort beyond my strength; 'striving,'—as Homer says of Odysseus in a line which I should wish graven on some tablet in my memory,—'striving to save my own soul and my comrades' homeward way.'"

But the years of struggle and effort brought in the end ample recompense, for they gave him a magnificent power to alleviate distress. He was able to communicate something of his assurance to others, so that more than one bereaved friend learned to say with him:

"What matter if thou hold thy loved ones prest  
Still with close arms upon thy yearning breast,  
Or with purged eyes behold them hand in hand  
Come in a vision from that lovely land,—  
Or only with great heart and spirit sure  
Deserve them and await them and endure;  
Knowing well, no shocks that fall, no years that flee,  
Can sunder God from these, or God from thee;  
Nowise so far thy love from theirs can roam  
As past the mansions of His endless home."

To how many a sorrowful heart his words have brought hope and comfort, letters, if ever published, will one day prove. The deep personal conviction behind his message drove it home with greater force, nor did it lose influence because it was enfranchised from orthodox traditions, and rang with no hollow professional note.

If he were right, and if his legacy to the race is to raise it towards any fraction of his high hopes and feeling of certainty in the dread presence of death: then indeed we may be thankful for his existence, and posterity yet unborn will love and honour his memory, as we do now.

[*Postscript to Dr. Lodge's Paper.*]

Sir Robert H. Collins—an early friend of Myers'—sends me the following sketch :

“I FIRST saw Frederic Myers in the early summer of 1864. He was leaning over the side of a steamer in the harbour of the Piræus, reciting poetry to a companion. We became friends on the ship, and travelled together to Messina, Palermo, Naples, and Rome. This was his ‘Hellenism’ period, and I have never forgotten his enthusiasm, whether we walked in the country outside Messina and Palermo, where, he said, all sights and sounds brought Virgil to his memory, or visited Art Galleries, where he would stand rooted before statues such as the Faun of Praxiteles.

“At his special desire, we bathed in the troubled waters between Scylla and Charybdis.

“When, in 1867, I became tutor to the late Duke of Albany, Myers learned to know the Duke, and the two remained firm and constant friends till the latter's death. His *In Memoriam* notice of the Duke will attest to this. He was at Windsor Castle at the time of Princess Louise's wedding, and wrote some lines on the event. I do not think either these lines, or a short poem he wrote by the Queen's request at the time of the late Duke's confirmation, have been published.

“During the phase of mind under the influence of which Myers wrote *St. Paul*, I had frequent opportunities of being with him, and was much struck with the intensity of his feelings at this time. A common friend remarked that his face wore ‘a chastened look.’ He seemed to have the power, if not of carrying his friends all the way with him in the special feelings by which he was himself swayed, at least of imbuing them with something of his attitude of mind. That he was unconscious of the influence of his personality is shown by his ingenuously remarking to me once, that it was strange that we often seemed to undergo similar changes of thought at the same periods.

“His most striking characteristic, in my opinion, was the eagerness and ardour with which he identified himself with all matters great and small that had a real interest to the average human being; while the power he possessed of investing such matters with fresh attractions, and presenting them in novel lights, furnished proof, if proof were needed, of his extraordinary force and genius.

“ROBERT H. COLLINS.”



On Myers as a man of letters the following appreciation has been written at my request, by my colleague, the Professor of Literature in the University of Birmingham :

“ IF students of literature hold resolutely by the touchstone of style, it is because they find in it a promise of all the major virtues, a sure mark of the distinguished mind. Amid to-day’s welter of uncontrolled and purposeless verbiage, such work as that of Myers is doubly precious ; unimpaired by contact with what is weak and worthless in contemporary writing, it not only shines in itself, but carries on the noble traditions of our literature. As a man of letters, his distinction was in part due to the breadth and refinement of his scholarship, which could suffer no conventional accent, since in his ears ever sounded the language of the poets who were his lifelong companions, and since he moved along the difficult paths of philosophical speculation as one familiar with the high things of the intellectual world.

“ His style, always choice, always charged, even surcharged, with thought, kindled when it touched a subject near his heart into a flame of brilliance ; his phrases vibrated in unison with his feelings. Eminent as scholar, psychologist, poet, he has his place as a critic of poetry in the company of those whose altars smoke with a fire derived from Heaven. He took his readers captive, not only because his knowledge was profound, his instinct unailing, but because by reason of the emotional and imaginative sympathy with his author of which he was capable, there is heard in him the note of an almost passionate appreciation, of which I believe the palmary example in our language is the *Essay on Virgil*. Myers claimed for poetry, as indeed for all high art—and I do not think the future will disallow the claim—that though its oracles are not those of a passionless reason or a studious enquiry, they are none the less authentic revelations that well up from some unfathomed depth of being, the divine enclasping region where are wrought the warp and the woof of our mortal life and destiny—*Nec mortale sonans, adflata est numine quando Jum propiore dei*. There are few, I think, among those who concern themselves seriously with literature who have not felt his charm, his dignity, his inspiration, and who have not compared with some disquietude their own coldness with his strenuous allegiance to the best of which the mind of man has vision.

“ W. MACNEILE DIXON.”

## II.

## FREDERIC MYERS'S SERVICE TO PSYCHOLOGY.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM JAMES.

ON this memorial occasion it is from English hearts and tongues belonging, as I never had the privilege of belonging, to the immediate environment of our lamented President, that discourse of him as a man and as a friend must come. It is for those who participated in the endless drudgery of his labours for our Society to tell of the high powers he showed there; and it is for those who have something of his burning interest in the problem of our human destiny to estimate his success in throwing a little more light into its dark recesses. To me it has been deemed best to assign a colder task. Frederic Myers was a psychologist who worked upon lines hardly admitted by the more academic branch of the profession to be legitimate; and as for some years I bore the title of 'Professor of Psychology,' the suggestion has been made (and by me gladly welcomed) that I should spend my portion of this hour in defining the exact place and rank which we must accord to him as a cultivator and promoter of the science of the Mind.

Brought up entirely upon literature and history, and interested at first in poetry and religion chiefly; never by nature a philosopher in the technical sense of a man forced to pursue consistency among concepts for the mere love of the logical occupation; not crammed with science at college, or trained to scientific method by any passage through a laboratory; Myers had as it were to re-create his personality before he became the wary critic of evidence, the skilful handler of hypothesis, the learned neurologist and omnivorous reader of biological and cosmological matter, with whom in later years we were acquainted. The transformation came about because he needed to be all these things in order to work successfully at the problem that lay near his heart; and the ardour of his will and the richness

of his intellect are proved by the success with which he underwent so unusual a transformation.

The problem, as you know, was that of seeking evidence for human immortality. His contributions to psychology were incidental to that research, and would probably never have been made had he not entered on it. But they have a value for Science entirely independent of the light they shed upon that problem; and it is quite apart from it that I shall venture to consider them.

If we look at the history of mental science we are immediately struck by diverse tendencies among its several cultivators, the consequence being a certain opposition of schools and some repugnance among their disciples. Apart from the great contrasts between minds that are teleological or biological and minds that are mechanical, between the animists and the associationists in psychology, there is the entirely different contrast between what I will call the classic-academic and the romantic type of imagination. The former has a fondness for clean pure lines and noble simplicity in its constructions. It explains things by as few principles as possible and is intolerant of either nondescript facts or clumsy formulas. The facts must lie in a neat assemblage, and the psychologist must be enabled to cover them and 'tuck them in' as safely under his system as a mother tucks her babe in under the down coverlet on a winter night. Until quite recently all psychology, whether animistic or associationistic, was written on classic-academic lines. The consequence was that the human mind, as it is figured in this literature, was largely an abstraction. Its normal adult traits were recognised. A sort of sunlit terrace was exhibited on which it took its exercise. But where that terrace stopped, the mind stopped; and there was nothing farther left to tell of in this kind of philosophy but the brain and the other physical facts of nature on the one hand, and the absolute metaphysical ground of the universe on the other.

But of late years the terrace has been overrun by romantic improvers, and to pass to their work is like going from classic to Gothic architecture, where few outlines are pure and where uncouth forms lurk in the shadows. A mass of mental phenomena are now seen in the shrubbery beyond the parapet. Fantastic, ignoble, hardly human, or frankly non-human are some of these new candidates for psychological description. The menagerie and the madhouse, the nursery, the prison, and the



hospital, have been made to deliver up their material. The world of mind is shown as something infinitely more complex than was suspected; and whatever beauties it may still possess, it has lost at any rate the beauty of academic neatness.

But despite the triumph of romanticism, psychologists as a rule have still some lingering prejudice in favour of the nobler simplicities. Moreover there are social prejudices which scientific men themselves obey. The word 'hypnotism' has been trailed about in the newspapers so that even we ourselves rather wince at it, and avoid occasions of its use. 'Mesmerism,' 'clairvoyance,' 'medium,'—*horrescimus referentes!*—and with all these things, infected by their previous mystery-mongering discoverers, even our best friends had rather avoid complicity. For instance, I invite eight of my scientific colleagues severally to come to my house at their own time, and sit with a medium for whom the evidence already published in our *Proceedings* had been most noteworthy. Although it means at worst the waste of the hour for each, five of them decline the adventure. I then beg the 'Commission' connected with the chair of a certain learned psychologist in a neighbouring university to examine the same medium, whom Mr. Hodgson and I offer at our own expense to send and leave with them. They also have to be excused from any such entanglement. I advise another psychological friend to look into this medium's case, but he replies that it is useless, for if he should get such results as I report, he would (being suggestible) simply believe himself hallucinated. When I propose as a remedy that he should remain in the background and take notes, whilst his wife has the sitting, he explains that he can never consent to his wife's presence at such performances. This friend of mine writes *ex cathedra* on the subject of psychical research, declaring (I need hardly add) that there is nothing in it; the chair of the psychologist with the Commission was founded by a spiritist, partly with a view to investigate mediums; and one of the five colleagues who declined my invitation is widely quoted as an effective critic of our evidence. So runs the world away! I should not indulge in the personality and triviality of such anecdotes, were it not that they paint the temper of our time, a temper which, thanks to Frederic Myers more than to any one, will certainly be impossible after this generation. Myers was, I think, decidedly exclusive and intolerant by nature. But his keenness for truth carried him into regions where either intellectual or

social squeamishness would have been fatal, so he 'mortified' his *amour propre*, unclubbed himself completely, and became a model of patience, tact, and humility wherever investigation required it. Both his example and his body of doctrine will make this temper the only one henceforward scientifically respectable.

If you ask me how his doctrine has this effect, I answer: *By co-ordinating!* For Myers' great principle of research was that in order to understand any one species of fact we ought to have all the species of the same general class of fact before us. So he took a lot of scattered phenomena, some of them recognised as reputable, others outlawed from science, or treated as isolated curiosities; he made series of them, filled in the transitions by delicate hypotheses or analogies, and bound them together in a system by his bold inclusive conception of the Subliminal Self, so that no one can now touch one part of the fabric without finding the rest entangled with it. Such vague terms of apperception as psychologists have hitherto been satisfied with using for most of these phenomena, as 'fraud,' 'rot,' 'rubbish,' will no more be possible hereafter than 'dirt' is possible as a head of classification in chemistry, or 'vermin' in zoology. Whatever they are, they are things with a right to definite description and to careful observation.

I cannot but account this as a great service rendered to Psychology. I expect that Myers will ere long distinctly figure in mental science as the radical leader in what I have called the romantic movement. Through him for the first time, psychologists are in possession of their full material, and mental phenomena are set down in an adequate inventory. To bring unlike things thus together by forming series of which the intermediary terms connect the extremes, is a procedure much in use by scientific men. It is a first step made towards securing their interest in the romantic facts, that Myers should have shown how easily this familiar method can be applied to their study.

Myers' conception of the extensiveness of the Subliminal Self quite overturns the classic notion of what the human mind consists in. The supraliminal region, as Myers calls it, the classic-academic consciousness, which was once alone considered either by associationists or animists, figures in his theory as only a small segment of the psychic spectrum. It is a special phase of mentality, teleologically evolved for adaptation to our natural environment, and forms only what he calls

a 'privileged case' of personality. The outlying Subliminal, according to him, represents more fully our central and abiding being.

I think the words subliminal and supraliminal unfortunate, but they were probably unavoidable. I think, too, that Myers's belief in the ubiquity and great extent of the Subliminal will demand a far larger number of facts than sufficed to persuade him, before the next generation of psychologists shall become persuaded. He regards the Subliminal as the enveloping mother-consciousness in each of us, from which the consciousness we wot of is precipitated like a crystal. But whether this view get confirmed or get overthrown by future inquiry, the definite way in which Myers has thrown it down is a new and specific challenge to inquiry. For half a century now, psychologists have fully admitted the existence of a subliminal mental region, under the name either of unconscious cerebration or of the involuntary life; but they have never definitely taken up the question of the extent of this region, never sought explicitly to map it out. Myers definitely attacks this problem, which, after him, it will be impossible to ignore.

*What is the precise constitution of the Subliminal*—such is the problem which deserves to figure in our Science hereafter as the *problem of Myers*; and willy-nilly, inquiry must follow on the path which it has opened up. But Myers has not only propounded the problem definitely, he has also invented definite methods for its solution. Post-hypnotic suggestion, crystal-gazing, automatic writing and trance-speech, the willing-game, etc., are now, thanks to him, instruments of research, reagents like litmus paper or the galvanometer, for revealing what would otherwise be hidden. These are so many ways of putting the Subliminal on tap. Of course without the simultaneous work on hypnotism and hysteria independently begun by others, he could not have pushed his own work so far. But he is so far the only generalizer of the problem and the only user of all the methods; and even though his theory of the extent of the Subliminal should have to be subverted in the end, its formulation will, I am sure, figure always as a rather momentous event in the history of our Science.

Any psychologist who should wish to read Myers out of the profession—and there are probably still some who would be glad to do so to-day—is committed to a definite alternative. Either he must say that we knew all about the subliminal region before Myers took it up,

or he must say that it is certain that states of super-normal cognition form no part of its content. The first contention would be too absurd. The second one remains more plausible. There are many first hand investigators into the Subliminal who, not having themselves met with anything super-normal, would probably not hesitate to call all the reports of it erroneous, and who would limit the Subliminal to dissolutive phenomena of consciousness exclusively, to lapsed memories, sub-conscious sensations, impulses and *phobias*, and the like. Messrs. Janet and Binet, for aught I know, may hold some such position as this. Against it Myers's thesis would stand sharply out. Of the Subliminal, he would say, we can give no ultra-simple account: there are discrete regions in it, levels separated by critical points of transition, and no one formula holds true of them all. And any conscientious psychologist ought, it seems to me, to see that, since these multiple modifications of personality are only beginning to be reported and observed with care, it is obvious that a dogmatically negative treatment of them must be premature, and that the problem of Myers still awaits us as the problem of far the deepest moment for our actual psychology, whether his own tentative solutions of certain parts of it be correct or not.

Meanwhile, descending to detail, one cannot help admiring the great originality with which Myers wove such an extraordinarily detached and discontinuous series of phenomena together. Unconscious cerebration, dreams, hypnotism, hysteria, inspirations of genius, the willing-game, planchette, crystal-gazing, hallucinatory voices, apparitions of the dying, medium-trances, demoniacal possession, clairvoyance, thought-transference—even ghosts and other facts more doubtful—these things form a chaos at first sight most discouraging. No wonder that scientists can think of no other principle of unity among them than their common appeal to men's perverse propensity to superstition. Yet Myers has actually made a system of them, stringing them continuously upon a perfectly legitimate objective hypothesis, verified in some cases and extended to others by analogy. Taking the name automatism from the phenomenon of automatic writing—I am not sure that he may not himself have been the first so to baptize this latter phenomenon—he made one great simplification at a stroke by treating hallucinations and active impulses under a common head, as *sensory* and *motor automatisms*. Automatism he then conceived broadly as a



message of any kind from the Subliminal to the Supraliminal. And he went a step farther in his hypothetic interpretation, when he insisted on 'symbolism' as one of the ways in which one stratum of our personality will often interpret the influences of another. Obsessive thoughts and delusions, as well as voices, visions, and impulses, thus fall subject to one mode of treatment. To explain them, we must explore the Subliminal; to cure them we must practically influence it.

Myers's work on automatism led to his brilliant conception, in 1891, of hysteria. He defined it, with good reasons given, as "a disease of the hypnotic stratum." Hardly had he done so when the wonderfully ingenious observations of Binet, and especially of Janet in France, gave to this view the completest of corroborations. These observations have been extended in Germany, America, and elsewhere; and although Binet and Janet worked independently of Myers, and did work far more objective, he nevertheless will stand as the original announcer of a theory which, in my opinion, makes an epoch, not only in medical, but in psychological science, because it brings in an entirely new conception of our mental possibilities.

Myers's manner of apprehending the problem of the Subliminal shows itself fruitful in every possible direction. While official science practically refuses to attend to Subliminal phenomena, the circles which do attend to them treat them with a respect altogether too indiscriminating—every Subliminal deliverance must be an oracle. The result is that there is no basis of intercourse between those who best know the facts and those who are most competent to discuss them. Myers immediately establishes a basis by his remark that in so far as they have to use the same organism, with its preformed avenues of expression—what may be very different strata of the Subliminal are condemned in advance to manifest themselves in similar ways. This might account for the great generic likeness of so many automatic performances, while their different starting-points behind the threshold might account for certain differences in them. Some of them, namely, seem to include elements of supernormal knowledge; others to show a curious subconscious mania for personation and deception; others again to be mere drivel. But Myers's conception of various strata or levels in the Subliminal sets us to analyzing them all from a new point of view. The word Subliminal for him denotes only a region, with possibly the most heterogeneous contents. Much of the content is certainly rubbish,

matter that Myers calls dissolutive, stuff that dreams are made of, fragments of lapsed memory, mechanical effects of habit and ordinary suggestion; some belongs to a middle region where a strange manufacture of inner romances perpetually goes on; finally, some of the content appears superiorly and subtly perceptive. But each has to appeal to us by the same channels and to use organs partly trained to their performance by messages from the other levels. Under these conditions what could be more natural to expect than a confusion, which Myers's suggestion would then have been the first indispensable step towards finally clearing away.

Once more, then, whatever be the upshot of the patient work required here, Myers's resourceful intellect has certainly done a service to psychology.

I said a while ago that his intellect was not by nature philosophic in the narrower sense of being that of a logician. In the broader sense of being a man of wide scientific imagination, Myers was most eminently a philosopher. He has shown this by his unusually daring grasp of the principle of evolution, and by the wonderful way in which he has worked out suggestions of mental evolution by means of biological analogies. These analogies are, if anything, too profuse and dazzling in his pages; but his conception of mental evolution is more radical than anything yet considered by psychologists as possible. It is absolutely original; and, being so radical, it becomes one of those hypotheses which, once propounded, can never be forgotten, but soon or later have to be worked out and submitted in every way to criticism and verification.

The corner-stone of his conception is the fact that consciousness has no essential unity. It aggregates and dissipates, and what we call normal consciousness,—the 'Human Mind' of classic psychology,—is not even typical, but only one case out of thousands. Slight organic alterations, intoxications and auto-intoxications, give supraliminal forms completely different, and the subliminal region seems to have laws in many respects peculiar. Myers thereupon makes the suggestion that the whole system of consciousness studied by the classic psychology is only an extract from a larger total, being a part told-off, as it were, to do service in the adjustments of our physical organism to the world of nature. This extract, aggregated and personified for this particular purpose, has, like all evolving things, a variety of peculiarities. Having

evolved, it may also dissolve, and in dreams, hysteria, and divers forms of degeneration it seems to do so. This is a retrograde process of separation in a consciousness of which the unity was once effected. But again the consciousness may follow the opposite course and integrate still farther, or evolve by growing into yet untried directions. In veridical automatisms it actually seems to do so. It drops some of its usual modes of increase, its ordinary use of the senses, for example, and lays hold of bits of information which, in ways that we cannot even follow conjecturally, leak into it by way of the Subliminal. The ulterior source of a certain part of this information (limited and perverted as it always is by the organism's idiosyncrasies in the way of transmission and expression) Myers thought he could reasonably trace to departed human intelligence, or its existing equivalent. I pretend to no opinion on this point, for I have as yet studied the evidence with so little critical care that Myers was always surprised at my negligence. I can therefore speak with detachment from this question and, as a mere empirical psychologist, of Myers's general evolutionary conception. As such a psychologist I feel sure that the latter is a hypothesis of first-rate philosophic importance. It is based, of course, on his conviction of the extent of the Subliminal, and will stand or fall as that is verified or not; but whether it stand or fall, it looks to me like one of those sweeping ideas by which the scientific researches of an entire generation are often moulded. It would not be surprising if it proved such a leading idea in the investigation of the near future; for in one shape or another, the Subliminal has come to stay with us, and the only possible course to take henceforth is radically and thoroughly to explore its significance.

Looking back from Frederic Myers's vision of vastness in the field of psychological research upon the programme as most academic psychologists frame it, one must confess that its limitation at their hands seems not only unplausible, but in truth, a little ridiculous. Even with brutes and madmen, even with hysterics and hypnotics admitted as the academic psychologists admit them, the official outlines of the subject are far too neat to stand in the light of analogy with the rest of Nature. The ultimates of Nature,—her simple elements, if there be such,—may indeed combine in definite proportions and follow classic laws of architecture; but in her proximates, in her phenomena



as we immediately experience them, Nature is everywhere gothic, not classic. She forms a real jungle, where all things are provisional, half-fitted to each other, and untidy. When we add such a complex kind of subliminal region as Myers believed in to the official region, we restore the analogy; and, though we may be mistaken in much detail, in a general way, at least, we become plausible. In comparison with Myers's way of attacking the question of immortality in particular, the official way is certainly so far from the mark as to be almost preposterous. It assumes that when our ordinary consciousness goes out, the only alternative surviving kind of consciousness that could be possible is abstract mentality, living on spiritual truth, and communicating ideal wisdom—in short, the whole classic platonizing Sunday-school conception. Failing to get that sort of thing when it listens to reports about mediums, it denies that there can be anything. Myers approaches the subject with no such *a priori* requirement. If he finds any positive indication of 'spirits,' he records it, whatever it may be, and is willing to fit his conception to the facts, however grotesque the latter may appear, rather than to blot out the facts to suit his conception. But, as was long ago said by our collaborator, Mr. Canning Schiller, in words more effective than any I can write, if any conception should be blotted out by serious lovers of Nature, it surely ought to be the classic academic Sunday-school conception. If anything is *unlikely* in a world like this, it is that the next adjacent thing to the mere surface-show of our experience should be the realm of eternal essences, of platonic ideas, of crystal battlements, of absolute significance. But whether they be animists or associationists, a supposition something like this is still the assumption of our usual psychologists. It comes from their being for the most part philosophers in the technical sense, and from their showing the weakness of that profession for logical abstractions. Myers was primarily a lover of life and not of abstractions. He loved human life, human persons, and their peculiarities. So he could easily admit the possibility of level beyond level of perfectly concrete experience, all 'queer and cactus-like' though it might be, before we touch the absolute, or reach the eternal essences.

Behind the minute anatomists and the physiologists, with their metallic instruments, there have always stood the out-door naturalists with their eyes and love of concrete nature. The former call the latter

superficial, but there is something wrong about your laboratory-biologist who has no sympathy with living animals. In psychology there is a similar distinction. Some psychologists are fascinated by the varieties of mind in living action, others by the dissecting out, whether by logical analysis or by brass instruments, of whatever elementary mental processes may be there. Myers must decidedly be placed in the former class, though his powerful use of analogy enabled him also to do work after the fashion of the latter. He loved human nature as Cuvier and Agassiz loved animal nature; in his view, as in their view, the subject formed a vast living picture. Whether his name will have in psychology as honourable a place as their names have gained in the sister science, will depend on whether future inquirers shall adopt or reject his theories; and the rapidity with which their decision shapes itself will depend largely on the vigour with which this Society continues its labour in his absence. It is at any rate a possibility, and I am disposed to think it a probability, that Frederic Myers will always be remembered in psychology as the pioneer who staked out a vast tract of mental wilderness and planted the flag of genuine science upon it. He was an enormous collector. He introduced for the first time comparison, classification, and serial order into the peculiar kind of fact which he collected. He was a genius at perceiving analogies; he was fertile in hypotheses; and as far as conditions allowed it in this meteoric region, he relied on verification. Such advantages are of no avail, however, if one has struck into a false road from the outset. But should it turn out that Frederic Myers has really hit the right road by his divining instinct, it is certain that, like the names of others who have been wise, his name will keep an honourable place in scientific history.

## III.

## IN MEMORIAM FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

PAR CHARLES RICHEL.

LE temps n'est pas venu encore où pourront être mis en pleine lumière les mérites et la gloire de Frédéric Myers. La postérité et l'histoire ne feront que rendre son nom plus illustre ; car son œuvre, vaste et profonde, est de celles que le temps doit singulièrement grandir. Aussi bien n'a-t-il jamais eu le souci de ce qu'on appelle la réputation, ou la célébrité, choses vaines qu'il estimait à leur faible valeur. Il avait de plus hautes aspirations ; sur toutes choses, l'amour désintéressé de la vérité, la passion de la connaissance. Sans être un mystique, il a eu toute la foi des mystiques, et, par un heureux assemblage de qualités intellectuelles, en apparence contradictoires, il combinait cette foi avec une sagacité et une précision toute scientifiques. Psychologue pénétrant, expérimentateur rigoureux, philosophe profond, il avait aussi toute l'ardeur d'un apôtre.

La grande œuvre qu'il a laissée est incomplète, comme toutes les grandes œuvres ; mais l'impulsion donnée à la recherche a été si puissante que sans aucune exception tous ceux qui désormais étudieront par des méthodes scientifiques les sciences dites occultes seront forcés d'être ses élèves. La voie a été tracée, et tracée de main-de-maître, par lui. Le développement admirable que nous entrevoyons pour ces sciences dans un avenir plus ou moins lointain, aura toujours Myers pour initiateur. *Principium et fons*. Il sera le maître de la première heure, le héros, qui, abordant résolument des problèmes jusque-là considérés comme insolubles ou absurdes, aura ouvert à l'humanité tout un monde illimité d'espérances.

Mais je ne ferai pas ici l'analyse de son œuvre. Ce serait une tentative prématurée, et, de ma part, téméraire. On me permettra seulement, dans cette réunion où plane la mémoire de notre illustre ami, de rappeler quelques souvenirs personnels. En donnant à notre

émotion respectueuse cette forme concrète, et pour ainsi dire anecdotique, nous resterons très près de lui encore. Heureux si je puis faire revivre la souvenir de celui qui a été notre inspirateur et notre guide à tous.

C'est à l'occasion des premières expériences publiées par la Société des recherches psychiques que j'entrai en relation avec Myers et Gurney, et tout de suite, après échange de quelques lettres, la sympathie fut profonde.

Je lui racontai ce que j'avais vu, et je lui fis part de mes espérances. Elles étaient moins vastes que les siennes, et tout d'abord j'étais tenté de l'accuser de crédulité, mais peu à peu il arriva à me convaincre, si bien que presque malgré moi, toutes les fois que j'avais un peu longuement causé avec lui, je me sentais ensuite comme transformé. Peu d'hommes autant que lui ont exercé une influence directrice sur ma pensée. Je trouvais en effet en lui non pas cette foi aveugle et crédule qui accepte toutes les fantaisies qu'une imagination sans critique sévère inspire à ses enthousiastes ; mais le culte de la rigueur scientifique, l'amour de la précision et une érudition sure, sagace et perspicace. Aussi, toutes les fois que quelque phénomène intéressant dans le domaine des sciences occultes se présentait à moi, ma première pensée était-elle toujours : "il faudra montrer cela à Myers, et savoir ce qu'il en pense."

Et c'est ainsi que nous avons pu tous deux, en maintes occasions, à Calmar en Suède, en Saxe à Zwickau, à l'île Ribaud en France, à Paris et à Cambridge, étudier ensemble quelques uns de ces phénomènes déconcertants, compliqués, qui par le mélange du vrai avec le faux semblent défier à la foi notre scepticisme et notre crédulité.

Je ne peux me rappeler sans émotion ces voyages, ces excursions charmantes où l'esprit de Myers se livrait tout entier. Attentif aux moindres détails, scrutant toutes les conditions expérimentales, proposant des dispositions ingénieuses, infatigable dans son activité à la recherche, inaltérable dans sa confiance, il relevait mon courage souvent abattu, et ne me permettait pas le désespoir ou le découragement. Combien de fois n'avons-nous pas cru avoir surpris la clef du grand mystère ! Et quelle énergie ne lui fallait-il pas pour ne pas se laisser troubler par la surprise de quelque misérable incident, qui nous faisait retomber à terre après avoir conçu de sublimes espérances !

Certes, si je suis resté, malgré tout, confiant dans la science des

phénomènes psychiques, c'est à lui que je le dois. Sans lui, je serais revenu, probablement sans retour, à la science classique, positive, cette science dont il ne faut jamais dire de mal ; car c'est la base la plus solide sur laquelle puisse s'affirmer une conviction, mais enfin dont on peut, sans calomnie, dire que ses vues sont parfois très courtes.

Si nous ne devons accepter que ce qui est prouvé d'une manière absolument irréfutable, nous serions réduits à bien peu de chose. Le mécanisme du monde ambiant est un mécanisme assez grossier, dont nous connaissons, tant bien que mal, les termes principaux ; mais nous avons soif d'aller au-delà. Il nous faut autre chose que ce mécanisme dont nous ne comprenons même pas l'essence. Nous avons besoin d'hypothèses plus hardies. Et la science ne peut vivre sans ces hypothèses, qui s'avancent beaucoup plus loin que les démonstrations : pour féconder la science, l'hypothèse est nécessaire. Certes la critique scientifique est indispensable ; mais il faut savoir distinguer entre l'audace qui conçoit toutes les plus grandioses hypothèses, et la sévérité scientifique qui n'admet que la démonstration impeccable.

Voilà ce qui rendait l'influence de F. Myers si profonde ; c'est qu'il avait une audace sans limite dans ses hypothèses. Il croyait fermement à un autre monde—moins grossier et moins barbare que le monde mécanique qui frappe nos vues rudimentaires ;—mais il ne se croyait pas pour cela, comme tant de spirites, hélas ! autorisé à négliger les règles d'une précision expérimentale scrupuleuse.

À l'île Ribaud, quand avec Lodge et Ochorowicz nous étions en présence des faits extraordinaires fournis par Eusapia Paladino, que de longues et attachantes conversations sur tous ces grands problèmes qui nous passionnaient ! Ce temps passé, déjà lointain, restera un des souvenirs les plus charmants de ma vie. Et dans cette hospitalière maison de Leckhampton, où j'ai passé de si douces heures, que de souvenirs encore je pourrais évoquer !

C'est à Myers qu'est dû pour une bonne part le succès des congrès internationaux de psychologie, Paris 1889, Londres 1893, Munich 1896, Paris 1900. Grâce à lui un accord, qui paraissait à première vue impossible, a pu être réalisé : l'union entre la science psychologique classique et la science psychique, cette psychologie future à laquelle notre illustre ami travaillait avec tant d'ardeur. Ce n'était pas précisément une tâche facile que d'apprivoiser les psychologues et philosophes de profession, accoutumés à lire Platon, Aristote, Locke et Kant plus



qu'à étudier les phénomènes de *trance*, et d'hypnose. Pourtant Myers y a réussi. Il a pu introduire dans les séances de ces congrès les données des sciences, si mal à propos dites occultes, la télépathie, les prémonitions, la suggestion mentale, etc. Non pas qu'il ait voulu faire pénétrer de vive force ces connaissances dans les esprits rebelles, mais au moins a-t-il fait admettre qu'elles avaient quelque valeur, qu'il fallait les discuter, et non les repousser par des *à priori* dédaigneux. Nul plus que lui n'était qualifié pour cette réconciliation; sa parole était toujours respectée; ses conseils toujours écoutés. S'il a été parfois blâmé par les spirites qui le trouvaient trop timide, il a été non moins énergiquement accusé de témérité par les philosophes; mais les uns et les autres, spirites et philosophes, étaient, en dernière analyse, forcés de s'incliner devant la rigueur de sa dialectique, et la sévérité de ses méthodiques critiques.

Assurément Myers n'a pas assisté au triomphe définitif de son œuvre—quand donc un triomphe est-il définitif? Mais au moins il aura vu l'évolution, provoquée par lui, grandir rapidement. Aujourd'hui personne ne raille plus ceux qui parlent de télépathie et de pressentiments, et de suggestion mentale, et d'autres phénomènes encore, qui excitaient il y a vingt ans les plaisanteries et presque la commisération des personnes soi-disant raisonnables. Aujourd'hui, grâce à Myers et à ses vaillants collaborateurs, tout un monde nouveau nous est offert, et il faut, en explorateurs que rien n'effraie, y pénétrer. La tâche est devenue plus facile. Le chemin est largement ouvert. L'indifférence et l'hostilité du public et des savants officiels ont été vaincues. Tous les hommes qui réfléchissent ont fini par comprendre qu'il y a là des trésors de vérités nouvelles; plus vraies et plus fécondes que toutes les vérités anciennes. Ce n'est pas le renversement de la science d'autrefois; c'est l'avènement d'une science inconnue, riche en promesses, et même ayant déjà donné un peu plus que des promesses.

La dernière fois que j'ai vu Myers, ce fut en août 1900, à ce Congrès de Psychologie en lequel il avait mis tant d'espérances. Il y apportait le récit très documenté de ses expériences avec Mme. T., expériences admirables qui avaient entraîné sa conviction profonde et inébranlable. Mais déjà la maladie l'avait frappé, et il lui fallut tout son énergie pour pouvoir assister à nos séances.

Mais peu lui importait la maladie. Il avait, dans ses études, ses expériences, ses réflexions, acquis la conviction que la conscience survit



à la destruction du corps ; et la mort lui apparaissait comme un passage à une existence nouvelle, une sorte de délivrance, que parfois même il hâtait de ses vœux. Malgré toute sa tendresse pour les siens, malgré les amitiés fidèles qui l'entouraient, malgré le respect et l'admiration de tous ceux qui le connaissaient, il aspirait à entrer dans l'avenir qu'il voyait ouvert devant lui ; et il est mort, doucement, plein de joie et de confiance.

Son nom ne périra pas, son œuvre est indestructible. Certes ses amis conserveront fidèlement le souvenir de cette chère mémoire ; jamais ils n'oublieront tant de charme, tant de sagesse, tant de pureté et d'élévation intellectuelles ; mais, lorsque ceux-là auront à leur tour, dans quelques rapides années, disparu, le nom de F. Myers restera tout aussi vivant et respecté. Il sera le *maître*, le premier maître. C'est lui qui aura donné le signal d'une science nouvelle ; et son nom sera placé en tête de cette psychologie future qui peut-être éclipsera toutes les autres connaissances humaines.

## IV.

F. W. H. MYERS AND THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL  
RESEARCH.

BY FRANK PODMORE.

THE Society for Psychical Research stands now at a critical point in its history. In Frederic Myers we have lost the last of the brilliant trinity of Cambridge men who, in conjunction with Professor Barrett, founded the Society in 1882. Myers had of course made his name known in other fields before the Society was formed. His early work, *St. Paul*, marked him out as a poet of high and original quality; his essays on various literary themes, classical and modern, had won for him the appreciation of scholars. Had he devoted himself to such pursuits there can be little doubt that he would have taken a high place in the Victorian age of English literature. But from early manhood, or perhaps even from boyhood, he had been possessed with that passion for the quest of immortality which he himself so well described a few weeks before his death, in his memorial address on Henry Sidgwick. Prior to 1882 he had joined a small circle, of whom Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick and Edmund Gurney were the other leading members, to investigate the phenomena of Spiritualism, and had later assisted at Professor Barrett's experiments in thought-transference.

From the foundation of the Society he threw all his energies into its work, and after Edmund Gurney's death took a large part of the routine duties in addition to the more congenial task of research. Only those who have worked with him can know how heavy a burden of dull business details incidental to the management of an organisation like ours Myers cheerfully undertook to bear. To his activity in other directions the fifteen volumes of our *Proceedings*, to which he contributed a preponderant share, bear eloquent witness. Again, though the writing of the book was the task of Edmund Gurney, Myers played a

considerable part in collecting the material for *Phantasms of the Living*, and was largely responsible for the classification of the cases finally adopted.

Probably the achievement which he would himself have regarded as most expressive of his personality, and which it seems likely will ultimately be accepted by dispassionate critics as possessing the highest permanent value, is his prolonged investigation into the powers and manifestations of what he has happily named the Subliminal Self. Those who are unable to accept, without large qualification and deduction, the conclusions at which he has arrived can yet unreservedly admire the characteristic qualities of his genius as here exhibited. We admire first his full and comprehensive survey of the whole field, and the amazing industry on which that comprehensive survey is based. As Edmund Gurney, himself a student of no mean capacity, once said to me, "Whilst I am reading a book, Myers will master a literature."

Next we note the extraordinary power of generalisation and classification displayed. Professor James and Dr. Lodge have already described Myers' power of bringing together a vast assemblage of heterogeneous phenomena, pointing out their resemblances and analogies, and uniting them in a common system. Not only did he thus bring the whole field of enquiry—a feat never attempted before—into one comprehensive survey, but he carried his genius for classification into each particular part of the whole area. One of the most striking examples of this is afforded by his treatment of the material dealt with in *Phantasms of the Living*. We had placed before us an immense mass of apparently diverse and heterogeneous observations—dreams, visions, banshees, corpse-lights, apparitions at death, fetches, doubles, and so on. The idea that all these various phenomena might be explained as due to the action of one mind upon another was the common property from the outset of those who had founded the Society. But it was mainly owing to Myers that the idea was embodied in provisional categories and expressed by a notation hardly less compendious than that of chemistry. Briefly, the various phenomena were grouped according to the state of agent or percipient, whether the one or the other were at the time of the occurrence in the normal waking state, or asleep, or in trance, delirium, illness, or dying. Thus, when a percipient in full possession of his waking faculties saw an apparition of a friend shortly before his death, the occurrence would be classed

as A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> (agent dying, percipient normal). If two persons sleeping in different rooms had a common dream, it would be noted as A<sup>s</sup> P<sup>s</sup> (agent sleeping, percipient sleeping). Other instances of the notation will be remembered by all who are familiar with his articles on the Subliminal Self. It is to be noted that this power of systematisation is of great practical value, even though later knowledge should lead ultimately to quite other principles of arrangement. The mere ability to bring together a vast number of scattered observations, to point out some of their common characteristics, and to group them in a provisional scheme, is a sufficiently rare endowment, and, in an investigation like ours, of the highest possible utility. However incomplete and rough and ready the classification may be—and Myers' schemes were by no means rough and ready—it facilitates discussion and at once directs and stimulates further investigation.

Closely connected with this power of classification was Myers' extraordinary fertility in suggestion and hypothesis. He was always seeing analogies that previous observers had overlooked; always bringing together from the furthest extremities of the field phenomena seemingly the most diverse and demonstrating their essential resemblance. It is this faculty which makes his writings so perpetually suggestive and provocative of thought. Those who differ most widely from some of his conclusions cannot read his works without gaining innumerable hints for their guidance, glimpses of new order and harmony in the material, and unimagined side-lights on old problems.

On Myers' gift of expression there is no need to dwell at length, in this place least of all. Every volume of the *Proceedings* up to the present time has been graced by some article from his pen. The most impressive characteristic of his style, however, was not the splendour of the diction, the unequalled command over the literary stores alike of classical and modern times, or even his rich imaginative endowment, but his instinct on occasion for the inevitable word. In his more studied utterances the language might seem at times overweighted by its own riches, by the abundance of the imagery, by the embarrassment of quotation and allusion. It was when he chose to be brief, and of many good things to select only the best, that his style reached perhaps its highest point of effectiveness. It would be difficult to surpass the art shown in the brief obituary notices of our distinguished members which he contributed to the *Journal* of the

Society ; in his replies to attack in outside periodicals ; and in some of the brief speeches at our meetings which were delivered to meet an unchearsed emergency. It is pertinent to remark in this connection that our psychical vocabulary is largely owing to Myers ; amongst his best known coinages are *telepathy*, *supernormal*, *veridical*.

But there is no need to dwell upon an aspect of his intellectual equipment which is familiar to us all. It is perhaps not so well recognised that much of his work was scarcely less finished from a scientific than from a literary standpoint. His conscientiousness as an artist was no doubt born with him ; his conscientious thoroughness as an investigator was more gradually and laboriously acquired. That he did display so much care and thoroughness in the tedious task of investigation is, in a man of his temperament, not the least of his achievements.

No trait in his character was more conspicuous than the tolerance of opinions at variance with his own. His deference indeed to any expression of adverse views was so marked that it can best be described as docility. At our Council meetings, whilst few were so well qualified to form an opinion, no one was more reluctant to seem to press his own. He was always open to suggestions from whatever quarter. Part of this deference to any expression of opinion was no doubt the simple outcome of a finished courtesy. But it had its roots, I think, deeper than this. It was most marked in his attitude towards Henry Sidgwick. Myers was always ready to defer, and set us the example of deferring, to any opinion in matters of policy and conduct deliberately expressed by Professor Sidgwick. That instant recognition of Sidgwick's true insight and sure judgment, the truest and surest that any of us have known, was a tribute that honoured the giver not less than the recipient.

Myers' life, happy in its strenuous activities, was happiest of all perhaps in its conviction of another life to follow. Various symptoms had given warning of his approaching end, and in November last, writing to tell me that his own expectations of an early death had lately received medical confirmation, he spoke of himself as looking forward to the great change, and "disposed to count the days till the holidays."



## V.

## F. W. H. MYERS AS A MAN OF LETTERS.

BY WALTER LEAF, Litt.D.

MYERS has a right to a place among the foremost writers of our day ; but it seems hardly likely that this right will ever be duly recognised. Whether it be or not is a question with which we may concern ourselves the less as it is certain that Myers himself did not greatly care. He had within his grasp a high reputation as poet and essayist, and deliberately sacrificed it to yet higher moral purposes. As years went on he addressed himself less and less to men of letters, seeking ever more consciously only the narrower audience which cared for the one subject engrossing his own energies and ambitions. Hence it is that to the world at large he is above all the author of *St. Paul*, his least mature work ; and even the *Times* is capable of attributing to him what was written by his brother.

Until the publication of his nearly finished book on *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, which will give him his final place both as thinker and writer, nearly all his most mature and finest work must be sought in the publications of the S.P.R. *St. Paul* is not forgotten, nor should it be ; for it is the work of a real poet. But it is easy to point out in it the obvious faults of youth—too exuberant imagination, too gorgeous colouring, excessive love of resonant phrase and dominant harmony. One small volume contains all the published verse of the rest of his life ; but it shows how he had learnt to control the temptations which tended to lead him astray, and guide his fertility towards one high aim. But it is in his later prose that this power of chastening and self-mastery is best seen, ever gaining ground and strengthening his style till he had attained something like perfection in his art. The poet's imagination is always there ; under his touch no discussion is arid ; flashes of insight light up alike the darkness of the subliminal self and the dreary inanities of automatic writing. But



no word is used merely for the effect of the moment ; all subserve the moral end.

It is this ethical tendency which is the real bond between all his published essays. His literary sense was almost abnormally acute ; but his criticism always leads up to one great question, by which he judges alike Virgil and Mazzini, Victor Hugo, Tennyson, Marcus Aurelius and Renan—what attitude does the poet, the historian, the statesman take towards the great riddle of life ? What sense has he of the interaction of the world unseen in the things of this life ? What lesson has genius, the “uprush from the subliminal self,” brought to man from behind the veil ? Even in the essay on *Greek Oracles*, which was I believe the first published of his prose works, this desire for knowledge of the spiritual mysteries was the leading thought—hardly apparent to the careless reader at first, but clearly indicated in the notes added to the later editions. It can be traced through the other essays *Classical and Modern*, till in the later volume, *Science and a Future Life*, it is the avowed and only subject.

Side by side with the ethical interest grows the scientific, till the threefold cord of goodness, truth, and beauty is twined in harmony. Each reinforces the other. Myers became a finer artist not by seeking “Art for art’s sake,” but by using his art for moral and scientific ends at once. Shallow thinkers may at times call him “rhetorical,” because they do not reflect that rhetoric is after all the art of making other men share one’s faith. In this sense Myers was eminently “rhetorical” ; he had to an extraordinary degree the gift of persuasiveness—a gift which is probably even better displayed in his correspondence than in his published work. His sympathetic and emotional nature went quick and straight to an opponent’s point of view ; his skill in language could present his own immediate object even to the coldest adversary as eminently rational and desirable.

But in his best work there is little that even an enemy can call rhetorical. On the contrary, the most remarkable feature in it is, to my mind, the eminently workmanlike style in which he could, when occasion called for it, render a lucid statement of long and often repellent points. Any one of his papers in our *Proceedings* will abundantly show this capacity. If I instance that on *Pseudo-possession* (in Vol. XV., pp. 384-415), it is not because of any special interest or merit to be found in it, but because it is an average—an almost every-

day—specimen of his work, and (with the exception of his memoir of Henry Sidgwick) the last published during his life. It is a discussion of two French medical works, and opens with a studiously unadorned statement of facts. The luminous arrangement will hardly be appreciated by any who have not learnt by experience how hard a task it is to set out clearly in short space essential points picked out from a large mass of recorded observation. But we have not gone far before Myers's humour begins to play round the dull tale of hysteria. The "tragedy of the free breakfast table" (p. 389), is followed by the scene between "the wily psychologist and the common devil" (p. 391); and among the pregnant and trenchant criticisms of the doctrine of metempsychosis our eyes can hardly fail to twinkle as we hear how Victor Hugo "took possession," as his own earlier avatars, "of most of the leading personages of antiquity whom he could manage to string together in chronological sequence." But the whole essay is a masterpiece in scientific treatment of intractable materials. It contains, almost as an *obiter dictum*, Myers's last words on telepathy (pp. 408-410), put with cogency to satisfy the most exigent logician; and it is only on the last page that the burning moral conviction of which we have been half-conscious throughout is allowed to show itself openly in the closing chord of hope—in the assurance on which Myers was never tired of dwelling, that the human race is yet in infancy; that we are "the ancients of the world"; and that all this strange farrago of hysteria, telepathy, automatism, and genius points forwards to the day when our successors "will look on our religions with pity and our science with contempt, while they analyse with a smile our rudimentary efforts at self-realisation, remarking 'how hard a thing it was to found the race of man.'"

It is natural to compare Myers to Ruskin. Both devoted high gifts of genius to high moral ends. Much of *Modern Painters* has like faults with *St. Paul*, and Ruskin like Myers learnt with years the need of self-suppression, though at the last he affected a simplicity which was somewhat overdone. But in two points at least Myers was the finer artist, if indeed the two points are not really one. Myers has the finer gift of humour. Readers of his published *Essays* only would hardly suspect how keen this was; but it was never suppressed when he wrote for our *Proceedings*, or when he gave the S.P.R. or some other congenial audience one of those wonderful addresses, delivered without

note or hesitation, which made us feel that he could, had he chosen, have taken as high a rank among orators as among writers.

And above all Myers was always preaching hope—hope for man in the largest sense. There is in all he wrote not one touch of the peevish dissatisfaction of the prophet in an unworthy age which mars beyond redemption so much of Ruskin's best work. Myers was throughout masculine, and his ever-growing faith in man's life beyond the grave raised him higher and higher above the petty discouragements which to Ruskin seemed to make all his preaching hopeless even while it was being uttered. Myers worked with all his heart for men in the sure and certain hope that his labours, however slow advance might seem, would not in the end be in vain.

It is less possible to appreciate Myers than even Ruskin without insisting on this indissoluble interfusion of literature and morals. The essay on his best-beloved Virgil is perhaps that of all his utterances which gives us most of his literary self. And the very heart of Virgil was to him in the famous speech of Anchises to Aeneas in Elysium (*Aen.* vi. 724-755), where the poet "who meant, as we know, to devote to philosophy the rest of his life after the completion of the *Aeneid*," propounds "an answer to the riddle of the universe in an unexpectedly definite form." This ultimate subordination of form to substance, of art to thought, is the whole story of Myers's literary work. His art gained all the more because it was not pursued as a primary aim, and the obvious rewards of it were little sought. Those only who followed the working of his aspirations will adequately recognise his mastery, and see how for him style was but the expression of his inmost soul. In his wonderful fragments of Virgilian translation he reached his height. The poet who was ever his truest ideal is transfused till the Roman and the Englishman blend in one passion, human and divine, and the triumphant song is taken up and proclaimed again after two thousand years :

"To God again the enfranchised soul must tend,  
He is her home, her Author is her end ;  
No death is hers ; when earthly eyes grow dim  
Starlike she soars and Godlike melts in Him."

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research.

PART XLIII.

MARCH, 1902.

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ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT,

DR. OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.

IN continuing to occupy the Chair for another year I am called upon to address the Society, and I do so under some disadvantage as having not very recently had an opportunity for personal investigation into any important phenomenon about which the Society might be desirous of hearing. Accordingly it appears that I must make some general observations about certain aspects of our work, and must attempt a review of some portions of the situation.

To this end I propose to say something on each of the following topics, though I shall by no means attempt to treat any of them exhaustively:—

- (1) The current explanations of trance lucidity and clairvoyance.
- (2) The strange physical phenomena sometimes accompanying trance.
- (3) The views concerning these ultra-normal human faculties that most appeal to me.

First I will speak of trance lucidity and clairvoyance; whereby I intend just now to signify the fact, the undoubted fact as it appears to me, that under certain conditions the mouth can speak and the hand can write concerning things wholly outside the normal ken of the mind usually controlling them. There are many questions of interest about this process: the muscles of the mouth and hand *appear*

to be stimulated, not from the brain centres dominated by the will, but from some more automatic and less conscious region of the brain, the part ordinarily supposed to be concerned in dreams and in hypnosis and automatisms generally; at any rate the normal customary mind of the writer or speaker does not appear to be drawn upon. And yet there appears to be an operating intelligence, with a character and knowledge of its own. The questions of interest are, What is that operating intelligence? and how is the extra knowledge displayed by it attained?

The chief customary alternative answers to the second question are two:—

(a) By telepathy from living people.

(b) By direct information imparted to it by the continued conscious individual agency of deceased persons.

On each of these hypothetical explanations so much has been said, for and against, that perhaps it is unnecessary to recapitulate the arguments; especially since in that (in every sense) considerable part of the *Proceedings* which has been recently issued, Professor Hyslop has dealt with the whole subject in an elaborate and careful manner; and, for my own part, I wish to express to him my thanks for the great care and labour he has bestowed upon this work, and for the valuable contribution to Science which he has made. I know by experience how troublesome it is, and how much time it consumes, to comment with anything like fulness upon a long series of trance utterances relating to domestic matters about which strangers are naturally quite uninformed and uninterested, and how difficult it is to make appear in the printed record any trace of the human and living interest sometimes vividly felt in the communications themselves by those to whom all the little references and personal traits have been familiar from childhood. No doubt all such records must necessarily appear very dull to strangers, just as a family conversation overheard in a railway carriage, about "Harry" and "Uncle Tom" and "Lucy" and the rest, becomes, if long continued, oppressively wearisome. Patience, however, is one of the virtues which any one aspiring to be a student has to learn. The bulk of Professor Hyslop's Report may deter a good many people from even beginning to read it; but I would point out that a great deal of this bulk consists, not of the record itself, but of comments on it, discussion of hypotheses concerning it, and a record of ingenious experiments undertaken, with the help of students and colleagues at Columbia University, for the purpose of elucidating it; and while the complete record is there for any future student to examine in detail, it is possible for any one skilled in the process of



reading and judicious skipping to make himself acquainted with the main features of Professor Hyslop's weighty and splendid piece of work without reading the whole volume.

This, however, is a digression.

Returning to the subject of trance-lucidity generally, I wish to emphasise my conviction that an explanation based on telepathy as a *vera causa* can be pressed too far. Telepathy is the one ultra-normal human faculty to the reality of which most of those who have engaged in these researches are prepared to assent; that is, to assent to it as a bare fact, a summary of certain observed phenomena; but its laws are unknown and its scope and meaning are not yet apparent. It is probably but one of a whole series of scientifically unrecorded and unrecognised human faculties; and it may turn out to be a mistake to attempt to employ it for the purpose of explaining a great number of other powers, which may be co-extensive or equipollent with itself; though the attempt is a natural and proper one to make. A key must be tried in all locks before we can be sure that it is not a master key; and if it open only one or two, it represents so much gained.

Telepathy itself, however, is in need of explanation. An idea or thought in the mind of one person reverberates and dimly appears in the mind of another. How does this occur? Is it a physical process going on in some physical medium or ether connecting the two brains? Is it primarily a physiological function of the brain, or is it primarily psychological? If psychological only, what does that mean? Perhaps it may not be a direct immediate action between the two minds at all; perhaps there must be an intermediary, —if not a physical medium, then a psychological medium,—or conceivably a third intelligence or mind operating on both agent and percipient, or in communication with both.

Until we can answer these questions,—and for myself I doubt if I have succeeded even in properly formulating them,—it is scarcely possible to regard telepathy, even from the sitter, as a legitimate explanation of much of the clairvoyance or lucidity noticed in trance utterances. It may have to be assumed as the least strained explanation, but it cannot with certainty be definitely asserted to be the correct one, even when it would easily cover the facts; still less is it permissible, except as the vaguest and most groping hypothesis, to press it whenever convenient beyond the limits of experiment into an extrapolated region, and to suppose that the minds of entirely disconnected and unconscious strangers at a distance are actually read: when it has never been experimentally shown that they *can* be read at all.



Those strangers must be supposed to be less familiar with the concerns of the person ostensibly represented as communicating through an entranced medium than he would be himself: why should we seek to go beyond the hypothesis of the agency of his in some way persisting intelligence and postulate the unconscious agency of outside or stranger persons? The reasons for doing so are obvious and may be cogent. It is easy to suppose that living people somewhere are acquainted each with one or two of the facts related by the clairvoyante: and these people exist; whereas we are not by any means so sure of the continued existence of the deceased person who is the ostensible communicator. In fact, that is just the thing we should like to be able to prove; *i.e.*, we should like to ascertain the actual truth concerning it, in a scientific way. Hence, again, I would plead that those of our members who are convinced of continued existence, continued accessible existence, must try to be patient with those of us who are not: impatience of any kind is out of place in this difficult quest, to which in all ages some part of humanity has devoted itself with only personal and not universal satisfaction.

One hypothesis concerning the agency of unembodied spirits is that they themselves temporarily occupy and animate some portion of the body of the medium, and thereby control a sufficient part of the physiological mechanism to convey the message they desire. The impression which such a hypothesis as this makes upon us depends upon the view that we take of our own normal powers: it derives any *prima facie* reasonableness which it may possess from the theory that we ourselves are mental entities, to which the names soul, spirit, etc., have been popularly applied, who may be said to form or accrete, to inhabit and to control a certain assemblage of terrestrial atoms, which we call our bodies; by means of which we, as psychological agents, can manage to convey more or less intelligible messages to other similarly clothed or incarnate intelligences: employing for that purpose such physical processes as the production of aerial vibrations, or the record left by ink traces upon paper.

Given that we are such mental entities or psychological intelligences, with the power of accreting and shaping matter by the act of feeding, we must note in passing the important fact that the manufacture of our bodies, just spoken of, is a feat accomplished by life without mind, or at least with only sub-conscious mind: it is wholly beyond the power of our conscious mind to perform. Feed a child, and in due course unconsciously he becomes a man,—a process beyond our control or understanding and wholly transcending our utmost executive skill.

Note further that it is the same unconscious life, or part of the body, or whatever is the proper term, which manages nearly all the ordinary vital processes, and disposes of our food or gives us indigestion as it sees fit. This may seem a frivolous interlude, but it is important in connection with what follows. It is perhaps obviously important in connection with the whole business of the inter-action between mind and matter.

The hypothesis which seeks to explain the control of a medium's body in trance by the agency of discarnate spirits, presumes that an elaborate machine like our bodies is capable of being occasionally used, not only by the mind or intelligence which manufactured it, so to speak, but temporarily and with difficulty by other minds or intelligences permitted to make use of it.

There are many difficulties here, and one of them is the assumption that such other intelligences exist. But that I confess is to me not a very improbable assumption; for knowing what we already certainly know of the material universe, of its immense scope, and the number of habitable worlds it contains (I do not say inhabited, for that the evidence does not yet reveal, but habitable worlds), realising also the absurdity of the idea that our few senses have instructed us concerning all the possibilities of existence which can be associated in our minds with the generalised idea of "habitable": perceiving also the immense variety of life which luxuriates everywhere on this planet wherever the conditions permit: I find it impossible to deny the probability that there may be in space an immense range of life and intelligence of which at present we know nothing.

Indeed, we ourselves are here on this planet and in this body for only a few score revolutions of the earth round the sun: a thousand months exceeds what we call the "lifetime" of most of us. Where or what we were before, and where or what we shall be after, are questions—intimately and necessarily connected with each other as I believe, and as Plato taught, or allowed himself to appear to teach—which as yet remain unanswered and as some think unanswerable.

But granting the possibility of a far greater and more widespread prevalence of life or mind than we have been accustomed to contemplate—a prevalence as extensive, perhaps, as that of matter—what is the probability that the different classes of life and mind interfere or inter-operate with each other? There is no *a priori* probability either way: it is purely a question for experience and observation.

By observation we learn that as a general rule the visible and

sensible inhabitants of this world are to all appearance left to pursue their own policy undisturbed except by mutual collision, conflict or co-operation. How much of this isolation is apparent, and how much of it is real, I will not now inquire. I believe it would be admitted by philosophers that the *appearance* of isolation and independence would be likely to present itself, even in a world where the reality was guidance and control; and certainly there have at all times been persons, called religious persons, who have felt more or less conscious of directing aid.

So it is with the material worlds:—they sail placidly along in the immensities of space, unimpeded and unhampered; and pluming themselves, perhaps, many of them—those whose physical atmosphere happens to be extra dense, or whose vision is otherwise limited—on the idea of complete, possibly they call it splendid, isolation. But we who see further, through our clearer air,—we, the heirs of Aristarchus, Copernicus, and Galileo, who realise the orbs of space,—know that this apparent freedom is illusory: that all their motions are controlled by a force of which they are unconscious: and that even the outward appearance of isolation, or immunity from external disturbance, is liable to be suddenly and violently terminated; for we know that in the depths of space, every now and then, a substantial encounter with some other similar body occurs—a collision, a catastrophe, and the blaze of what we call a new star: a phenomenon which by persons more closely concerned—persons in the immediate neighbourhood, if such there be—would rather be styled the destruction of an old one.<sup>1</sup>

In the psychological world have we ever experienced any such ultra-normal phenomenon, any interference from without of our normal and placid condition; is there any record of an inrush of intelligence or of moral character beyond the standard of humanity, any avenue to information not normally accessible, any revolution in our ideas of God and of humanity and of the meaning of existence? Have we ever welcomed or maltreated a prophet or a seer of the first magnitude? Or, on a lower level, have we ever had experience, in our family life, of any strange occurrence, apparently, hallucinatory

<sup>1</sup>I am well aware that collision between solid habitable globes must be an extremely rare occurrence, and that collisions between widespread or nebulous masses must be much commoner. But the meaning of what I am saying does not depend on the habitability of the colliding masses, nor does it depend on the relative frequency of collisions; my point is to emphasise the rarity, but at the same time the possibility, of the occurrence.

but yet significant, any vision or voice or communication from friends beyond the normal range, or, it may be, from friends beyond the veil? Or, to go lower down still, have we ever witnessed any movement of material objects which by known causes or by normal inhabitants of this planet have not been moved?

It is a question of evidence whether such things have occurred; and opinions differ. For myself, I think they have. Part of the extra difficulty of accepting evidence for any unusual phenomena is the *a priori* notion that such occurrences are contrary to Natural Law, and are therefore impossible. We cannot, however, clearly tell that they are contrary to natural law; all we can safely say is that they are contrary to natural custom; or, safer still, that they are contrary or supplementary to our own usual experience. That last statement is safe enough; but between that and the adjective "impossible," or the equivalent phrase "contrary to the order of Nature," there is a vast and unfillable gap.

Whence, then, arises the antagonism—the inveterate and, let us hope, expiring antagonism—between orthodox science and the evidence that humanity has at different times adduced, the evidence which our Society has conscientiously worked at, that such occasional irruptions do occur? It arises, I think, because Science has a horror of the unintelligible: it can make nothing of a capricious and disorderly agent, and it prefers to ignore the existence of any such. It is accustomed to simplify its problems by the method of abstraction—that powerful practical method of ignoring or eliminating any causes which are too embarrassing, too complex or too trivial, to be taken into account. And by a long course of successful ignorance it may have acquired a habit of thinking that it can actually exclude, instead of only abstract, these disturbing causes. That, however, is beyond its power. Abstraction is a most useful process, but it can only exclude from consideration; it cannot really exclude from the universe<sup>1</sup> anything too complex or too apparently disorderly. Of course there is no real hesitation on the part of any one to admit such a statement as that; but nevertheless a certain amount of exclusion—exclusion from its own experimental area—science *has* found it possible to exert: and it has exercised this exclusion. If disturbances were frequent, trustworthy science would be almost impossible; life in the laboratory would be like that depicted by the author of *Prehistoric Peeps*, where long-necked reptiles assist at every entertainment.

<sup>1</sup>James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i., p. 77.



So also a little mischief or malice might cause trouble in any scientific laboratory. Introduce a spider or other live animal into the balance or other delicate apparatus of the physicist, and he will for a time be thrown into confusion. Something capricious and disorderly has entered, and spoils everything. This is just the sort of annoyance which a scientific man would feel if suddenly introduced into a traditional séance in full activity. It would, however, be open to a first-rate experimentalist, even if a spider were a perfectly new experience to him, to catch it and tame it and get it to spin webs for his further instrumental convenience; but usually it would be ejected as too confusing, and its study would be left to the biologists. If biologists did not exist, if the live beast were the first ever experienced, and if, subsequent to the confusion, it escaped, it is difficult to see how a narrative of the experience could be received by any scientific society to which it was recounted, except with incredulity, more or less polite.

So, I conceive, could a human being, looking down on an ant world, inflict catastrophe and work miracles of a discomposing character. I suppose that the ordinary ant in populous countries must already have been liable to such irruptions and disturbance of its economy in past history, and may be thought to have accumulated and handed down some legends of such occurrences; but to ants in unexplored countries, the achievements of some shipwrecked mariner might come as a novel and incredible experience. And it may be noted that the performances of humanity could be beyond the powers of the ant community, not only in magnitude, but in kind. For instance, human beings might administer chemicals, or electric shocks, or sunlight concentrated by a lens.

Now, by far the greater number of the physical phenomena which are asserted to take place in the presence of a medium involve nothing in themselves extraordinary: the production of scent, for instance, the introduction of flowers and other objects, movements of furniture, the impress on photographic plates, are all of a nature that can easily be managed by normal means, given time and opportunity; and the only thing requiring explanation is how they are managed under the given conditions, more or less stringently devised to prevent their normal occurrence. This is a familiar old battleground, at which we glance and pass on.

But there is a residue of traditional physical phenomena which involve an effect beyond ordinary human power to accomplish. For instance, the asserted resistance of the human skin and nerves to fire,



usually though not always when under religious emotion or in some trance state; or the extraction of a solid object from a permanently closed box; or, what is much more commonly asserted than the other two, the materialisation or appearance of temporary human forms.

I confess that I myself have never seen any of these things achieved under satisfactory conditions, but the evidence of Sir William Crookes and others for certain of them is very detailed; and it is almost as difficult to resist the testimony as it is to accept the things testified. Moreover, some in this audience must imagine themselves perfectly familiar with all these occurrences.

Let us therefore see whether, in the light of our present knowledge of Physics, they are wholly impossible and absurd, so that no testimony could produce any effect on our incredulity; or whether we may complacently inquire into the evidence, and be prepared to investigate any given case of their occurrence; with care and due scepticism undoubtedly, but not with fixed and impervious minds.

One of the three instances quoted seems in some respects the simplest and most definite, inasmuch as it keeps off the less familiar ground of physiology and biology and touches only on physics. I mean the phenomenon commonly spoken of as the "passage of matter through matter,"—the passage or leakage of one inorganic solid through another, without damage or violence. Asserted instances of this are such as the tying or untying of knots on an endless string, the extraction of a billiard ball from a permanently closed shell, and the linkage together of two closed rings. I have never seen a trustworthy instance of any of these occurrences. I know of rings being put over things apparently too large—a ring on the stem of a wineglass, for instance, or on the leg of a round table, or on a man's wrist,<sup>1</sup>—but I have never seen a permanent and undeniable instance of what may be termed a physical miracle; and I am not aware that there is such a thing on view in the world as, for instance, the linkage of unjoined rings of different kinds of wood: though perhaps the skill of the botanist or tree fancier might manage to accomplish this by constrained growth under favourable conditions. I assume, however, that any natural mode of doing it could be detected by proper botanical examination of the result.

<sup>1</sup>The iron ring on Husk's wrist being believed by Dr. George Wyld to be miraculously small, *i.e.* too small to have ever gone over the hand; see *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. III., p. 460, for an account of an investigation of this phenomenon by Sir William Crookes, Mr. Victor Horsley, and others, who concluded that the ring might have come into the position in which they found it by known natural forces.

A couple of rings of unjoined leather, cut out of a single skin, have been shown linked together; but this linkage can be managed by taking advantage of the thickness of the skin and by judicious cutting. An assemblage of wineglass and egg-cup stems, packed through a hole in a piece of wood, has been produced in Berlin, and has been kindly lent for our inspection; but though this is asserted to have been produced under supernormal conditions, it is certainly only of the nature of a moderately ingenious mechanical contrivance involving skilled and deceptive construction. A similar object, consisting of a wooden ring on the neck of a glass vase, recently constructed (quite normally) in Sir William Crookes's laboratory, I am also permitted to exhibit.

But concerning the abnormal "passage of matter through matter," I am not aware that Sir William Crookes has ever testified to any instance of it; the only scientific evidence that I am acquainted with was that given by Professor Zöllner, which, though extremely curious and puzzling and detailed, does not leave a feeling of conviction on the unprejudiced mind.

Accordingly, the simplest thing for me, or any other scientific man at the present day, is to treat the case of matter through matter as not only unproven but as impossible, and to decline to consider it. Nevertheless, so many extraordinary things have happened that I would not feel too certain that we may not some day have to provide a niche for something of this kind. If so, one hardly likes to suggest that the recently-discovered probably complex structure of the material atom, with interspaces very large in proportion to the aggregate bulk of its actual constituents, may have to be appealed to, in order to explain the hypothetical interpenetration of two solids. At present, however, the difficulties of any such hypothesis are enormous, and I confess myself an entire sceptic as to the occurrence of any such phenomenon, and should require extremely cogent evidence to convince me.

But it may be said, Do I find movements of untouched objects, or do I find materialisations, any easier of belief? Yes, I do. I am disposed to maintain that I have myself witnessed, in a dim light, occasional abnormal instances of these things; and I am certainly prepared to entertain a consideration of them.

Suppose an untouched object comes sailing or hurtling through the air, or suppose an object is raised or floated from the ground, how are we to regard it? This is just what a live animal could do, and so the first natural hypothesis is that some live thing is doing it; (*a*) the

medium himself, acting by trick or concealed mechanism; (b) a confederate,—an unconscious confederate perhaps among the sitters; (c) an unknown and invisible live entity other than the people present. If in any such action the ordinary laws of nature were superseded, if the weight of a piece of matter could be shown to have *disappeared*, or if fresh energy were introduced beyond the recognised categories of energy, then there would be additional difficulties; but hitherto there has been no attempt to establish either of these things. Indeed it must be admitted that insufficient attention is usually paid to this aspect of ordinary commonplace abnormal physical phenomena. If a heavy body is raised under good conditions, we should always try to ascertain (I do not say that it is easy to ascertain) where its weight has gone to; that is to say, what supports it, what ultimately supports it. For instance, if experiments were conducted in a suspended room, would the weight of that room, as ascertained by an outside balance, remain unaltered when a table or person was levitated inside it? or could the agencies operating inside affect bodies outside?—questions these which appear capable of answer, with sufficient trouble, in an organised psychical laboratory: such a laboratory as does not, I suppose, yet exist, but which might exist, and which will exist in the future, if the physical aspect of experimental psychology is ever to become recognised as a branch of orthodox physics.

Or take materialisations. I do not pretend to understand them, but, as I have hinted in an earlier part of this Address, if ever genuine and objective, they may after all represent only a singular and surprising modification of a known power of life. Somewhat as a mollusc, or a crustacean, or a snail can extract material from the water or from its surroundings wherewith to make a shell, or—a closer analogy—just as an animal can assimilate the material of its food and convert it into muscle, or hair, or skin, or bone, or feathers—a process of the utmost marvel, but nevertheless an everyday occurrence,—so I could conceive it possible, if the evidence were good enough, that some other intelligence or living entity, not ordinarily manifest to our senses, though possibly already in constant touch with our physical universe by reason of possessing what may be called an etherial body, could for a time utilise the terrestrial particles which come in its way, and make for itself a sort of material structure capable of appealing to our ordinary senses. The thing is extremely unlikely, but it is not altogether unimaginable. Nor is it physically impossible that some of these temporary semi-material accretions might be inadequate to appeal to our eyes and yet be of a kind able to

impress a photographic plate; but here I confess that the evidence, to my mind, wholly breaks down, and I have never yet seen a satisfying instance of what is termed a spirit photograph; nor is it easy to imagine the kind of record, apart from testimony, which in such a case would be convincing; unless such photographs could be produced at will.

The evidence for photographs of invisible people which we sometimes hear adduced as adequate is surprisingly feeble. For instance, in a recent anonymous and weak book, said to be written by a member of this Society, two such photographs are reproduced which are said to have been obtained under what are considered crucial conditions; but the narrative itself at once suggests a simple trick on the part of the photographer, viz., the provision of backgrounds for sitters with vague human forms all ready depicted on them in sulphate of quinine.

The ingenious and able impositions of a conjurer are *cause verissima*, and full allowance must be made for them. Some of the physical phenomena which I have adduced as among those proclaimed to have occurred, such as *apports*, scent, movement of objects, passage of matter through matter,<sup>1</sup> bear a perilous resemblance to conjuring tricks, of a kind fairly well known; which tricks if well done can be very deceptive. Hence extreme caution is necessary, and full control must be allowed to the observers,—a thing which conjurers never really allow: I have never seen a silent and genuinely-controlled conjurer: and in so far as mediums find it necessary to insist on their own conditions, so far they must be content to be treated as conjurers. Honest and good people are often the most readily deceived, especially by protestations and by injured innocence: so certain Members and Associates of this Society must be good enough to pardon the rest of us for being, as they think, stupidly and absurdly sceptical about the reality of many phenomena in which they themselves strongly believe. “Facts are chiefs that winna ding,” says Robert Burns. So is belief. One cannot coerce belief. And it is difficult sometimes to adduce satisfying reasons for either the faith or the incredulity that is in us on any particular topic.

One is frequently asked by casual and irresponsible persons: Do you *believe* in so and so? usually: Do you believe in ghosts?—a question which ordinarily has no meaning in the mind of the asker, and to

A technical phrase which I do not justify and do not trouble to improve upon until convinced of the genuineness of the kind of occurrence intended by that ruse.



which a categorical reply, either yes or no, would convey no real information. The best answer to such a question is that belief is not our business, but that investigation is; and if any answer beyond that is to be given to a stranger, it must take the form of a question asking for a definition of the terms used,—a stage beyond which the casual inquirer can rarely go.

But suppose he can, and is not a flippant inquirer, with an eye to ridicule, or a comic article in the Press. This Society, for instance, is not in the position of a casual and irresponsible inquirer; almost every grade of opinion, and probably almost every grade of intelligence, exists among its members; indeed it would be only wholesome in the present state of our knowledge if each one of us held a different shade of opinion. Moreover, some of our members must have devoted the greater part of a lifetime to the subject, and must be far more experienced than myself; but still if any one cares to hear what sort of conviction has been borne in upon my own mind, as a scientific man, by some 20 years' familiarity with those questions which concern us, I am very willing to reply as frankly as I can.

First, then, I am, for all personal purposes, convinced of the persistence of human existence beyond bodily death; and though I am unable to justify that belief in a full and complete manner, yet it is a belief which has been produced by scientific evidence; that is, it is based upon facts and experience, though I might find it impossible to explain categorically how the facts have produced that conviction. Suffice it to say for the present that it is not in a simple and obvious way, nor one that can be grasped in an hour or two, except by those who have seriously studied the subject, and are consequently equally entitled to an opinion of their own.

For if asked: Do I associate physical movements and other physical phenomena with the continued existence of deceased persons? I must answer I do not. The phenomena always occur in the presence of the living, and the natural supposition at first is that the living in some unknown way produced them; that, in so far as they are not tricks, they represent an unexpected and unrecognised extension of human muscular faculty;—a faculty which, by the way, though we are well accustomed to it, is itself, in its quite normal manifestations, a most noteworthy phenomenon, and philosophically considered of extreme significance; though it would take too long to bring out the full meaning of what I here suggest. Suffice it to say that by the action of live things the ordinary processes of the degradation



or dissipation of energy can be diverted or suspended or reversed<sup>1</sup>; weights can be raised which inorganically would have fallen; rivers can be deflected, and the face of the earth changed; and, most surprising of all, a conclave of persons can sit and decide, or to all appearance decide, whether a certain thing shall happen or shall not.

If pressed, I must confess that I do not see how the hypothesis of the continued existence of human personalities, so long as they are disconnected with bodies and muscles, is any real help in explaining ultra-normal physical movements; except that since the movements show traces of what we ordinarily speak of as will and intelligence, they do suggest the agency of live things of some kind.

But then I see no reason for limiting the possibilities of existence—it may be of inter-planetary or of extraspatial existence—to those friends of ours who have recently inhabited this planet.

Eliminating physical phenomena therefore for the present, suppose that I am asked further: Do you consider that trance-utterances are ever due to the agency of departed persons? I am bound to say that, as regards the content or intelligence of the message, I have known cases which do very strongly indicate some form of access to a persistent portion of the departed personality; and occasionally, though rarely, the actual psychical agency of a deceased person is indicated.

But if by agency my hearers understand me to mean in all cases conscious agency, direct communication with full consciousness of what is going on, they must allow me to explain that of that in most cases I am extremely doubtful. It seems to me much more often like a dream intelligence or a sub-conscious part of the persistent mind that we have access to, not a conscious part. It appears to me still a true kind of telepathy; and telepathy from, as well as to, a sub-conscious stratum. This use of the term is an extension of its ordinary one, but it is an extension which appears to be required. (See Mrs. Sidgwick, *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. XV., pp. 17, 18.)

The medium when awakened does not usually remember, is not really conscious of, the communication which has been spoken or written: not until he or she returns to the state of trance. Nor should I expect the ostensible communicator, so long as he is anything like ourselves, to remember or to be properly conscious of what has been, as it were, drawn from his memory, until he too returns once more into the same dream-like or semi-conscious or sub-conscious condition. There may be all grades of recollection, however; analogous

<sup>1</sup>Witness "Maxwell's demons" in theory, and nitrifying bacteria in what is now accepted as botanical fact.

to the various grades of reminiscence of ordinary dreams, as and after we wake.

Moreover, it appears as if the portion of the deceased person which, on this hypothesis, is once more in a manner materialised for us, and with which we hold communication, is sometimes but a very fragmentary portion<sup>1</sup>; so fragmentary that if at some other or at the same time the same ostensible individual is operating through another medium elsewhere, the two portions are, I believe, sometimes unaware of what each is, so to speak, saying, and are liable to deny each other's genuineness. Occasionally, however, in my experience, there has been an indication that the bare fact of simultaneous communication through two mediums is known or felt; and I urge that more experiments and observations are needed in this direction, which will, I hope, prove an extremely helpful line of research if only it can be worked. The difficulties are obviously great and the opportunities few. Anyhow it will be agreed that this double communication from ostensibly one intelligence, with the contents of each message unknown to the other communicator, is an interesting and instructive phenomenon, if it is real, and one that fits in excellently with Mr. Myers' luminous hypothesis of the subliminal self.

For, to tell truth, I do not myself hold that the whole of any one of us is incarnated in these terrestrial bodies; certainly not in childhood; more, but perhaps not so very much more, in adult life. What is manifested in this body is, I venture to think likely, only a portion, an individualised, a definite portion, of a much larger whole. What the rest of me may be doing, for these few years while I am here, I do not know: perhaps it is asleep; but probably it is not so entirely asleep with men of genius; nor, perhaps, is it all completely inactive with the people called "mediums."

Imagination in science is permissible, provided one's imaginings are not treated as facts, nor even theories, but only as working hypotheses,—a kind of hypothesis which, properly treated, is essential to the progress of every scientific worker. Let us imagine, then, as a working hypothesis, that our subliminal self—the other and

<sup>1</sup>Probably these limitations are all due to imperfections of the physical mechanism, or rather to the difficulty of controlling it under the given circumstances,—

(a) of controlling it at all,

(b) of controlling it solely, *i.e.* unconfused with other influences,

(c) of controlling it continuously, without breaks analogous to wandering of attention;

but whatever the limitations are due to, they are interesting and instructive.

greater part of us—is in touch with another order of existence, and that it is occasionally able to communicate, or somehow, perhaps unconsciously, transmit to the fragment in the body, something of the information accessible to it. This guess, if permissible, would contain a clue to a possible explanation of clairvoyance. We should then be like icebergs floating in an ocean, with only a fraction exposed to sun and air and observation: the rest—by far the greater bulk—submerged in a connecting medium, submerged and occasionally in subliminal or sub-aqueous contact with others, while still the peaks, the visible bergs, are far separate.<sup>1</sup>

“We feel that we are greater than we know.”

Or, reversing the metaphor, we might liken our present state to that of the hulls of ships submerged in a dim ocean among many strange beasts, propelled in a blind manner through space; proud, perhaps, of accumulating many barnacles as decoration; only recognising our destination by bumping against the dock wall; and with no cognisance of the deck and the cabins, the spars and the sails, no thought of the sextant and the compass and the captain, no perception of the look-out on the mast, of the distant horizon, no vision of objects far ahead, dangers to be avoided, destinations to be reached, other ships to be spoken with by other means than bodily contact,—a region of sunshine and cloud, of space, of perception, and of intelligence, utterly inaccessible to the parts below the waterline.

Incidentally, if one were permitted rather rashly to speculate, it might be suggested that most of the disputes about re-incarnation could be hypothetically reconciled by this hypothesis of the subliminal self. Not the same individual portion need perhaps be incarnated again, but another phase of the whole; and so gradually each aspect might acquire the experience, the submerged experience, so to speak, and the practical training, obtainable by incarnate life on one of the vagrant lumps of matter known as habitable planets.

So also are the difficulties of birth and recent childhood, recent nonentity, minimised by the subliminal self hypothesis. The suggestion is an obvious one that as a body becomes gradually ready and the child grows, so more and more of the total personality *leaks*, as it were, into it, until we get the adult individual as we know him: sometimes more of the whole—what we call a great man: sometimes

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it may not be superfluous to say that an iceberg floats with only about  $\frac{1}{12}$ th of its bulk above water.

less—a deficient man. And death is the rejoining and re-uniting of the temporarily almost dissevered and curiously educated fraction to the whole. Shall such a mental entity be only capable of complete and thorough incarnation? Shall it never in some dreamy and semi-conscious or unconscious state influence another body, or take any physical part in the scenes in which for a time it was so interested? The opportunities appear to be scarce, and the phenomenon is rare; but who is to say that it is non-existent; and who shall say that the fact that the communications are vague, hesitating, uncertain, sometimes mistaken, and never complete,—though no doubt there are several grades towards completeness,—goes to prove that the residue is not genuine? It is occasionally almost like trying to hold a conversation with some one in his sleep: it is hard to judge of a personality by that sort of test. Indeed, there are all grades of brilliancy even in our own waking complete selves: not always are we at our best; and odd conceptions might be formed of our intelligence if a stranger judged us by our remarks on the weather or the crops. I am told that Browning spoke in quite a commonplace manner concerning the weather.

How often have we not found that the utterances of some eminent person, even in his full bodily manifestation, do not come up to our idea of him: an idea perhaps based on an acquaintance with a record of his more fully developed personality in moments of inspiration. There is a tale concerning Tennyson which I recently heard; it may not be true, but it is quite possible. A lady, a worshipper of Tennyson, and long desirous of seeing him, was once to her great joy invited to a dinner at which he sat opposite to her, and she listened open-eared for his conversation. He spoke very little, however, being apparently in an uninspired mood, not to say a grumpy humour; and the only phrase she distinctly caught was, "I like my mutton in chunks." That lady might easily have gone away convinced that she had been the victim of a fraud, and that some unpoetic person had been palmed off on her as "the bard," after the manner of the dinner party in *The Golden Butterfly*.

The fact that a "control" who frequently sends messages, brings with him each time only the memory of previous messages through the same medium, and is unaware of his other supposed manifestations through other mediums, is very suggestive of what we know concerning secondary and multiple personalities. The complete or complex personality itself may perhaps know all about them all; but with this complete personality we seem unable to get into com-



munication; we can so far only reach the fragments, and through different mediums different fragments, as if—speaking of it as a kind of incarnation,—as if the temporary incarnation were affected or regulated by the kind of body occupied, and could not manifest in identical fashion when constrained by the limitations of different instruments just as an executive musician would naturally appeal to different emotions if given, alternately, a violin, a cornet, a flute, and a concertina. We can hardly expect, on any view, to reach more than what we have supposed to be the fraction which had been manifested here in the flesh during earth life, but it appears as if we could not reach so much as that—only a fragment of that. The specially adapted and educated body and brain which it was wont to use is no longer available,—the organ is broken, and the organist is asked to manifest his identity on the harmonium of a country church.

But neither telepathy nor yet the agency of deceased persons is able to explain the asserted power of true clairvoyance properly so-called: the perception of things unknown to every mind of a human order<sup>1</sup>; nor prediction of a kind other than inference.<sup>2</sup> These are great subjects, and I have something to say about them too, though whether it is worth saying at the present time is very doubtful, for I am not by any means convinced that either of these things ever occurs. I will only say, therefore, in general, that the vague hypothesis of a world-soul, or an immanent Mind, of which even the totality of ourselves are only microscopic fragments, as our ordinarily known selves have been supposed to be more substantial fragments of our entire selves—a Mind to which space and time are not the barriers and limitations which they appear to us—a Mind to which the past, present, and future are not indeed all one, but yet in a manner perceivable at will as a simultaneity as well as a sequence, and in which no transit or travel is necessary to pass from one place to another,—I must say that a vague hypothesis of this kind—a notion familiar to all philosophers—is often forced across

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the reading of numbers or letters grasped at random and thrown into a bag; or of a piece of newspaper torn out anywhere and sealed up without having been looked at, and the residuc promptly burnt; if such a thing ever occurs.

<sup>2</sup> If such a thing is conceivable as real prevision not deducible from a wide knowledge or survey of contemporaneous events; for instance, the winner of a neck-and-neck race, or the exact date of some optional and as yet undecided event. But these are not good instances, for it must be assumed *possible* that the predicting agency might act so as to bring about fulfilment.



my vision as I think over the problems of this great and wonderful universe.

To suppose that we know it all: to suppose that we have grasped its main outlines, that we realise pretty completely not only what is in it, but the still more stupendous problem of what is not and cannot be in it—is a presumptuous exercise of limited intelligence, only possible to a certain very practical and useful order of brain, which has good solid work of a commonplace kind to do in the world, and has been restricted in its outlook, let us say by Providence, in order that it may do that one thing and do it well. Some of these gnostic persons have been men of science, others have been men of letters, some of them again politicians and men of business: some few of them have called themselves philosophers,<sup>1</sup> but the world has not thought them its greatest philosophers. The instinct of the world in the long run, though only in the long run, is to be trusted; and the great men whom it has picked out as philosophers of the very first magnitude—the philosopher Plato, of the older time, and the philosopher Kant, of the more modern era—did not so limit their conception of the possible; nor have the greatest poets, those whom humanity has canonised among its greatest poets—Virgil, let us say, and Wordsworth and Tennyson—neither have they looked with dim beclouded eyes on the present of the universe, or on the past and the future of man.

Hear Tennyson on the origin of life and the antecedents of human existence:—

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that true world within the world we see,  
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore.

<sup>1</sup> One cannot but sympathise to some extent with those philosophers who urge that the progress of humanity has been achieved by attention to a development of our full consciousness, and that reversion to the subconscious or to dream states is a step back. It must be noted, however, that the adjective “subliminal,” as we understand it, is not suggestive of subordinate or subsidiary, but is far more nearly related to “sublime”: a statement which, considered objectively, the philosophers in question would probably disallow. If they mean that for the active and practical concerns of life consciousness must be our guide and our adviser, I am with them; but if they mean (as I am sure they do not, when pressed) that inspiration is attained through consciousness, or that it is unlawful and unfruitful to investigate the subconscious, where (I suggest) lie the roots of the connection between mind and matter; then I must join issue with them. So might an iceberg, glorying in its crisp solidity and sparkling pinnacles, resent attention paid to its submerged subliminal supporting region, or to the saline liquid out of which it arose, and into which in due course it will some day return.

Hear him also on the present, and on the possibilities of inter-communion :—

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once was Man,  
But cannot wholly free itself from Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen ; the veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.

And yet again on the future, and the ultimate reconciliation of matter and mind :—

And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet  
No phantoms, watching from a phantom shore  
Await the last and largest sense to make  
The phantom walls of this illusion fade,  
And show us that the world is wholly fair.

A quotation from Virgil, as translated by Mr. Myers, may be permitted even to one who has no claim to be a scholar. It is from the speech of Anchises, in Book VI. of the *Æneid*, in reply to Æneas's question whether the departed ever wish to return to the flesh ; and Anchises, while maintaining that the flesh was a burden well cast off, takes occasion to assert the essential unity of life and of mind throughout the universe :—

One Life through all the immense creation runs,  
One Spirit is the moon's, the sea's, the sun's ;  
All forms in the air that fly, on the earth that creep,  
And the unknown nameless monsters of the deep—  
Each breathing thing obeys one Mind's control,  
And in all substance is a single Soul.

And, lastly, let us hear Wordsworth in that immortal *Ode* which hymns the Platonic doctrine of life and an ever-present though seldom realised connecting link between the diverse orders of existence :—

Hence in a season of calm weather  
Though inland far we be,  
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither,  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the Children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Meanwhile, what have we to do ? To inquire, to criticise, to discover, but also to live,—to live this life here and now : aided thereto, it may be, by a laboriously acquired certainty that it is only an

interlude in a more splendid drama. With some people, belief has preceded and frustrated inquiry: others there are with whom investigation has resulted in belief: and yet again others to whom belief continues unattainable in spite of conscientious effort and research. Those who feel assured of a future existence may be thankful; but those who cannot feel so assured, with them also it is well, if they apply their energies to service on this earthly plane, and reap the wholesome and natural joys accessible to us in our present state.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.



# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research.

PART XLIV.

JUNE, 1902.

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### PROCEEDINGS OF GENERAL MEETINGS.

THE 111th General Meeting of the Society was held at the Westminster Town Hall on Friday, March 8th, 1901, at 8.30 p.m.; the PRESIDENT, DR. OLIVER LODGE, in the chair.

Papers were read in memory of Mr. F. W. H. Myers by the President, Professor William James, Professor Charles Richet, and Mr. Frank Podmore. These were afterwards published in full in the *Proceedings*, Part XLII.

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The 112th General Meeting was held in the same place on Friday, April 19th, 1901, at 4 p.m.; the PRESIDENT in the chair.

DR. F. VAN EEDEN read part of his "Account of Sittings with Mrs. Thompson," which is printed below.

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The 113th General Meeting was held in the same place on Friday, May 17th, 1901, at 8.30 p.m.; MR. FRANK PODMORE in the chair.

DR. ABRAHAM WALLACE read a paper entitled "Difficulties and Disappointments in the Practical Application of Psychical Research;—the case of the missing stock-broker, Mr. Percy L. Foxwell."

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The 114th General Meeting was held in the same place on Friday, June 14th, 1901, at 4 p.m.; DR. WALTER LEAF in the chair.

MR. FRANK PODMORE read part of a paper by DR. R. HODGSON on "Some Cases of Secondary Personality."



The 115th General Meeting was held in the Banqueting Hall, St. James' Restaurant, on Friday, November 29th, 1901, at 4 p.m.; the PRESIDENT in the chair.

A paper, communicated by MR. J. G. PIDDINGTON, and entitled "A Record of Two Sittings with Mrs. Thompson," was read by Mr. Piddington and Mr. N. W. Thomas. This paper is printed below.

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The 116th General Meeting was held in the Westminster Town Hall on Friday, January 31st, 1902, at 5 p.m.; the PRESIDENT in the chair.

The PRESIDENT delivered an Address, which has since appeared in the *Proceedings*, Part XLIII.

## I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORTS OF SITTINGS WITH  
MRS. THOMPSON.

BY DR. OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.

FROM time to time an oral account has been given at meetings of the Society by various members of their experiences with the lady living at Hampstead, Mrs. Thompson, who has been good enough to allow a few personally introduced friends to sit with her for the purpose of observing and recording the phenomena of so-called mediumship which developed themselves in connection with her ; but so far no publication in the *Proceedings* of any of these records has been made.

This delay is in accordance with the usual practice of the Society in dealing with the most important cases which come under its investigation, opportunity being thus afforded for fuller light, in whatever direction, to manifest itself. Mrs. Piper was under investigation for several years before any report of her powers was published ; and though her case was different, being that of a paid medium, it is obvious that the same kind of caution should be exercised, and similar opportunity for growing experience should, if possible, be afforded, in any case which appears to be of the first evidential rank.

The records of sittings with Mrs. Thompson now published constitute only a small proportion of the whole, but they represent some of those of which the notes were most carefully and exactly made ; and they give a fair idea or sample of the nature of the phenomenon—both at its best and at its worst,—though indeed some private episodes in unreported sittings are held, by those with personal knowledge of them, to be far superior to any here recorded.

The delay in this case has been useful since it has afforded opportunity for Dr. Hodgson to have six sittings with Mrs. Thompson. These appear to have been of the kind above denominated “worst,” and his report is decidedly unfavourable ; indeed, he is strongly of opinion that there was nothing of any value in them at all, and that they suggest that in other cases also knowledge believed to have been

of supernormal origin might be traced to normal sources of information if the sitters had been equally competent. This being so, it is important to have the fact recorded in our first publication; and it has been the wish of Mrs. Thompson herself that everything, whether favourable or unfavourable, should be impartially published. Reference to her letter in the *Journal* for November, 1901, will show the admirable position which she takes up in such matters; her object has been to help in our quest, to this end she has given up much time and taken much trouble; and anything in the nature of suppression, either of suspicious circumstances or of hostile criticism, would be resented by her, just as it would be contrary to the whole spirit and traditions of the Society.

In these phenomena the first question is, whether the information given is so far in accordance with facts as to be worthy of consideration. Of this the reader can judge fairly from the records, so that no time need be spent in discussing it. But it is impossible to state fully—because no one knows, or can know—the exact circumstances under which the knowledge was obtained and given out by the medium. The value of the evidence, therefore, depends partly on the honesty of the medium and partly on the competence of the observers. The latter point may be judged of indirectly from the records, which show what precautions were taken, (*a*) to prevent information reaching the medium by normal means, (*b*) to distinguish information that could have reached her normally from that which apparently could not.

The honesty of the medium is a more difficult problem; because we must recognise the possibility that she might either consciously or unconsciously present knowledge obtained by ordinary means as if it were acquired supernormally, which is precisely what in these cases is meant by “deceit.” It is not customary in ordinary life to associate this word with any subconscious or unconscious condition, nor is it customary to analyse it or to do anything but simply anathematise it, and it may seem highly dangerous to be prepared to do anything else; yet on consideration it will be perceived that every piece of information given must be acquired somehow, and the whole interest of the phenomenon from our present point of view depends primarily on whether the information was acquired normally or not. The first question before us is whether the source of information can be shown to be supernormal; it is therefore necessary to assume that whenever the knowledge *could* have been acquired normally it was so acquired. Hence a discussion of normal means of obtaining information, and how far they may be presumed to go, becomes of the essence of the question.

In fairness to a medium, it must be admitted that it is not always easy to be certain of the limits of the power of normal acquisition, or to set bounds to the power of our organs of sense, so as to be able to discriminate clearly where sense-perception merges into a form of clairvoyance or crystal-vision lucidity. Thus, take the case of a lady who, holding an unwrapped copy of the *Times* before her face to act as a fire screen, saw a few hours later in a glass sphere an announcement of a death which subsequent investigation showed to be contained in its obituary column (see *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. V., p. 507; a similar case also in the *Journal S.P.R.*, vol. I., p. 246); it would, of course, have to be assumed that she had obtained the information through normal vision with her eyes, even though genuinely unconscious of the fact. Or take, again, the case where the contents of a letter, delivered into the post-box of a house, becomes known in a dream to a person who believes himself to have remained in bed, normally quite unaware of any such letter (I cannot now find a record of the case of which this is my recollection; but there is something like it in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. I., p. 375; also vol. II., pp. 385 and 444; also in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. XIV., pp. 279 and 280); the hypothesis would at least have to be considered that in a state of somnambulism he had read the letter and sealed it up again, for some other member of the family to open later.

Or take the case of Mrs. Piper, who ostensibly read part of a letter, which I gave her, by the process of undoing it and applying it to the top of her head: it would have to be assumed that she had glimpsed its contents by her normal eyesight, unless evidence to the contrary were strong. Such a case might, of course, be one of conscious fraud: the application of the letter to the top of the head being then a mere deceitful artifice to divert attention from the real intervals of normal reading.

Nevertheless it is quite imaginable, in any given case, that the medium might genuinely think she had got the whole of the information in a supernormal way, while the truth was that some part of it, or even the whole, had been really obtained normally, or, if not quite normally, yet by hyperæsthesia—extra quickness of the appropriate sense organs.

It needs but a small acquaintance with hypnotic and automatic phenomena to be well aware that the hypnotic subject or automatist is frequently deceived as to the source of his impressions; not only may he suppose that an impression originated in his own mind when it really came from without (*e.g.* from the hypnotist) or *vice versa*; but also he may suppose it came through one sense when it provably came

through another. A little careful analysis of our own experience will show that we sometimes make similar errors as to the sources of impressions in ordinary daily life. Examples of the kind referred to are contained in the *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. IV., pp. 532-4. In the first case a boy appeared to read clairvoyantly or telepathically the number of the page of a book held facing the agent, but with its back to the boy; and when asked to indicate the place where the number was, pointed to the back of the book just opposite the number's true position. Nevertheless there is reason to believe that the number was really seen reflected in the cornea of the eye of the "agent" or person facing him, though this image would certainly be an extremely small thing to read, and could hardly be legible to a person not somewhat hypersensitive. Nevertheless M. Bergson, who observed the fact and suggested this explanation, felt sure that the boy's real belief was in accordance with his own statement, and accordingly supposes it to be a case of *simulation inconscient*.

The second example is referred to more at length in the *Journal S.P.R.*, vol. I., p. 84, where Mrs. Sidgwick reports on a case of reading or glimpsing with elaborately bandaged eyes through chinks so small and deceptive that the observer could hardly tell with which eye he was dimly seeing, and might conceivably be unaware that he was seeing in a normal way at all.

Certainly in cases of hypnosis, where suggestion may be dominant, it is easy to suppose that the subject may believe himself to be receiving impressions in any way which is either actually or artificially in the mind of the operator; and it is a familiar fact that suggestions which are given in one state often take effect as if they were quite spontaneous when the subject has entered another state, no connection between the two states being remembered. (See a number of curious instances observed and recorded by Mr. Gurney in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. IV., pp. 268 *et seq.*)

There is therefore a further difficulty when an attempt is made to discriminate between what a medium knows in her own proper person and what she knows in trance or in her secondary personality. In hypnotic experience it is usually found possible to distinguish these two reservoirs of knowledge or memory from each other, and to find that they are independent, or at least that they consistently simulate independence. There seem to be all grades of this independence of memory in different states. (See especially Gurney's article in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. IV., p. 518, etc.; also the report by Dr. Milne Bramwell, vol. XII., pp. 193-5; see also, for something of the same



sort in secondary personality, the Léonie case, vol. V., p. 397.) But such a hypothesis is too dangerous and lax to be applied to the present instance. It is quite *possible* that the entranced medium may not be fully aware of some things that have been told to the medium in her ordinary state; but for evidential purposes it must obviously always be assumed otherwise. Everything known to the normal Mrs. Thompson must be considered equally known to the ostensible "control" speaking with Mrs. Thompson's mouth.

If it had been found in any one case that she had deliberately deceived a sitter, this would of course throw grave doubt on all other cases, even those in which it appeared that no deceit was possible. Now, she does, when in trance, often refer to facts known to her when in her normal condition; the "control" seeming sometimes aware, and sometimes unaware, whether the facts are so known or not. But the sitters who have had most experience of her trances (especially Mr. Piddington and Mrs. Verrall) have been struck by her constantly telling them—either during the trance or afterwards—that certain facts were so known to her normal state, and are not to be regarded as supernormally known. Instances of this will be found in the narratives which follow.

On the other hand, there are cases in which, without any such warning to the sitters, she has made statements about special facts as if they came to her supernormally which (*a*) she *might* have learnt (*e.g.* Miss Harrison's names, see Mrs. Verrall's paper, pp. 208-210) or (*b*) there is strong evidence that she *did* learn by normal means. Cases like these are what in the subsequent discussion we call "suspicious circumstances," and it is on them that Dr. Hodgson's unfavourable judgment depends.

As I have already indicated, persons who are familiar with automatic phenomena will admit that it is *possible* that Mrs. Thompson might have learnt these facts unconsciously and given them out with no deliberate intention to deceive. And in favour of this it may be urged that a witness who watched an incident of the kind (see below, p. 162) had the impression that it was to be so interpreted. On the other hand, Dr. Hodgson, who did not see such an incident occur, but had strong reason to think it had occurred, believes that Mrs. Thompson acted consciously and deliberately. Plainly, each reader must be left to form his own judgment on these incidents.

Whatever view is taken, we must all admit that a certain amount of what may, in the technical sense, be called "deception" is involved, or is liable to be involved, in the phenomenon for the reasons above given.

This deception need not in any case be voluntary, and its occurrence may depend on a certain want of co-ordination between different strata of personality in the medium—if it be supposed that a “control” is a secondary personality,—so that information conveyed from one stratum may be received and given forth as a genuine supernormal message by another stratum, having been misinterpreted and perhaps distorted in the process of transfer.

It must be noted, however, that in the case of Mrs. Thompson such instances of apparently unconscious transmission of information, without cognisance of its source, seem to have been only occasional, and do not in any way suggest the existence of an organised subliminal fraudulent scheme; nor do they indicate an elaborately organised and complex scheme of subliminal romance, such as Professor Flournoy experienced in the case of Héléne Smith, many of the elements in which he traced to normal sources, though there was every reason to suppose that the medium was unaware of their real origin.

I myself have been accorded opportunities of sitting with Mrs. Thompson many times, sometimes with Mr. Myers, sometimes alone, and I have become impressed with her absolute sincerity, and real desire, not always successful, to avoid every normal assistance or other aid; which aid, when employed, while it may for the moment fictitiously appear to improve the phenomenon, really undermines its most essential feature.

I propose now first to quote, from the Report of the Psychological Congress in Paris, Mr. Myers' general introduction; then to give the series of Dr. Van Eeden, and of the sitter known as Mr. Wilson; then to give Dr. Hodgson's report, together with some observations of a similar character, as noted by Miss Johnson; and to conclude with the series of Mrs. Verrall.

It is not to be supposed that this collection represents any large proportion of all the work that Mrs. Thompson has been good enough to do for the Society, but it is all that we propose to publish at the present time.

## II.

## ON THE TRANCE-PHENOMENA OF MRS. THOMPSON.

BY THE LATE F. W. H. MYERS.<sup>1</sup>

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*Introduction.*

I.—Trance is a name applied to a form of automatism, whether healthy or morbid, in which the automatist appears to be in some way altered, or even asleep, but in which he may speak or write certain matter of which his normal personality is ignorant at the time, and which it rarely remembers on his return to waking life. If there appears to be not merely a *modification* but a *substitution* of personality in the trance, it is called *possession*. Trance occurs spontaneously in so-called somnambulism, as a result of disease in hysteria, and as a result of suggestion, etc., in hypnotic states. A fuller analysis shows classes which slide into each other in various ways.

1. The trance may be simulated and the utterances fraudulent; the facts which they contain having been previously learnt, or being acquired at the time by a "fishing" process.

This is usually the case with professional *clairvoyantes*.

2. The trance may be genuine, but morbid; and the utterances incoherent or in other ways degenerative, even when showing memory or accuracy greater than normal.

This is the case in hysteria, so-called demoniacal possession, etc. This group of cases has been admirably analysed by Drs. Pierre Janet, Binet, etc., in France: Drs. Breuer and Freud, etc., in Austria: and elsewhere.

3. The trance may be genuine and healthy, and the utterances coherent, but containing no actual fact unknown to the automatist.

<sup>1</sup>Reprinted by permission from the *IV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Psychologie: Compte rendu des Séances et Texte des Mémoires* (Paris, 1901), pp. 113-121. Some obvious misprints in the report, the proofs of which had not been submitted to Mr. Myers, are here corrected.

This is sometimes the case in hypnotic trance; and the "inspirations of genius" may approach this type, which seems to be illustrated by Prof. Flournoy's subject, Mlle. Hélène Smith.

4. The trance may be genuine and healthy, and the utterances may contain facts not known to the automatist, but known to other persons present, and thus possibly reached by *telepathy*; or existent elsewhere, and thus possibly reached by *telæsthesia*.

5. The trance may be genuine and healthy, and the utterances may contain facts not previously known to the subject nor always known to the observers, but verifiable, and such as might probably be included in the memory of certain definite deceased persons, from whom they profess to come. This form of trance may suggest a temporary *substitution* of personality.

II.—During the past 25 years I have seen many specimens of the three former of these classes, and a few of the two latter and more interesting types. Records of the Rev. W. Stainton Moses' case, and of Mrs. Piper's case, with others analogous, have been printed in the *S.P.R. Proceedings*. I have now to describe a third well-marked case of this type,—the case of Mrs. Thompson.

This case, while quite independent, is closely parallel to Mrs. Piper's. I hope to produce, in a longer paper to appear in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, a series of testimonies, from a large group of competent witnesses, who assert that facts have been uttered to them through Mrs. Thompson entranced which could not have become known to her in any normal way.

The hypotheses of fraudulent preparation and of chance-coincidence appear to be quite excluded. There seems to be some telæsthesia and some telepathy; but most of the matter given suggests the character and the memory of certain deceased persons, from whom the messages do in fact profess to come.

III.—I claim that this *substitution of personality*, or *spirit-control*, or *possession*, or *pneumaturgy*, is a normal forward step in the evolution of our race. I claim that a spirit exists in man, and that it is healthy and desirable that this spirit should be thus capable of partial and temporary dissociation from the organism;—itself then enjoying an increased freedom and vision, and also thereby allowing some departed spirit to make use of the partially vacated organism for the sake of communication with other spirits still incarnate on earth. I claim that much knowledge has already thus been acquired, while much more is likely to follow.

## CASE OF MRS. THOMPSON.

Following on this introduction, it seems best to give, in such brief form as my limits allow, a few details which may answer obvious inquiries, and which may prove useful to persons who may have the chance of investigating similar cases.

I.—*History of the Case.*

It is through the kind permission and co-operation of Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Thompson, of Hampstead, London, N.W., that I am enabled to present a record—inevitably imperfect indeed, yet fairly representative—of certain phenomena which have accompanied Mrs. Thompson from childhood down to the present day. The case is the more interesting in that these phenomena arose among a group of persons unfamiliar with such experiences, and have ever since been closely linked with Mrs. Thompson's own private life and family affections. Mrs. Thompson was born in 1868,—the daughter of an architect in Birmingham. Mr. Thompson, whom she married in 1886, then held an important post in a firm of merchants, and has now for some years conducted a business of his own as importer of isinglass in the City of London. Mrs. Thompson thus is not, nor ever has been, a paid or professional medium.

Mrs. Thompson's distinct realisation of her own powers dates only from 1896, when, in consequence of certain perplexing experiences, she sought advice of Mr. F. W. Thurstan, a graduate of Cambridge, long known to me, who has rendered great service to this research by affording opportunities (at considerable expense of time and trouble to himself) for the recognition and development of psychical gifts. Mrs. Thompson, who was already interested in spiritualism, saw the announcement of Mr. Thurstan's meetings, and attended them for some time. Introduced by his kindness to Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, I have known them intimately since 1898; and they have agreed with me that it is the clear duty of persons possessed of supernormal powers to keep an accurate record of phenomena, and to publish so much of that record as may be possible with serious care. For what follows, therefore, I claim entire genuineness. I believe that there has been no attempt whatever to exaggerate any incident, but an honest desire on the part of both Mr. and Mrs. Thompson to utilise for the benefit of Science a gift which they fully recognise as independent of personal merit;—a trust placed in the hands of individuals selected by some law as yet unknown.



Mrs. Thompson, I would add, is an active, vigorous, practical person: interested in her household and her children, and in the ordinary amusements of young English ladies, as bicycling, the theatre. She is not of morbid, nor even of specially reflective or religious temperament. No one would think of her as the possessor of supernormal gifts.

## II.—*Modes in which Messages are given.*

These, with Mrs. Thompson, cover nearly the whole range of automatism already familiar to the student.

1. In the first place, Mrs. Thompson frequently *sees spirits* standing in the room, who sometimes, though not always, indicate their identity. Sometimes these figures form scenes, like the scenes discerned in crystals, but life-size. Thus a glove-fight which my son had witnessed at Eton was partially reproduced as though by figures standing behind him. Similar *auditory* impressions are sometimes also received, resembling either internal or external voices, heard by Mrs. Thompson alone.

2. Writing is sometimes seen on walls, etc.; again resembling the writing seen in crystals.

3. Pictures are often seen in a glass-ball (crystal). These pictures fall into the ordinary categories. Some of them seem meaningless and dream-like; some of them represent scenes actually passing elsewhere; some of them are symbolic of future events. *Sentences* sometimes appear; which, oddly enough, look to Mrs. Thompson (who alone has seen them) just like scraps of coarse printing;—as though a piece of newspaper were held beneath the ball. There have even seemed to be ragged edges, as though the paper had been torn. Such indications are of interest, on the assumption that the pictures may come from outside her own mind, as seeming to show that it may be easier to produce a picture—in this case a picture of printed words—which is in some way copied from objects materially existent already.

4. Mrs. Thompson sometimes writes automatically, in a waking state.

5. But such writing is generally produced during a brief period of sleep or trance. There will be an impulse to write, followed almost at once by unconsciousness; and scrawls, more or less legible, will be found on awaking.

6. But the most frequent mode of communication is by *speech in trance*; intermingled with occasional writing, and claiming to come from some definite spirit who “controls.”

The entry into the trance is swift and gentle. As a rule there is a

mere closure of the eyelids as in sudden sleep. If the control be an unfamiliar one, there may be a few deep inspirations. The awaking also is a mere opening of the eyes,—sometimes with a look of bewilderment. If the sitting has been a success, there is a feeling of rest and refreshment,—which may indeed develop into unusual peace and joy. The impression made on the observer is that the trance is as natural as ordinary sleep. Mrs. Thompson believes that her health has derived marked benefit from these trances.

### III.—*Choice of Sitters.*

In selecting sitters I have naturally aimed at getting persons who were unknown to her, and not giving hints or suggesting replies. I naturally also wished to give opportunities to *savants*, and especially to colleagues on the S.P.R. Council, such as Sir W. Crookes, Professor Sidgwick, etc. Experience soon showed that it was practically unimportant whether Mrs. Thompson knew the sitter beforehand or not. The quality of the messages has not been perceptibly modified by this fact. Most of the best messages, in fact, have been given to absolute strangers, while persons of whom much could easily have been learnt—as Sir W. Crookes, Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, Dr. Hodgson, etc.—have obtained practically nothing. I can, however, perceive to some extent on what circumstances success depends. Success depends partly on the sensitivity of the sitter himself—when such sensitivity happens to meet Mrs. Thompson's—in some way which we cannot explain. But success depends much more on the question whether there is any departed friend who is eager to communicate with the survivor, and who has also learnt the way in which to do so.

In this, as in almost all points, Dr. Hodgson's conclusions, drawn from his numerous sittings with Mrs. Piper, are confirmed by my own observation with Mrs. Thompson. He had already observed that he obtained the best results when he acted on the spirit-hypothesis;—dealt with the sources of information as if they were just what they professed to be, and thus got from each spirit in turn all that it could give him.

Still more markedly, I repeat, is this the case with Mrs. Thompson. The knowledge given—whether consisting of earth-memories or (as appears) of actual fresh observation of things on earth, made from the spiritual world—arranges itself most naturally, almost inevitably, under the names of certain informants around whose special memories, and powers of fresh acquisition, the scattered facts and ideas emitted are seen to cohere. One is, in fact, talking to a series of friends, each

of whom has a characteristic, but limited, budget of news to tell one,—and also a characteristic, but limited, power of observation or collection of fresh facts. I find that the important thing is to interest if possible (on behalf of each fresh sitter) certain departed friends of my own,—some of them already familiar with these inquiries before their decease. If these or similar willing and capable spirits will intervene, some measure of truth is sure to follow. In this, as in an earthly inquiry, I have to work outwards from a small nucleus of persons and ideas already intimately known. Other sitters (as Dr. van Eeden) have had the same experience with their own special groups.

#### IV.—*Arrangement of Sittings.*

The actual sittings are of the simplest type. I bring an anonymous stranger into a room where Mrs. Thompson is, and we simply await her trance. I sometimes ask my anonymous friend to remain silent (if, for instance, his accent should give some clue to nationality) or else we talk together on trivial topics until Mrs. Thompson's light trance supervenes,—with no external symptom except a closing of the eyes and certain slight differences in manner. It does not matter where the visitor sits, nor is any contact desired. There is no "fishing" for information. I usually converse myself with the "control"; and in some of the best sittings I have been as ignorant as Mrs. Thompson herself of the family history, etc., of the sitter. To give one instance only, this was well exemplified in the case of Miss A. D. Sedgwick (the American novelist), whom I took with me for a sitting on the very day on which I made her acquaintance. I knew Miss Sedgwick's name and her books; Mrs. Thompson knew nothing of her whatever, but a vein of memories was at once opened which developed with so much of intimate family matter that only a scanty selection from what was said can be offered for publication. This series of memories was fully begun by an alleged spirit-friend of Miss Sedgwick's, while I alone was the interlocutor. Afterwards Miss Sedgwick joined in, but gave no hints; and indeed various facts were given to her which lay quite outside her own memory. This last remark suggests a brief review of the habitual *contents* of these messages.

#### V.—*The Matter given falls under Four Main Classes, whose Proportions vary with the Sitter.*

(a) Dream-like and confused talk, with mistakes and occasional approximations. This probably proceeds mainly from Mrs. Thompson's own subliminal self, and occurs when there is no valid "control." It

does not seem connected with any clear consciousness, and when it occurs now it is usually stopped by some "control," who puts an end to the imperfect trance;—much as one rouses oneself up from a confusing doze, so as either to wake or to sleep properly.

(*b*) Facts lying beyond the sensory range, but not necessarily implying discarnate spirits as their source. Such are perceptions of events actually occurring at a distance, or of events which have occurred in the past or will occur in the future. It is at present impossible to say how far Mrs. Thompson's own subliminal self, or how far any discarnate fellow-worker, is responsible for the singularly varied mass of knowledge thus given.

(*c*) Next come facts purporting to proceed from discarnate spirits, —and such as might probably exist in their memories. But in this case, of course, as in Mrs. Piper's, the majority of these facts exist also in the minds of the sitters, so that it is possible to argue that they are telepathically drawn from thence by the sensitive's subliminal faculty, without any intervention of spirits of the departed.

(*d*) There remains a small but significant group of facts which are not known to the sitters, but which would have been known to the departed persons from whom they profess to come;—or (and this is still more curious) facts which are such that those departed persons would have been interested in learning them after death. The gradual, incidental accumulation of facts of this type becomes at last a strong argument for the authenticity of the alleged communications.

I believe, then, that I have good reason for ascribing many of these messages to definite surviving personalities, known while on earth to friends of mine whose presence with Mrs. Thompson has evoked the messages, or to myself.

I believe that most of these messages are uttered through Mrs. Thompson's organism by spirits who for the time inform or "possess" that organism; and that some are received by her spirit in the unseen world, directly from other spirits, and are then partially remembered, so that the sensitive can record them on emerging from the ecstatic state.

But although I cannot ignore the evidence for these extreme hypotheses, I by no means wish to assert that all the phenomena in this or in any similar case proceed from departed spirits. Rather, I am inclined to hold that whenever an incarnate spirit is sufficiently released from bodily trammels to hold any conscious intercourse with the unseen world, that intercourse will inevitably include various types of communication. I think that there is likely to be knowledge



derived telepathically from incarnate as well as from discarnate spirits ;—and also telæsthetic or clairvoyant knowledge of actual scenes, past, present, or future, which lie beyond sensory reach. If I speak with a friend on this earth I am at the same time conscious in many ways of the earthly environment ;—and similarly I imagine that even a slight and momentary introduction into that unseen world introduces the spirit to influences of that still more complex environment, mingled in ways which we cannot as yet disentangle. The sensitive may thus exercise concurrently several forms of sensitivity ;—receiving *messages* of all degrees of directness, and *perceptions* of all degrees of clarity.

These ideas are far removed from ordinary scientific experience. It may still seem, I fear, almost impertinent to offer them for the consideration of a Congress of *savants*. Yet I ask that this case be considered along with two other cases brought forward at the same Congress :—namely, Professor Flournoy's case of *pseudo-possession* in Mlle. Hélène Smith, and Dr. Morton Prince's case of multiplex personality in "Sally Beauchamp."<sup>1</sup> It is hard to say which of these cases, if narrated fifty years or even twenty years ago, would have been considered the most bizarre and impossible. Yet all competent psychologists will now agree in considering Professor Flournoy's and Dr. Prince's cases as records of high value to the student of human personality. Before setting my case aside as unworthy of similar consideration, I invite psychologists to study Part XXXIII. (vol. XIII.) of the *S.P.R. Proceedings*, where Dr. Hodgson has discussed at length the closely similar case of Mrs. Piper. If that record be compared with the forthcoming record of Mrs. Thompson's case, in [the present Part] of the same *Proceedings*, it may perhaps be felt, by some at least of the rising generation of psychologists, that few tasks can be more interesting and important than that of discovering, investigating, and comparing as many as possible of these extraordinary variations in the ordinary human type—variations which, although often degenerative, are also sometimes, in my view, distinctly and rapidly evolutive in their tendency.

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. XV., p. 466.



## III.

## ACCOUNT OF SITTINGS WITH MRS. THOMPSON.

BY DR. F. VAN EEDEN

*(of Bussum, Holland).*

WE may say of students of psychical phenomena that they fall into three different groups:—the complete disbelievers, the spiritualists, and the non-spiritualists.

Among the serious men of science who have taken the matter in hand patiently and without prejudice, complete disbelievers are becoming scarce. We need not here discuss their opinion.

But the believers in the genuineness of the phenomena are still divided into two well-defined parties.

The first group accepts almost completely the view of the spiritists and believes in the influence of spirits, of impalpable and, in the ordinary way, imperceptible beings, upon the mind and body of a living human being.

The second group acknowledges the facts as extraordinary and inexplicable by ordinary causes, but does not admit that as yet anything has been discovered which forces us inevitably to believe in the existence of spirits. Everything may perhaps be explained, according to them, by faculties personal to the medium, such as telepathy and clairvoyance.

To the first group belong, as we all know, very distinguished men of science, such as Alfred Russel Wallace and Sir William Crookes, and also the man whose loss we so deeply deplore, Frederic Myers.

To the second group belonged, I believe, that other President of this Society, whose loss we all regret, Professor Sidgwick; and to it there still belong Mr. Podmore and others.

The first theory is much the simpler as an explanation. Once given the possibility of the action upon our own existence of beings whose material conditions of existence are quite imperceptible and even inconceivable for us, all the rest is easily explained. As a philosophical conception this view has nothing in it absurd or improbable. On the

contrary, as a matter of probability, we must agree that it is far more likely that there exists an infinity of imperceptible beings, even in our immediate proximity, than that we should be the ultimate form of life, or that we should have reached an exhaustive power of perception of other living beings. We know that our sensory perception is limited to five modes, or channels, each of them embracing only a small part of an infinite scale of vibratory motions. It is, philosophically speaking, quite as absurd to believe that every form of life and existence must fall under our power of observation, as that there are no other celestial bodies but those which our eyes can see.

We must keep in mind the philosophical tenet, well expressed by Spinoza, and as far as I know never contradicted or considered open to contradiction, that God's infinity has an infinite number of modes: "*Infinita infinitis modis*;" that is to say, there is not only infinity in sequence of time, or in extension of space, but also *in diversity of being at the same place and at the same time.*

The second group of observers, however, while accepting the philosophical possibility, or even probability, of the existence of other beings, angels or spirits, near us and able to exert influence upon us, maintain that it is scientifically right to oppose as long as possible the theory of their agency or intervention to account for the phenomena. Premature use of such a theory would indeed be far too easy a method and not in accordance with scientific economy, which prescribes the utmost restriction in the employment of final causes and the utmost care in every step towards the unknown.

Telepathy and clairvoyance being once recognised as realities, and the marvellous faculties of the unconscious or subliminal mind being taken into consideration, we must not speak of spirits until it becomes absolutely necessary.

This second platform seems to be quite unassailable from the theoretical side. It is always very difficult to prove strictly that a certain fact has been out of reach of the medium's unconscious observation during the whole of his lifetime; and this difficulty grows into absolute impossibility, if we admit a faculty like clairvoyance, of which we cannot tell if it has any limits either in space or in time.

Let me give an instance from my own experience with Mrs. Thompson. We had taken every precaution at my first sitting that the medium should hear nothing about my coming, my name, or my nationality. I came unexpectedly, and remained an almost silent witness. And yet, at the first sitting, the name Frederick—my Christian name and that of my father—was given; an apparent

attempt was made to pronounce my surname ("Fon," "Fondalin"), and an allusion was made to my medical profession.

At my second sitting, though I had not seen Mrs. Thompson in the interval, the name "van Eeden" was given in full, pronounced as if it were read by an Englishman (Eden), also the name of my country ("Netherlands"), and the Christian names of my wife ("Martha") and of one of my children were given, and at the beginning of the third sitting the name of the place where I live ("Bussum").

These different names were given more or less at random, not always in their proper relation, but nevertheless in such a way that simple guessing was out of the question. She began, *e.g.* (at the third sitting) to call me "Mr. Bostim," "Bussom" or "Bussum," mistaking the name of my place for my own name; then she asked what "Netherlands" meant; she said at the first sitting that I had a relation called Frederik; at the third, that it was my own name, and that I was a "gardener of Eden," and so on. At each following sitting this confusion became a little clearer in her mind.

To explain this, coincidence will not do, as every one who studies the notes must acknowledge. Four suppositions are possible:

(1) Conscious fraud. This presupposes a system of secret information, a detective service, of incredible extent and precision. I may say that to know Mrs. Thompson is to discard this idea.

(2) Unconscious fraud. On this hypothesis, it is necessary to assume that by some marvellous power of deduction the medium can connect names, seen here and there on letters, cards, or papers, with an unknown visitor whom she sees for the first time.

(3) Information by spirits. This is the explanation given by Mrs. Thompson herself. On this view, the spirits talk through her mouth, while she herself is dreaming about other things. She tells her dreams sometimes after waking up.

(4) Clairvoyance and telepathy. According to this theory, Mrs. Thompson reads particulars about me from my mind or from elsewhere, unconsciously, and constructs a dramatic figure, a fantastic being, a spirit, who is supposed to tell her all this.

How can we eliminate the supposition of imposture?

The possibility of fraud seemed untenable. I got information about objects whose origin was known only to myself. I brought a lock of hair of a man who had lived and died at Utrecht, and the hair was immediately connected with that name, and on subsequent occasions referred to as the "Utrecht hair." I brought a piece of clothing that had belonged to a young man who had committed suicide. *Nobody in*

*the world* knew that I had kept it, nor that I had taken it to England with me for this purpose, and yet I got an exact description of the young man and the manner of his suicide, and even his Christian name was given.

For me this excluded all fraud or coincidence.

Certainly, this evidence would not be convincing for anybody who doubted my faculty of memory and observation, or my veracity. But no evidence is in itself sufficient. It all requires repetition and corroboration by others. This is exactly what we look for.

The choice between spirits and telepathy remains. But the difficulties involved are deeper and more complicated than we might think at first sight.

The telepathic hypothesis implies that my thoughts were communicated, without ordinary means, to the mind of the medium. But at what distance? May we take for granted that this way of communication, concerning which we have no knowledge whatever, falls under the laws of light and sound? Or can there be only telepathy when I am in the same room, or when I make an effort of volition? And how can we avoid or exclude the telepathic influence of all other persons in all other parts of the world?

At first sight one would say that telepathy was excluded when the medium tells me a thing I did not know myself. This has, indeed, been considered by many previous researchers as a crucial test.

But let us consider this crucial test well, for we here come across an unscientific or unphilosophical method of reasoning, very common indeed, but most misleading. To rely on this test involves a tacit assumption of knowledge which we do not as a matter of fact possess. Our present knowledge of the conditions of telepathy is not knowledge, but simply a sort of vague idea of what is likely, an "Ahnung," as the Germans say.

We think it likely that distances count in telepathy, distances in time and in space; in the case of experiments, we think it most likely that there will only be telepathic influence between two persons at the same time in the same room, one of them making an effort of volition, the other remaining passive. But we have no right to maintain that these conditions are essential.

Who could contradict me if I were to say that the information which was unknown to me was obtained by telepathic action from some other person somewhere in Holland or in some other part of the world?

Still more vague and ill-defined are our notions of clairvoyance.



And it is just because our knowledge of its conditions and laws is so small that we can explain nearly everything by it, and that consequently it is impossible to talk of crucial tests.

We all know that our subliminal part is a first-rate dramatist. Our dreams are comedies or dramas most astonishing to ourselves. We can order hypnotised persons to perform this or that *rôle*, and they will act their part with wonderful talent and accuracy.

In this way, every spirit that is represented, no matter in how life-like and convincing a manner, can be explained away. If we admit the faculty of clairvoyance, which can procure information concerning everything and everybody, concerning all places and all times, concerning the past and the future, what miracle of evidence can the spirit produce that will outweigh the fatal objection that he is simply a dramatic creature of the medium's brain, constructed with the help of absolutely unlimited information?

For instance, the young man who had committed suicide gave as proofs of his identity Dutch names of places and persons which were not at all in my mind at the moment. This might have been unconscious telepathy. At the same time proper names were given which I had never heard myself. I did not even know such names existed. Yet later, in Holland, I came across people who bore these very names, though their connection (if any) with the young man I could not find out. But what value could they have as proof of identity? Could we not always say that the medium, being clairvoyant, had seen these names somehow in connection with the young man, and so used them to complete the *vraisemblance* of her creation?

Thus it is clear that evidence of this kind must remain inconclusive.

On the other hand, we know nothing of the conditions under which spirits may or must work on the human brain, nor whether distances count or not in that regard, any more than we do in the case of telepathy.

As a very curious observation, I may relate the following: The young man, as mentioned in the notes of my sittings, had recovered from his first attempt at suicide (though the control, "Nelly," did not find out this particular), but the wound in his throat left his voice hoarse and gave him a peculiar little cough. As soon as I came near Mrs. Thompson with the piece of clothing, her voice became more or less hoarse, and by and by the same peculiar little cough appeared, and grew more accentuated at each subsequent sitting. After three sittings it kept on even in the intervals between the sittings, and



in the end did not leave her altogether *until I had left England*, taking with me the piece of clothing—a flannel vest.

Here distance seemed really to be of import, and, what is most curious, the influence seemed to emanate from an inanimate object. It reminded me of what a French author called "*l'âme des choses*," the soul of things.

Now, it is just as difficult to disprove the other view, that there is no telepathy, no clairvoyance at all in these phenomena, but that everything is the work of spirits. According to this view—as maintained by superior minds like A. Russel Wallace—spirits surround us everywhere and always, and are constantly occupied in trying to give us impulses, ideas, or fantasies. These influences are pleasant or disagreeable, useful or dangerous, insignificant or marvellous, according to our impressionability, our healthy or morbid physical condition.

By this means telepathy, clairvoyance, all the phenomena of the subliminal intelligence, even dreams and the hallucinations and mental aberrations of the insane, may be explained.

This position seems to me as strong as the other. While studying dreams and the disturbances of the diseased mind, I have often had a vivid impression that, in some instances, they could only be the result of evil influences working from the outside, like demons with diabolical scheming and prevision. It must have struck every observer how often it appears as if a wicked spirit takes advantage of the weak and ill-balanced condition of a human mind to assail it with all sorts of dreadful, grotesque, or weird ideas and fantasies.

To explain all these morbid phenomena as the work of the unconscious or subliminal mind, or of a secondary personality, often seems forced and insufficient. Moreover, considering the matter philosophically, are the terms: "unconscious," "subliminal," "secondary personality," clearer and more scientific than the terms demon, spirit, or ghost? Is it not often a simple question of terms? What difference is there between a secondary or tertiary personality and a possessing demon?

The strongest objection to this view, I think, is that we are able to *create* secondary or tertiary personalities by means of hypnotic suggestion, and that it is unlikely that we could create demons in that way. But then, again, do we know *what* we are doing by hypnotic suggestion? Decidedly not, as I am entitled to say after fifteen years of practical experience. And is it not possible that we, by our hypnotic suggestion, are working on the mind in exactly the same way, and

therefore with the same results, as the invisible spirits do? I, for my part, feel unable to deny this possibility.

We are obliged in this difficult matter to rely a good deal on our own personal impressions, to judge by probability, and to form more or less intuitive conceptions. This may not appear very exact, but it is unavoidable, and we shall find a similar course pursued in many other branches of science. Astronomy, for instance, is based principally on personal impressions,—but impressions which are verified by many persons, and on intuitive ideas of probability,—but ideas which are confirmed by repeated observation.

My personal impression has varied in the following manner. During the first series of experiments, in November and December, 1899, I felt a very strong conviction that the person whose relics I had brought with me, and who had died fifteen years ago, was living as a spirit and was in communication with me through Mrs. Thompson. A number of small particulars, which will be found in the notes, produced on me when taken *en bloc* the effect of perfect evidence. To regard these all as guesses made at random seemed absurd: to explain them by telepathy forced and insufficient.

But when I came home, I found on further inquiry inexplicable faults and failures. If I had really spoken to the dead man, he would never have made these mistakes. And the remarkable feature of it was that all these mistakes were in those very particulars which I had not known myself and was unable to correct on the spot.

Consequently, my opinion changed. There were the facts, quite as certain and marvellous as before. I could not ascribe them to fraud or coincidence, but I began to doubt my first impression that I had really dealt with the spirit of a deceased person; and I came to the conclusion that I had dealt only with Mrs. Thompson, who, possessing an unconscious power of information quite beyond our understanding, had *acted* the ghost, though in perfect good faith.

In so doing, she must have been guided by slight involuntary tokens, positive or negative, on my part. How, otherwise, could she have given so many true details, sufficient to create an impression of perfect evidence, and how otherwise would she have made mistakes exactly on the very points on which I was unable to correct her?

But on my second visit, in June, 1900, when I took with me the piece of clothing of the young man who had committed suicide, my first impression came back, and with greater force. I was well on my guard, and if I gave hints, it was not unconsciously, but on

purpose; and, as will be seen from the notes, the plainest hints were not taken, but the truth came out in the most curious and unexpected ways.

Take this for instance. Nelly said to me: "You don't seem to have any whiskers. I don't see your head properly, some one covers up your head. He [*i.e.* the suicide] covers up your head to show how his own head was covered up. Oh, dear! isn't it funny? You must not cut off your head when you die."

The fact is that the head of the young man was covered up when he was found dead.

Nelly did not take the hint that the first attempt at suicide had failed. And yet she gave details which unmistakeably, though indirectly, refer to that failure; *e.g.* "when they found him he could not speak"; and again, "don't take me back to the horror of it"; which two sayings are in exact accordance with the ineffectual attempt, after which he was found alive and quite conscious, but with an open windpipe. The second time he shot himself through the heart and died at once.

The following described very exactly both his character and his attempt at suicide. "He would not show me any blood on his neck, because he was afraid I should be frightened."

This is quite like my dead young friend. He was very gentle and always tried to hide his mutilated throat in order not to horrify children or sensitive people.

Up to the sitting of June 7th all the information came through Nelly, Mrs. Thompson's so-called spirit-control. But on that date the deceased tried, as he had promised, to take the control himself, as the technical term goes. The evidence then became very striking. During a few minutes—though a few minutes only—I felt absolutely as if I were speaking to my friend himself. I spoke Dutch and got immediate and correct answers. The expression of satisfaction and gratification in face and gesture, when we seemed to understand each other, was too true and vivid to be acted. Quite unexpected Dutch words were pronounced, details were given which were far from my mind, some of which, as that about my friend's uncle in a former sitting, I had never known, and found to be true only on inquiry afterwards.

But being now well on my guard, I could, exactly in this most interesting few minutes, detect, as it were, where the failures crept in. I could follow the process and perceive when the genuine phenomena stopped and the unconscious play-acting began. In hardly

perceptible gradations the medium takes upon herself the rôle of the spirit, completes the information, gives the required finish, and fills in the gaps by emendation and arrangement.

*E.g.* the Dutch names which are to be found at the beginning of the sitting on June 7th were written by Mrs. Thompson in her sleep while I was absent. These names are very remarkable, as I had never heard them; so my own telepathic influence, at least so far as my ordinary consciousness is concerned, was excluded. But when I asked Nelly who was "Notten, Velp," and who was "Zwart," I got very quick and definite answers, purporting to come from the young suicide, which answers were afterwards found to be absolutely wrong. I even found that the name "Zwart" must have been misread, and that what was really written was "I wait." Nevertheless Nelly made out of my mistake a fictitious friend of the deceased called "Zwart," who shot himself in the forehead.

That same summer I came twice into contact with persons bearing the name "Notten" and living at "Velp," but I failed absolutely to find out in what relation, if any, they stood to my deceased friend.

We see here how recklessly and carelessly the control-spirit Nelly enters into explanations about things of which she evidently understands nothing, though she has referred to them spontaneously herself. And we see, moreover, how easily and imperceptibly the rôle of any spirit is taken up by the medium, after the genuine information has ceased.

The principal thing that brings this on is encouragement. As soon as the control-spirit or the medium is encouraged and helped in an enthusiastic way, she goes on and on, making her creation complete, until nothing true or genuine is left. This accounts for the dreadful muddle in which so many honest observers have ended.

And here, I think, I may make a definite and clear statement of my present opinion, which has been wavering between the two sides for a long time. I should not give any definite statement if I did not feel prepared to do so, however eagerly it might be desired, for I think it the first duty of a scientist and philosopher to abstain from definite statements in uncertain matters. And in observations like these we must reckon with a very general inclination to deny on second thoughts what seemed absolutely convincing on the spot and at the moment. Every phenomenon or occurrence of a very extraordinary character is only believed after repeated



observation. After the first experience one's mind refuses to stay in the unaccustomed channel of thought, and next morning we say: "I must have been mistaken, I must have overlooked this or that, there must be some ordinary explanation."

But at this present moment it is about eight months since I had my last sitting with Mrs. Thompson in Paris, and yet, when I read the notes again, it is impossible for me to abstain from the conviction that I have really been a witness, were it only for a few minutes, of the voluntary manifestation of a deceased person.

At the same time, I feel sure that genuine direct information is far rarer and scarcer than the medium believes, and in good faith would have us believe. I hold that a certain amount of unconscious play-acting is *nearly always* going on at every sitting of every medium, and that even our most scrupulous and careful observers, such as Myers and Hodgson, have been misled by it. I doubt not only the veracity but the actual existence of the so-called control-spirits; to me it seems not improbable that they are artificial creations of the medium's mind, or—according to the spiritist view—lying and pretending demons.

In considering what method to adopt in future investigations this question is extremely important; since every medium gets a certain education from his or her leaders or observers, and the effects of this education are generally unalterable. The education, as a medium, of Mrs. Thompson has been an immense improvement, compared with what we have been accustomed to. After all the poor mediums literally spoiled and bewildered by too credulous and fanatical experimenters, Mrs. Thompson's quiet self-control and scrupulous neutrality is very gratifying. And yet I cannot avoid expressing my opinion that her wonderful faculties as a seer have been spoiled by too much credulity and encouragement on the part of the principal observers and leaders of the experiments. I have seen how soon the so-called control-spirits begin to fancy and to invent when we simply entertain the idea of their genuine existence as controlling spirits. In my notes it will repeatedly be seen that I asked: "How do you know?" because I was aware that I only heard the conclusions of the control-spirit, and not the direct perceptions of the seer. In the later sittings I strictly abstained from talking to the control-spirit; I took no notice of her, but asked for exact information of what was seen or felt by the medium. This attitude was not sufficiently persevered in by former observers. Most of them entered more or less into the play and spoiled the purity of the experiment.



I may sum up my criticisms by saying, that most observers have been, if not too credulous, then certainly too *eager*. This eagerness, in comparison with which patience is often considered phlegmatic, is a general weakness of the Anglo-Saxon. It accounts for his wonderful achievements, but also for his mistakes. And this is true also in the difficult domain of psychical investigation.

In a remarkable article entitled, "How it came into my head," Miss Goodrich Freer, who is herself a seer, has well pointed out this want of patience and passivity in psychical researchers, and the advice she gives we may all take to heart. Nearly all the material that has been collected up to the present needs revision: a sifting of the gold of truth from the ore of play-acting and fancy. We can never have a definite conception of the way in which this supernormal information reaches us, and we are only too much inclined to form more or less incomplete, materialistic, and superficial ideas about it. We speak of the spirit playing on the brain, as a player does on a violin or piano, and so on. We must also not forget that the statements made come from regions where our conceptions of time are probably invalid, which must offer an insuperable bar to our powers of understanding.

Let me mention one little fact in my experience with Mrs. Thompson,—a mere trifle in itself, but still very curious. In one of our first sittings Nelly predicted that I should get at a dinner in Cambridge "a red sauce with fish," which "would not suit me." I asked, "Why not?"<sup>1</sup> but got no answer. In Cambridge the red sauce really turned up, and I took some, braving the prediction, and wondering if it would make me ill. At the next sitting, I asked why the sauce was forbidden me in the prediction, and Nelly asked, evidently at a loss for an answer, "Well, don't you feel thirsty?" But I did not feel thirsty at all. Then she said, "Are you a vegetable man?" Now, I had never told Mrs. Thompson, or shown in her presence, that I was a vegetarian by custom. But as the sauce was a fish sauce, and was coloured with cochineal, the remark, made several days before, that it "would not *suit* me," was perfectly appropriate; yet the medium appeared not to understand herself the appropriateness of her own remark.

This little fact is, if well considered, full of unfathomable wonders for our human mind. This trifling remark,—a little joke without any deep or serious meaning, but showing supernormal knowledge of the

<sup>1</sup> Van E.'s question, "Why not?" is not recorded in the notes, but I have no doubt it was spoken. [Note by J. G. Piddington.]

future and of my own way of life,—made, as it were, by proxy and without insight into its meaning,—how are we ever to grasp all that lies beneath it? Nothing in all the experiments gave me so vivid an impression that the medium is simply an instrument, a tool, temporarily in the power of beings who live, and can even jest, in regions beyond space and time.

But let us take care, by all means, not to represent these beings in definite forms according to our own dramatic fancy. We are sure to produce what are called in anatomy “artifacts,” artificial instead of natural forms.

I have heard the source of this supernormal information denominated by an English poet as “the collective memory of the race,” and this broad and mystical conception, however vague, seems to me in some respects the safest working hypothesis for further investigation.

All will readily agree when I maintain that the trance-world of a medium and the world of dreams are not very far apart. In both, the human mind seems to possess some possibility of contact with a super-human world, “Anschluss am Absoluten,” as the Germans say. In my notes, I show that my own dreams, during the time of the sittings, provided me with a name which I had forgotten, and which duly appeared at the next sitting. And while I was preparing this paper, nearly a year after the sittings, another dream gave me the solution of the word “Woeken,” which, as shown in the notes, was particularly insisted upon by the young suicide. It was in my dream associated with the title of the only book he had written, published after his death, and for the success of which he was very anxious. (The solution seems very probable, but I cannot publish it.)

Having observed my own dreams for a long time, making careful notes of them, and having attained the faculty of executing in my dreams with full presence of mind voluntary acts which I had planned while awake, I arranged with the medium that I would call her in my dreams after returning to Holland, and that in her trance she would tell an observer in England if she had heard my calling. All this is recorded in the account of the sittings in Appendix I. at the end of this paper.

The result (recorded in full in Appendix II.) I may give in a few words. The whole matter seems to me of great interest, and merits an elaborate treatment, which, in years to come, if time and ability allow, I hope to be able to devote to it. But this single interesting experiment I will relate now, if only to draw attention to the possibility of the new line of investigation that it opens up.

In the winter following the first series of sittings, Nelly announced in the course of various séances, that on three occasions she herself, and on another occasion another spirit, had come to visit me in my dreams. In two instances these visits corresponded closely in time with dream visions of my own, which I had recorded in my diary previously to the receipt of letters from Mr. Piddington giving details of Nelly's statements, and in all four instances there is evidence of telepathic rapport between Nelly and myself.

The second instance is the most remarkable. For then, in my dream, I made what I thought to be a mistake and called out "Elsie, Elsie," instead of "Nelly." I put down the fact in my notes the next morning, the name Elsie being absolutely without any meaning and quite strange to me.

Two days later I got a letter telling me that Nelly's spirit friend, Elsie, had heard me calling, and that she had been sent by Nelly to answer me. So my mistake was no mistake; the name Elsie, though strange to me, had come into my head by some mysterious influence, and the message across the channel was received.

I have the notes and the letters to show to any one who takes a serious interest in such matters.

After this, the communication stopped; only Nelly seemed to be aware of two slight indispositions on my part; but the dream experiments wholly failed.

I will conclude this brief account by saying that I see before us a limitless domain of strange knowledge and the possibility of most important investigation, but that we need in this, more than in any other branch of science, patience and prudence. Nowhere are we in such great danger of complete error and entanglement. We can form hypotheses, eschatologies, whole religious systems, according to our fancy, and the docile medium will show us all our chimeric constructions in full action and bewildering semblance of reality.

To avoid such pitfalls we must check all undue eagerness and impatience in this most delicate and subtle of scientific quests, which concerns the human soul and the superhuman world where-with it is conjoined. Passive in observation, patient in action, prudent in advance, we must refrain from seeking to unveil with over-hasty hands the secrets yet hidden from us by the Eternal God.

## APPENDIX I.

## DETAILED REPORT OF SITTINGS.

NOTE BY J. G. PIDDINGTON.

[Throughout the record, R. =right, W. =wrong, and D. =doubtful.

The notes of the first series of sittings are as nearly verbatim as the rapidity of Nelly's utterance permitted. Special care was taken to note down remarks made or questions asked by the sitter or note-taker.

The notes of the second series of sittings are not so full, but Dr. van Eeden is responsible for the greater part of them, and confidence may therefore be felt that nothing of essential importance has been omitted.

The omissions, which are indicated thus . . . , with one or two very slight and totally unimportant exceptions, have reference to matters unconnected with Dr. van Eeden.

All explanatory notes and comments, in so far as they refer to his own affairs, friends, relatives, etc., have been either written or dictated by Dr. van Eeden, or submitted for his approval, although, for the sake of clearness, they have usually been changed from the first to the third person. They are printed in square brackets, the sentences in round brackets relating to what was said or done at the sittings.

It will be observed that most of the statements made by the medium in these sittings purport to come from "Nelly," a child of Mrs. Thompson's, who died as a baby. The medium is therefore generally referred to as "mother" by the control.]

## SITTING I.—NOVEMBER 29TH, 1899.

At 65 Rutland Gate, S.W., 4.30 p.m. Present: Mrs. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Crackanorpe, Dr. F. van Eeden, and J. G. Piddington (note-taker).

[Dr. van Eeden arrived in England the night before the first sitting. He was accompanied to 65 Rutland Gate by J. G. Piddington. His name was not given to the servant to announce, but was known to Mr. and Mrs. Crackanorpe.]

*Nelly.* "What does Mr. Savant want?"

(Van E. hands small end of cedar pencil to Mrs. T.)

*Nelly.* "Pencil gives impression of preaching to a lot of young men. . . ."

(J. G. P. gives an envelope, handed to him by van E., to Mrs. T.)

*Nelly.* "I get a feeling about a lady with this. Feels like a piece of dark hair—not white hair [R.]—belongs to somebody who didn't like travel [R.]—travelling made her ill [R.] gave her backache [R.] (*Sotto voce* to J. G. P.) That gentleman (*i.e.*, van E.) doesn't understand what I'm saying.



“Strong influence of lot of stairs, some one lives very high up—tall building.”

[Van E.’s first meeting with the lady was in a large high building with many stairs. See p. 103.]

“The lady connected with the envelope had something taken out of her neck, a little tiny something, when she was young [W.]. . . .

“There was a Michel (pronounced ‘Meeshel’) associated with the lady who is connected with the envelope.

“Belonging to the lady of the hair (*i.e.*, hair in envelope) was a soldier. He died of fever, not in war.”

[The lady had a brother, a soldier, who, when not on active service, died at the age of 39 from a fall from his horse.]

“He was a blue [R.], not a red, coat soldier—not a Prussian. There was a Léon connected with the blue soldier [D.] and a Louise [R.].

“There was a name like Clockild—Clotilda [D.]. Don’t like all these funny names—they are not familiar to me.

“It was always such a pain down left side, wanting to lie down all the time [R.].

“Do you know Astratoff? but the gentleman there (van E.) knows him very well—not very well, associates with him. He is a Swede.” (Here followed what seemed to be expressions of disapproval of Astratoff.)

[If this refers to Mr. Aksakoff, he is a Russian, not a Swede, and van E. has had only a slight correspondence with him.]

(To van E.). “Bring something next time belonging to the young man who died prematurely at 22.”

[Van E. has been unable to identify the young man of 22.]

“Fondalin—Fohmmer—Fomineer.” [Various attempts to pronounce a proper name, with the Dutch pronunciation. Fondalin seems like an attempt at “Van Eeden.”]

“Everybody has a Frederick connected with him, but so has that gentleman (van E.) too. He was fond of experimenting with medicine bottles, like Sir W. Crookes, you know. I mean the young man who died at 22.

“Ordinary doctor was father or brother or very near relative of this young man.”

[Frederik is van E.’s Christian name, and also his father’s. The father never made chemical experiments, but the son has, a good many years ago. All this seemed to van E. an attempt to define his personality.]

“. . . This gentleman (van E.) thinks he is going back on a certain day, but there will be some commotion which will make him change the date of departure—either one day earlier or later.”

[The day of van E.’s departure was not fixed at time of sitting, but he left England several days later than he had intended originally.] . . .

“There is a *Marie* belonging to that gentleman (*i.e.*, van E.) (Mrs. T. takes van E.’s hands.) I do like you, but I can’t creep round you a bit. . . .”

[Van E. knows a Marie, but the name is not borne by any near relative or intimate friend.]



“That gentleman (van E.) has been to a materialising séance.”

*Van E.* “When?”

*Nelly.* “A short time ago. There is a strong influence of somebody cheating all the time—taking off clothes and so on—fraudulent throughout.”

[Van E. sat with Miss Fay about twelve years ago. She was fraudulent at times probably; but van E. thinks she did not cheat with him.]

*Nelly* (to van E.). “I promise faithfully to give you plenty of details on Friday.”

(To J. G. P.) “Don’t let your mother—or lady at your house—be present at sitting—it would make mother nervous.”

(Van E. asks Nelly if she can appear to people in dreams.)

“I never tried except with mother.

“I’m going to materialise one day for father to show him the colour of my hair—black curly hair, not light like mother’s.”

[But cf. the following from a sitting on January 18th, 1900 :

“You want my description? (J. G. P. *had not asked* for a description, though he had thought of doing so.) I haven’t red hair. It’s as light as mother’s—not red—more look of brightness, like mother’s.” J. G. P. several months later pointed out to Nelly the inconsistency of these two descriptions, and Nelly explained that the description given on January 18th, 1900, should apply to “Elsie.” For “Elsie” see below.1]

. . . . .  
End of séance, 5.35 p.m.

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#### SITTING II.—FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, 1899.

At 87 Sloane Street, S.W., 10.30 a.m. Present: Mrs. Thompson, Dr. F. van Eeden, and J. G. Piddington (note-taker).

(Nelly asks for a piece of hair, but van E. gives her a pair of old gloves.)

*Nelly.* “What was ‘Vam’? Not a dead influence with this [W.]”

“Do you know what ‘Sellin’ is? Very awkward to pronounce—‘Sowin.’ ‘Sayyin.’”

“An old gentleman with these gloves [R.]”

“Black, dark hair [R.]”

“Some one tried to come, an old gentleman. He writes a great deal [R.], used to have a great cold in (right) arm [D.]”

“You noticed how mother opened her eyes; the gentleman used to sit back in an arm-chair—not a warm stuffed one like the one mother is sitting in, but a cold leather-covered chair,—asleep. He used to open his eyes, as

<sup>1</sup> On Nov. 21, 1901, after reading the proofs of this record, Mrs. Thompson, in reply to my enquiries, told me that the personal description ascribed by Nelly to Elsie is not in accordance with the facts; for Elsie, whom Mrs. Thompson knew well, and saw as late as four days before her death, had colourless lightish brown hair cut short and straight across her forehead. Elsie died at about six years of age. Nelly, who died when only four months old, had very dark brown curly hair, most unlike her mother’s.—*Note by J. G. P.*

if awake, suddenly, and shut them again; but he was really asleep all the time [D].

“There was an old lady belonging to the old gentleman. She wore a funny cap—her hair was very thin” [R.].

[An ordinary Dutch cap might appear “funny” to an English person.]

“The old gentleman wore white stockings [R.] or light drab.

“As he sat in arm-chair with his legs stretched out, his toes looked big and bulgy; the boots were cut open all round.”

[He *may* have worn very worn-out slippers.]

“He seemed dead after he sat in chair. He seemed to be taken ill in his chair before taking to his bed [R.]. There was a striped cover on back of chair [D.].

“He wore a hat like Tennyson [R.].

“What was Angelina? It sounds like that in English. She has to do with this gentleman (*i.e.*, van E.) [W.].

“It is a ‘clog’ country where the old gentleman lives [R.]. The old gentleman went to stay there—he had relations there. The noise of clogs could be heard on the pavement. He had greasy hair like yours (to van E.)—only darker [R.]. He was large of frame [R.]—tall—not stout [R.]—looked very shrunk in face.”

[“Rather shrunk” would be correct.]

“Had a fur collar when he went to clog country. He went to a great many different countries [R.]. I’m not sure whether he is alive or dead.

“The glove gives an influence of a live person; but the incidents related seem to refer to a dead person.

“There was like a German lady at your house, who knew all about this old gentleman. I think he was her father. ‘Netherlands’ associated with this old gentleman [R.]. The lady is not exactly of the same nationality as the old gentleman, she seems nearer to a German.”

[Mrs. van Eeden is the daughter of the old gentleman. He had a German daughter-in-law.]

“The old gentleman belongs to a country where there is a Queen [R.] not a Republic. The lady seems to have belonged to a Republic [W.].

“Some one belonging to the old gentleman was drowned in a pleasure accident a long time ago. It was a young man. He is all excited now when I asked him to recite an account of it.

“The old gentleman never forgot it, although the accident occurred when he was a young man.”

[Van E. has not been able to get any confirmation of this.]

“I think the accident occurred when larking, not a serious accident.”

*Van E.* “Was the old gentleman present at the accident?”

*Nelly.* “The old gentleman wrings his hands: it carries him back to sad times. The old gentleman has an old lady belonging to him who breathed with great difficulty—not asthma, but very difficult breathing” [R.].

“When the old gentleman went out he likes to have a boy—a young man—with him, grandson or child of friend, about 15 or 16 years old. A friend, not a servant.”

[This may have been his youngest son.]

“He used to wear a wedding ring: no stones in it—a tight ring—it was quite tight. [R. It is the Dutch custom for men to wear wedding rings; van E. himself was wearing a similar ring, which fitted very tightly.]

“He used to wear a scarf put round—a Wellington scarf—a stock.”

Van E. “What colour?”

Nelly. “Black [R.]. Very narrow collar indeed—the necktie didn’t allow much collar to show.”

(To van E.). “The old gentleman is delighted to give you this information.”

(Van E. hands a small box to Mrs. T. The box contained hair. The *box* had been in a lady’s possession several years. The *hair* belonged to her dead husband. This may explain the subsequent confusion.)

“Sister’s influence more than anything.”

(Van E. says there is something inside box.)

“May I take it out?” (“Yes”) “That’s very dead—that’s *after* it was dead [R.].

“This seems to have been cut after lady was dead.” [It was cut from the head of the *husband* after death.]

“It was a Holland—Dutch lady. She had always to go away for her health [R.] because she was always hot and cold all over—had to wipe her head.”

[The latter part of the sentence would be true of the *husband*, but not of the *wife*. The pantomime which the medium made when speaking of wiping the head reminded van E. strongly of the death scene of the man to whom the hair belonged.]

“This lady used to wear a cross. You have the cross at your (*i.e.* van E.’s) house belonging to this lady. When she was ill she went away to get better, but came home worse.”

[On subsequent enquiry van E. found that the lady still possesses the cross at her house, and that the statement about the lady’s health was true. Neither of these facts were known to van E. at the time of the sitting.]

“She had one or two unsuccessful trips for her health. This is what Mrs. Cartwright<sup>1</sup> says [R.].

“There was an Anna belonging to this lady [D.].

“Great suddenness of influence about this lady’s death—peculiarly sad circumstances connected with her death [R. of husband.] . . .”

(In accordance with Nelly’s instructions, Mrs. T. is awakened, in order that Nelly may go and get further information.)

<sup>1</sup> “Mrs. Cartwright” is the name of a former teacher of Mrs. Thompson’s, who occasionally purports to “control.”

*Van E.* (to Nelly): "You made one mistake—enquire about it."

(Trance breaks 11.40 a.m. and is resumed at 12.15 p.m.)

*Nelly.* "What was that dead baby associated with hair lady? It was not properly born."

*Van E.* "I don't know."

[*Van E.* could not on enquiry find out anything about the baby.]

(To *van E.*): "You didn't want me to tell you that the lady went away for her health. I don't know if that was the mistake."

[See above.]

"A married lady belonging to this hair—not young lady [R.]. It was not a developed baby, but it is alive now. Was Vanden? Can't say it. Vandenen? Begins like 'Van' in the street. Then 'endenen.'

"Begins with E—'endenen'—not like 'Hendon,' but 'endenen.'

"Sophie that was [?]

"Do you know that name like Makosky (?) [No meaning.]

"They [sic] don't speak English like this gentleman (*i.e.* *van E.*), but they talk like very foreignly. They do speak English, but not fluently." [This would be true of the relations connected with both pieces of hair.]

"Hair lady connected intimately with 'Meddi Makosti'<sup>1</sup> and a Louise.

"Louise was a relation of hair lady [R.].

"Hair lady used to make very beautiful lace for her amusement—worked it with her fingers [W.].

"She used to look after an old gentleman—like her father—looked after house and superintended for an old gentleman with a drab-coloured dog [D.]. But this was not *the* old gentleman with the gloves [R.].

(To *van E.*). "I wish you would think about the dead baby. The hair lady has the entire management of the dead baby [?].

"I can't make it clearer. I've muddled it all out as distinctly as I can.

"It seems as if the lady's name was Utrecht—like Utrecht velvet." [Husband and wife both lived, and husband died at Utrecht. See séance of December 4th, 1899.]

<sup>1</sup> On November 21st, 1901, Mrs. Thompson, after reading the proofs of this record, spontaneously informed me that she had noticed an unexplained reference to "Meddi Makoski." She then explained that her daughter, Rosie, both for some long time before, and probably also at the date of *van E.*'s sittings, had been at school with a girl of the name of "Meddi Makoski." Mrs. Thompson had only heard the name pronounced, and is uncertain of the correct spelling. Her daughter had on several occasions spoken about the girl at home, and her nationality had been discussed. When giving me this information, Mrs. Thompson remarked: "You see how things in my conscious memory come into the trance communications." On November 25th, 1901, Mrs. Thompson's daughter, Rosie, wrote to me as follows: "Mother asked me to find out the date the three Miecznikowska girls left school. They left Midsummer, 1899. These girls were not my friends, but I remember quite well (so does father) how we discussed their nationality, the mother being Portuguese and the father Polish. I had never seen the name written until to-day; when the girls were at school we always spoke of them as the 'Medgemakoskis.'"—*Note by J. G. P.*

(Van E. hands to Mrs. T. the same hair in envelope that he had previously given her at séance on November 29, 1899).

*Van E.* "Is it alive or dead?"

*Nelly.* "Dead lady. It belonged to an older piece than the other; it belonged to an older person. [W.]

(To van E.) "Why didn't you bring your boy with you? You ought to have brought him. It would have been an education for him."

[Van E. recognised this as an appropriate remark.]

(To van E.) "You are going to see my mother in Paris next year. You will be wearing a lighter-coloured felt hat at Paris than you are wearing now. But if you remember this prophecy you must not go and buy one on purpose."

[Van E. did meet Mrs. T. in Paris in 1900; but Mrs. T. in her normal state would have known this to be not improbable. He did not wear a lighter-coloured hat].

"You were talking two years ago in Brussels at an association."

*J. G. P.* "What was it about?"

*Nelly.* "Stuff that no one can understand,—philosophy, like Professor Sidgwick. I don't know any more."

*J. G. P.* "In what part of Brussels?"

*Nelly.* "It was a Congress. You know the 'North Pole'—'Pôle du Nord'—where people sing and dance. Turning out of the street in which was the North Pole was the big hall where the Congress was held.

"I saw Dr. Bramwell in the street there. That gentleman<sup>1</sup> (*i.e.* van E.) and Dr. Bramwell were at Congress together."

[Van E. has never given a lecture at Brussels. He attended a lecture given at the Université Nouvelle about two years ago, but did not meet Dr. Bramwell there. Mrs. Thompson has been in Brussels.]

"Does Marie Louise belong to this? (*i.e.* to hair in envelope).

"Do you know Linden? I associate the hair with 'Unter den Linden'—not with the place, but with the name 'Linden.'"

[This is the family name of intimate friends of the husband; and this fact, unknown to van E. at the time of the sitting, was discovered by him on subsequent inquiry.]

"The old gentleman when he wanted anything couldn't get up to ring the bell, but had a stick by his side with which to knock on the floor. The old gentleman told me that. I get clear messages from the old gentleman. He says some one—a lady—came to him and brought him some funny cakes—baked—to eat. It's like Martha—the name of the lady—Martha S."

[Mrs. van Eeden, whose name is Martha, attended on the old gentleman, her father, in his last illness. Van E. states that the stick in bed with the dying man and the cakes are very characteristic. At the sitting van E. could not say if the statement about the cakes was correct or not, but verified it on his return home.]

<sup>1</sup> *Note by J. G. P.* "My original notes run 'van E. and Dr. Bramwell were at Congress together,' but I feel sure Nelly did not mention Dr. van Eeden by name. I probably wrote 'van E.' as a short equivalent to 'that gentleman.'"



‘I see capital S by you (*i.e.* van E.) all the time. The name is like—a short name—about five letters. Schlips—Schloss—not Schloss.

“He wasn’t so patient as you are (to van E.). He is most impatient. He would do like that (very characteristic pantomime of impatient gestures with hands).

“It is like Schweitz—not Schweppes—an S H feeling about it—Schwort.

“The old gentleman is very ‘fummy’ [R.]. He poisoned his dog—because the dog couldn’t get better—a long time before his own death [D.]. He always wanted to rule [R.].

“Do you know van Eeden?—(pronounced ‘Eden’). Somebody said that, —somebody slipped in and said that, I think. Freidhof—Fitz,—begins like Frederick and then goes off peculiar. Amsterdam, Freidham, Freidher. Amsterdam came like a picture right across. Freidham was a man belonging to this gentleman (*i.e.* van E.), but younger than he is.”

[Van E. was living at Amsterdam when the old gentleman died. “Fray” represents the English pronunciation of the name by which the old gentleman called van E.]

“Your real name is Von Savant—only they don’t call you that.” [Nelly referred to van E. as “Mr. Savant” at beginning of séance on November 29th, 1899.]

(To van E.). “Will you be sure to ask me about the name beginning with S next time?” . . .

(To van E.). “Don’t have any of that red sauce with fish at Cambridge. It wouldn’t suit you.” [See second séance of December 4, 1899, p. 100.]

“Why that’s—Talks like a Dutchman.”

(J. G. P. asks Mrs. Thompson on awaking what she heard last as she came out of trance, and she replied):

“She’s talking double Dutch—or something like that.”

(Sitting ends 1.15 p.m.)

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SITTING III.—DECEMBER 4TH, 1899.

At 5 Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge; Sitting begins 5 p.m. Present: Mrs. Thompson, Dr. F. van Eeden, and Mrs. Verrall.

[Notes taken by Mrs. Verrall.]

*Nelly.* “Don’t mesmerise mother.”

*Van E.* “No.”

*Nelly.* “I see you doing it to people.”

*Van E.* “No, I won’t do it.”

*Nelly.* “I can see in your past life that you hypnotise. If you are not a foreigner, what are you called ‘Frederick’ for?” [The name “Frederick” was pronounced oddly: an attempt at the Dutch pronunciation.] “How do you pronounce it?”

*Van E.* “Frédèrik.”

*Nelly.* "Yes. I telled you that before. Somebody's got something the matter with the eyes. You hypnotise."

[When van E. treats patients he always begins with touching their eyes so as to close them.]

*Van E.* "What person?"

*Nelly.* "I don't know what."

*Van E.* "Was it long ago?"

*Nelly.* "Not while you were in London."

*Van E.* "Where was it?"

*Nelly.* "Like in ———. I know your name is Mr. Bosom, Bostim. Come here, Mrs. Verrall, let me tell it to you. (To van E.). You are Mr. Gardener Eden" (or "garden of Eden").

["Gardener Eden"—not a bad joke on Nelly's part: as van E. farms at Bussum].

*Nelly.* "Mr. van Eeden—It is Bus-som."

*Van E.* "I will put you on the right track. The place where I live is Bussum. Have you a message from the old gentleman? (Gives the gloves.) There was a word with an S in it."

*Nelly.* "If it does not come now, you won't be cross?"

*Van E.* "No."

*Nelly.* "Mr. Myers has got a *c* in his name. This gentleman (*i.e.* van E.) has a *k*. [*i.e.* Frederic Myers and Frederik van Eeden.] You have that silly name of Bussum because you are a foreigner. It's a name of Holland."

*Van E.* "Can you tell me about the old gentleman? Put your hand inside the glove."

*Nelly.* "He's got somebody belonging to him who is a doctor."

*Van E.* "How do you know?"

*Nelly.* "He says: 'My son is a doctor'—not in that sort of talking."

[The old gentleman was van E.'s father-in-law, but had also a son—who is a doctor in Oriental Languages.]

*Van E.* "Is it a son?"

*Nelly.* "No, it's like a brother. They are all medical; there's a lot of medical men belonging, not all medical, but doctors."

*Van E.* "Can you distinguish his voice? He wanted to say a word with an S."

*Nelly.* "The lady belonging to the hair is alive" [R.].

*Van E.* "You made a mistake about the hair, you mistook the man's hair for the lady's. The hair was in possession of a lady."

*Nelly.* "You have a dead brother who is a genius [W.]. Do you know what Ront . . . It's a gentleman, not the one of the gloves, that you are friendly with. He's just had some one died, belonging to him—van Ron. . . ." (an attempt followed to pronounce von Renterghem). [It should be noted here that the name von Renterghem occurs next to van Eeden's in the list of members of the S.P.R., and that van E.'s address, Bussum, appears in the same list.—J. G. P.] "He writed with you about mesmerism—a review—a foreign name."

[Van Renterghem and van E. practised and wrote about hypnotism in collaboration.<sup>1</sup>]

(To Mrs. Verrall). "This gentleman (*i.e.* van E.) and another are fond of hypnotism."

*Van E.* "Oh, I see."

[Van. E. made this exclamation as it suddenly struck him what the name was which Nelly was endeavouring to pronounce.]

*Nelly.* "He was fond of joining you in partnership when you talk mesmerism. He had a lady belonging to him who died."

*Van E.* "Recently?"

*Nelly.* "Yes. Ask him will he give something belonging to that lady next time. I'll tell you all about it."

[This reference to a "lady that died" has no relevance, so far as van E. can ascertain.]

*Van E.* "Can you tell me about the old gentleman and the word?"

*Nelly.* "Shuber, like Schubert, not Shuber—Sh—Sh—Sh—"

*Van E.* "Can you tell me the name of the old gentleman or of his favourite place?"

*Nelly.* "When he was alive, you hadn't got a queen. There was some one else. There was a great commotion, he remembers all about it. Through a king or a queen there was a commotion in the town. He had a Charles [W.] and a Frederick belonging to him—and like an Eden."

[The old gentleman died in 1883. In 1879 the second marriage of William III., King of the Netherlands, was celebrated.]

"When he slept in bed he had a night-cap on—everybody does not wear night-caps."

[It was not a night-cap, but usually a silk wrapper.]

"He has somebody belonging to him ill now, not very ill, has to lie down and be careful."

*Van E.* "How do you know?"

*Nelly.* "I see a picture of a lady lying down, she ought to be in bed. She's not well at all."

[R. for surviving wife of the old gentleman.]

"The old gentleman had a long pipe—with a long stem: he's not smoking it—in his hand—it's on a rack on the wall by the fire-place."

*Van E.* "Does he never smoke it?"

*Nelly.* "It's at the back of the chair where he used to sit. [He never used to smoke.] There's lots of books in that room, lots and lots of books [R.]."

<sup>1</sup> On November 21st, 1901, Mrs. Thompson, after reading the proofs of this record, spontaneously told me that she had been given a copy of *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. XI. (1895), by Mr. Myers, who wished her to read his paper on *Resolute Credulity*. On looking into the volume on November 21st, 1901, she noticed that it contained a review by Dr. C. L. Tuckey of a work on hypnotism, written in collaboration by Dr. F. van Eeden and Dr. W. A. van Renterghem; but that, so far as she was aware, this was the first time that she was conscious of having seen it.—*Note by J. G. P.*

He could think stronger than he could talk. You (van E.) can talk—he could think stronger.”

[It was a matter of concern to the old gentleman that he could not talk so well as he could think.]

*Van E.* “Does he say that himself?”

*Nelly.* “Yes. He’s got a very magnetic sort of hand, it would soothe your head if it were put on it.”

*Van E.* “The old gentleman’s or mine?”

*Nelly.* “The old gentleman’s. He did not exercise it. Have you got the old gentleman’s black silk tie? It has been with this” (*i.e.* gloves).

*Van E.* “No. But I can ask. Ask for the word with an S. Is it the name of a spirit?”

*Nelly.* “Yes. When he says it he shortens it. Shuber—Shulof—Sh—Sh—

“The old gentleman’s head was muddled before he died. Shofto. When he says it distinctly I’ll tell you. What is Bossom?”

*Van E.* “That’s where I live.”

*Nelly.* “He wants you to send his love to them—to those people at Bossom.”

*Van E.* “Can you tell me the name of his favourite place?”

*Nelly.* “Am-felt—hamfelt—handfelt—belonging to you.” [The name ought to have been Haarlem.] “When the old gentleman went out in the garden there were white things sticking up on the right-hand side, like stone things [not recognised]. He keeps imitating a violin, he wants to be where they played the violin. There’s a very large church-like building, where glass windows are. He likes to hear the music at the church place. I am trying to find the name.” [Perhaps the church at Haarlem, where concerts are often held.]

*Van E.* “It’s nearly right.”

*Nelly.* “It’s like Shovelt. It’s difficult. They have to say the word and tell Mrs. Cartwright, and she tells me.”

*Mrs. V.* “You were very clever with my names, Nelly, you saw pictures of them; but it’s easier in English.”

*Nelly.* “He [*i.e.* the old gentleman] could speak English, but not like you (*i.e.* van E.) [R.]. I won’t talk about Schuman any more. I’ll talk about something else. . . .”

“Who’s the William belonging to the old gentleman?” [His eldest son.]

“He’s alive, not very well, going about as if right; may have a breakdown, is overdoing it. You must not let him. His energy is more than his vitality,—too strong for his strength. When he starts a thing he does not listen to reason. He should be more rational.” [All this is very probable.]

“The old gentleman is concerned.”

*Van E.* “Why?”

*Nelly.* “He is concerned about William. He ought to take recreation between. William’s got thin hair, he has to comb it over.” [Quite wrong about hair.]

*Van E.* "Is it William?"

*Nelly.* "It's like Willem, Willeme" (pronounced Willemer).

[Very much like the Dutch pronunciation.]

*Van E.* "Yes, that's it."

*Nelly.* "He's got thin hair [W.]. I'll come to your country. I'll come and talk with you. You've got somebody you can make talk when put to sleep. If you say, 'Now, Nelly,' I'll come if I can."

*Van E.* "Will you come in my dreams?"

*Nelly.* "But you've got curtains round your bed. I don't like them. They are old-fashioned now."

[Bed curtains are becoming rare in Holland. Van E.'s sleeping-room being at the same time his study, he has a drapery hanging before his bed.]

[See below for the dream visions of Nelly experienced by van E. on nights of Jan. 2-3 and 14-15, 1900.]

*Van E.* "If you saw better you would see why I have curtains."

*Nelly.* "Because it's got a thing to hide it. Because you don't want all the people to see. You are funny."

*Van E.* "What's the matter?"

*Nelly.* "I don't know."

*Van E.* "I put the curtain up at night."

*Nelly.* "I don't know if I am in the right house. It's got a shiny floor. There's a cupboard with little drawers." [There is a cupboard with little drawers in van E.'s house and a floor with mattings.] "You'll faithfully promise not to put mother to sleep. There is some person at your house, whom you might put asleep as a medium; she is very poorly."

*Van E.* "I can't understand whom you mean."

*Nelly.* "She has a pain at the top of her spine."

[There is somebody answering to that description living with van E., but he never hypnotises her and probably never will.] . . .

*Nelly* (to Mrs. Verrall). "Perhaps I'll talk secrets when you go away. I shan't call you doctor (to van E.), though the old gentleman does. I can't oblige you and call you doctor. You have not enough bottles, you don't smell enough of disinfectants."

[Van E. does not practise medicine much now.]

"What was Paul? He belonged to the old gentleman—a person not very near. The old gentleman knows all about Paul."

[Paul is the name of van E.'s youngest son, born after the old gentleman's death. Note the use of the present tense, "knows."]

"It is not your fault, nor Mrs. Verrall's, but the people all come and talk at once. The old gentleman has a telling voice [R.], not loud, but you could hear it in a large room to the furthest corner; it reached out."

*Van E.* "Can you ask about the hair?"

*Nelly.* "The lady had it in a box with things that belonged to another dead person [D.]. Your real name is foreign savant. I'll forgive you for saying Spain to mother."

[On walking away from the house with Mrs. Thompson after his first



sitting, when his nationality had not yet been discovered, van E. had talked to her about Spain, not without some intention of seeing if Nelly would follow up a wrong hint.]

*Van E.* "So you have heard that?"

*Nelly.* "Yes and another thing that Mr. Piddington said, that mother did not struggle, nor pull faces, when she goes in a trance."

[After the second sitting, when Mrs. Thompson had left the room, and perhaps the house, van E. and J. G. P. had talked about the quiet and easy form of Mrs. T.'s trances.]

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SITTING IV.—DECEMBER 4TH, 1899.

At 5 Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge; 8.30 p.m. Present: Mrs. Thompson, Dr. F. van Eeden, and Mrs. Verrall.

*Van E.* "Why did you tell me not to eat the red sauce?"

*Nelly.* "I told you you would have it here."

*Van E.* "Yes, but was it dangerous for me?"

*Nelly.* "Oh, no. Mrs. Verrall, do you often have it? It is funny you had red sauce with white fish. At mother's house you would have had white sauce."

*Van E.* "But why was I not to take it?"

*Nelly.* "Well, don't you feel thirsty?"

*Van E.* "Not at all."

*Nelly.* "Are you a vegetable man?"

*Van E.* "A vegetarian, yes; but I sometimes eat fish, not to be rude to people."

[See end of Sitting II., December 1st, 1899. Van E. writes: "At dinner, remarking the red sauce, I asked if Mrs. Verrall had it often. Nelly was evidently very much amused at this incident. She could give no explanation why she had forbidden me to partake of the sauce. But her question if I was a vegetarian is very curious, the sauce being coloured with cochineal.

"If this is the true explanation, we must admit that some other intelligence was aware of the two facts: that I am a vegetarian, and that I should have at Cambridge sauce coloured red with cochineal, which would thus '*not suit me.*' Nelly was evidently unaware of the connection."

*Note by Mrs. Verrall.*—"The sauce was anchovy, but coloured with cochineal, as we always have it. I had given no orders about the sauce, having only said there would be boiled fish. When I selected the John Dory I hesitated whether I would have a Dutch sauce, but decided to leave the question of sauce to the cook."]

*Nelly.* "Have you got Scholmas now? It's like Schoolbred; it begins like that. Do you belong to Mr. Kruger?"

*Van E.* "No, he's no relation of mine."

*Nelly.* "Well, you say Dutch."

*Van E.* "Kruger is Afrikander, not Dutch."

[This may refer to van E.'s political sympathies, but perhaps the conversation at dinner had turned on the war.]

*Nelly.* "Have you got your brother's hair?"

*Van E.* "No."

*Nelly.* "I wish you would bring it."

(*Van E.* gives the same box as at second sitting.)

*Nelly.* "Not that hair—not Utrecht-hair."

*Van E.* "Why not? (To Mrs. V., who was not sure of having caught the name rightly) the name is right."

[*Van E.* was struck with the expression "Utrecht-hair," because it proved that the name Utrecht was not said at random at the séance on December 1st, 1899.]

*Nelly.* "It belongs to a dead person, who had a lot of pain before they died. It makes mother feel ill. Had he got cancer on the liver? horrible pain." . . .

[“The voice and gestures of Mrs. T. produced a strong impression on me of very great internal pain.”—*Note by Mrs. Verrall.*]

*Mrs. V.* "Perhaps you might leave a message with me about it some other time."

*Nelly.* "Mr. Hypnotism (*i.e.*, *van E.*), the old gentleman is not the pain person."

[It was the old gentleman though, who died from cancer of the liver. The Utrecht person died from pneumonia.]

"The person of the hair is nearer to your heart [*R.*]. Besides you there is a Frederik belonging to the person of the hair [*W.*]. What was Anna, not quite that, Amma? When this was—there are studs belonging to the man, because he was a male person, but he was not old, not with whiskers, he was young."

[He was about forty.]

"He had studs with something in the middle, not plain gold [*D.*]. Mrs. Verrall, there's a Theodore belonging to you,<sup>1</sup> there's a Theodore belonging to this gentleman [*D.*]. Don't mix them. There seems a Karl, a great friend of this gentleman. This one could sing, you cannot (to *van E.*); he could play a music that you blew, not a big thing (imitating a horn), just blow."

[He was very musical, and always wanted to play a trumpet, which he did not, because his wife did not approve.]

"He's got something the matter with his inside, he's ever so uncomfortable, he could hardly breathe.

"This is a description. I can ask him. He has a brother alive now [*W.*] and a dog [*W.*] The dog and the brother are in the same house.

"There's a flat piano where this man lived [*D.*].—not a stand-up one like that (pointing to piano). He used to drink quantities of milk [*R.*]. He used to have . . . he was rather an experimenter [*R.*], fond of trying to

<sup>1</sup>See Mrs. Verrall's paper, "Notes on the Trance Phenomena of Mrs. Thompson," p. 176.

make something out of nothing, not mechanical ; he was clever in the head for thinking, for inventions" [R.].

*Van E.* "Does he speak to you?"

*Nelly.* "Yes, but yet I can't say he does ; he speaks to some one who tells me. It's a difficult personality. He was not free, he resented outsiders trying to know his affairs [R.]. He only told a choice few ; he was very reticent ; that's the word" [R.].

*Van E.* "Quite different from the old gentleman?"

*Nelly.* "Yes, more reserved [R.]. Wrapped up like a cigar you have to unroll, unroll him and find what he is, find the tobacco. That's an illustration. People misjudge him, thought he was too much wrapped up [R.]. He was a bright spirit ; would not do any one any harm [R.]. He went to Italy [R.]. I think with you, with a Frederick. I think you can find that out."

*Van E.* "He went to Italy, but not with a Frederick."

*Nelly.* "He has an uncle now alive [W.], who's a military man. I'm never sure about relations."

[Many relations of deceased were military men. His uncle, who was an officer, is dead.]

*Van E.* "Let us say a relation."

*Nelly.* "You should not have let him die ; he was just beginning to be at the very best of his life. People a lot older belonging to him could have better died. He was not what you call pious or religious [R.]. He had a high sense of goodness in nature, a religious feeling [R.]. He was a strange character, a powerful character [R.] in a weak frame [W.].

"He always wore button boots [W.]. Sometimes had gaiter pieces, spats . . . perhaps that's the buttons. I can see like gaiters, leggings. Not all alike on his feet.

"He used to wear a hat like yours, a brown hat" [D.].

*Van E.* "Has he a message?"

*Nelly.* "He wants you to collect those papers and finish it."

*Mrs. V.* (to *van E.*). "Do you understand?"

*Van E.* "Yes."

[Perhaps this is about an unfinished literary work, in which he might have been interested.]

(Here *Mrs. T.* seemed to want her handkerchief. *Mrs. Verrall* found it and gave it to her. She put it to her face.)

*Nelly.* "The gentleman coughs. He makes me cough. Don't take him to the hospital. I don't like this foreign country. I don't like this foreign country—O dear ! O dear !—get me out of this hospital. *Mrs. Verrall*—It's not hurting my mother. The gentleman tried to talk—I saw them taking some one to the hospital and thought it was me. I didn't want to go."

["All through this part of the sitting the impression of misery and distress made on me was exceedingly vivid. It was as if a scene was being vividly described of some one in a foreign country taken against his will to a hospital."—*Note by Mrs. Verrall.*]

Van E. has not been able to ascertain what incident in the deceased's life was described here. Some time before his death one of the employés at his office, a German, was taken ill, and he had advised him to go to the hospital, where he (the German) died.]

"You'll finish the papers and put them together and write a little bit at the end and print them. Never mind the money, that'll come all right."

*Van E.* "Thank you."

*Nelly.* "Give me the pocket-book."

*Van E.* "Is this it?" (giving a red and a brown pocket-book).

[Van E. gave his own pocket-book, which had no connection with the deceased.]

*Nelly.* "Yes, I think I mean this. It does not seem to be that gentleman's influence. What's that red pocket-book?" (Takes red in left and brown in right hand.)

*Van E.* "Is it what you mean?"

*Nelly.* "Yes." (So Mrs. Verrall's note: but van E. thought the answer was negative.) "I want to tell you. That gentleman of the hair likes silk handkerchiefs better than white ones. Not a rich gentleman, but thought that if he lived longer he would have had a lot of money for it; just when he was going to have it, he died."

[He was not at all poor, but started a new line of business shortly before he died.]

"You went up a lot of steps round and round, and both stood at the top looking. [See first sitting, p. 89.] He was very fond of talking and thinking about stars, astrology. If you were to find—he's got some treatise on it" [D.].

[These words were said more slowly, as if some one else were speaking. This led Mrs. Verrall to say:]

*Mrs. V.* "He is speaking now, is he not?"

*Nelly.* "Yes. He has a paper on astronomy" [D.].

*Van E.* "What has he done with it?"

*Nelly.* "Marta—Martin—not in our house, but among them. Foreign coins—he had a lot of coins" [D.].

*Van E.* "Where?"

*Nelly.* "He used to wear a money piece on his watch. Three years before he died he went across water to a foreign country. I don't know if it was America. [It was Italy.] As a very young man he had typhoid fever [D.]. He has got a shiny mark here (touching left temple or a little lower). What do you call it?"

*Mrs. V.* "A scar."

*Van E.* (to Mrs. V.) "What do you call this part of the face?"

*Mrs. V.* "The temple."

*Nelly.* "Rather lower than the temple, Mrs. Verrall, on the upper part of the cheek. Not very big. Just enough to know."

[The scar was on the breast.]

"He used to wear a ring. I can't think what you were doing when you went round up those stairs.

“There’s Alfred belonging to him : he’s much associated with Alfred [D.] He always used to do like this :”

(Here Mrs. T. rose and walked to the fire, put her hands behind her, and bent forward, rising on her toes, as she talked.)

[This was most characteristic.]

“When talking he used to bend forward, rock in front of fire, nearly tip over. He didn’t mind getting wet, he didn’t take care enough. He used to go out without an umbrella when it was pouring.”

[The pneumonia from which he died was the consequence of exposure.]

“Now it’s all gone dark, foggy. But I will come back.” (After a pause.) “There was an old gentleman cried ever so, and was so sorry when he died [D.] And a young lady [R.] Lady much younger than the gentleman.”

(On awaking Mrs. T. said that she felt as if at the top of a high building.)

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SITTING V.—JUNE 2ND, 1900.

At Hendon, Middlesex, 10 a.m. Present : Mrs. Thompson, Lady X., Dr. van Eeden.

*Nelly.* “I want those treasures of the pareel. Is it you that wrapped it up?”

*Van E.* “Yes.”

*Nelly.* “Are these people dead? Perhaps it’s your influence.” (Takes pareel which contains relics of young suicide.) “I am frightened. I feel as if I want to run away.” (To van E.) “That lady won’t be cross.” (To Lady X.) “Don’t go away. I feel rather frightened. What’s Marfa, Martha? She’s got a lot of people belonging to her.”

*Van E.* “That’s my wife.”

*Nelly.* “She was not very well. It is better now. She went to lie down [D.] Old gentleman sends his love to Martha. He says: ‘My love, Martha.’

“This” (pointing to pareel) “is a much younger gentleman. Very studified, fond of study” [R.]

*Van E.* “Why were you frightened?”

*Nelly.* “Because something seemed like a shoek to me. He’s not a rich gentleman. If he lived a bit longer he would have had more. He wanted to make some” [R.]

*Van E.* “How do you know?”

*Nelly.* “Mrs. Cartwright tells me.”

*Van E.* “Ask her why you were frightened.”

*Nelly.* “She says because I was afraid of making faults.”

[Obviously wrong.]

“Gentleman used to have headache at the baek of his head. He used to take tablets to make his headache go better” [D.]

“Stout William. Had a bad heart. Used to walk baekwards and forwards under some arches. A very knobly stick. He’s got a sister



alive, living in Holland. He was not very patient. He'd stick to his work. . . .”

[All references to “Stout William” unrecognised.]

*Van E.* “You have not told me the principal thing about this man” (parcel).

*Nelly.* “The principal thing is his sudden death [R.]. I can tell you better when she (Lady X.) is not there. It frightens me. Everybody was frightened, seeming to say ‘O dear! good gracious!’ . . .”

“This gentleman could shoot. He was rather an out-of-doors man. What a funny hat he used to wear. Round with a cord around. He had a velvet jacket. You have a velvet jacket too, but not real velvet, and like trousers [R.]. But that gentleman had real velvet jacket.” [References to dress D.] “I can't see any blood about this gentleman, but a horrible sore place: somebody wiped it all up. It looks black” [the bullet wound probably]. “I am happy because that man is happy now. He was in a state of muddle. And when he realised what he had done, he said it is better to make amends and be happy.”

*Van E.* “How did he make amends?”

*Nelly.* “When any people want to kill themselves he goes behind them and stops their hands, saying, ‘just wait.’ He stops their hands from cutting their throats. He says, ‘Don't do that: you will wake up and find yourselves in another world haunted with the facts, and that's a greater punishment.’ He's got such a horror that anybody would do the same thing, and he asks them to stop, and it makes him so happy.” [He cut his own throat, but recovered; and afterwards shot himself.]

(To *van E.*) “You don't seem to have any whiskers. I don't see your head properly. Some one covers up your head. He covers up your head to show how his own head was covered up. O dear, isn't it funny? You must not cut off your head when you die.” [The suicide's head was covered up when he was found dead. See p. 82.]

*Nelly.* “Who is old Frederik?”

*Van E.* “My father, I presume.”

*Nelly.* “I like him.”

*Van E.* “Tell about Lady X.'s grandchild. How did it die?”

*Nelly.* “Was it croup? Something the matter with the throat.” [Wrong. There may have been some confusion with the suicide.]

“The gentleman is bigger than you. He will try and talk through mother. How do you pronounce Hendrik?”

*Van E.* “Very good, it is Hendrik.”

*Nelly* says good-bye to everybody, and to Lady X., “I like you.” . . .

[*Note by van E.*—I did not quite remember the name of the suicide, and thought it might be Hendrik. A few days later I dreamt about another friend of mine called “Sam,” and I called out, “Sam! Sam!” in my dream. I remembered then that the name of the dead man was also Sam, or Samuel.]

## SITTING VI.—JUNE 5TH, 1900.

At Mrs. Thompson's house, at 3.30 P.M. Present: Mrs. Thompson, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Dr. van Eeden, Mr. F. N. Hales (the latter unknown to Mrs. T. and to van E.).

Nelly asks for the parcel: seems rather disturbed by the presence of a stranger (Mr. Hales), says "This is a secret," and asks Mr. Hales to make no notes.

Mr. Myers asks if she wants the stranger to leave.

*Nelly.* "No, but when one of your friends has committed suicide, you don't want anybody to know." (To van E.) "Have you got Martha's letter?"

*Van E.* "No."

*Nelly.* "It is a letter on tinted paper: she says somebody is much better than they were." [No confirmation of this.]

"This person (of the parcel) talks foreign language [R.]. Has got something about the throat" [*i.e.* the wound resulting from the unsuccessful attempt at suicide] "talks not very distinctly [R.]. He can talk English a bit, but not many [R.]. He is standing before a desk with white knobs on it [D.]. He was very disappointed and got depressed and got a headache. Worried much [R.].

"Very friendly, and used to go about a good deal with a tall, fair man, fair complexion." [He was intimate with a tall, fair man, who in turn committed suicide two days after him.] "They had a good quarrel." [Probably right.] "I don't like that fair man. I don't believe in him, don't trust him. It was a shock to him (parcel-man) to find this out about his friend [D.].

"Masters—who is Mr. Masters? [?]"

"What has this man (parcel-man) got on his left forefinger? A shiny mark on his left forefinger" [D.].

*Van E.* "How do you know his throat was cut?"

*Nelly.* "I see it. An open windpipe."

*Van E.* "And did he die from that?"

*Nelly.* "Of course. How could one live with an open windpipe?"

[“This was a plain hint, but Nelly did not take it. The wound in the throat, resulting from the first attempt at suicide, healed; the second time he shot himself. This shows both how Nelly concludes falsely from partial information and how slowly she takes hints.”—*Note by van E.*]

(Mr. Myers and Mr. Hales leave the room.)

*Nelly.* (to van E.) "I want you by yourself. I do not like them to know all these things. Would you like me to hold the parcel?" (Takes the parcel. Long pause.) "Ought not I to be frightened? He did it himself. He was a very great friend of yours. Had greatest admiration for you. Before he did it he told you about his work. He used to confide in you [R.].

"It is not that he did not want to come himself, but the strange gentle-

man upset him." [This because Nelly had promised that he would talk himself.]

"He was alive when your Queen was crowned [R.]. He had a way, used to be like that (swaying her hand) [R.]. I do love him—really I do. It was a great shock to your wife. She said she could not have thought it of him [R.].

"Something very peculiar happened to his uncle." [Statement about uncle found to be true on subsequent enquiry.]

"Ought I to like the strange gentleman?"

"This gentleman wore ring with a dark stone in it [D.]. He wrote some letters that you read [R.]. You looked at them and said: 'How could a man do such a thing that could write like that?'" ["This was my sentiment, though I do not recollect having said the words."—*Note by van E.*] (Coughing) "Could he not make the people have what he wrote?"

*Van E.* "But he got his writings printed."

*Nelly.* "Yes, but it gave him no satisfaction [R.]. He thought great things of those things [R.]. You wrote a book, he admired it very much [R.]. But he criticised it nevertheless [R.]. He does not seem to have had a wife [R.]. I see him sleeping alone. Do you like that tall friend?"

*Van E.* "You made a mistake about that friend. He is dead."

*Nelly.* "No, that's somebody else."

"This man (the suicide) is not suffering for having done this. He is only sorry to think he caused his friends so much trouble. That tall friend is something like Charles (?). When they found him (the suicide) he could not speak."

*Van E.* "Was he dead?" (No answer.)

*Nelly.* "He said 'Don't take me back to the horror of it.' He did not want any one to make him live." [See p. 82.]

"I never saw any one so gentle. He would not show me any blood on his neck, because he was afraid I should be frightened. He always wanted to save any one from trouble."

"You know somebody named van Renterghem."

*Van E.* "That's a different person."

*Nelly.* "He's going to send something for you to look at [W.]. This is not the cap-man."

*Van E.* "Why a cap-man?"

*Nelly.* "He wears something like a hat, a round hat."

*Van E.* "But that's no cap."

*Nelly.* "Yes, it is a University hat."

*Van E.* "But you have the cap there in the parcel." [The parcel contained a grey travelling cap].

*Nelly.* "Oh, indeed. Nobody knows that. I thought it was his collar and his vest."

[*Van E.* comments: "I remember Nelly speaking once more about a collar in the parcel. She seemed not to know why she used the word cap-man and sought for an explanation, which was wrong." *J. G. P.* comments: "Nelly

always referred to a prominent character of some earlier sittings, at which van E. was not present, as 'the cap-man.' She probably said, 'this is not *the* cap-man,' meaning that there was some association of a cap with this individual, but that he must not be confused with '*the* cap-man.'"]

*Nelly.* "If you ask, you get a lot more things from him. They got something velvet belonging to him. I can't understand his English. He could not speak so well as you [R.]. But he could read it [R.]. Your thirteen year old is a boy" [R.].

*Van E.* "I never said a girl."

*Nelly.* "Does your wife mind? How many Frederiks have you got? I wish . . . This man could put up with inconveniences to oblige other people [R.]. Don't you think it would have all come right if he had waited? [R.]. He says he can see it. He does not want to come back to Bussum [R.]. He is very happy.

"Does your wife always wear a black dress? [W.]. I never see her in anything different [W.]. She wears a wedding ring—and another. She does not wear many rings. The top ring is worn."

"[All this would have been perfectly right if applied to the lady of the Utrecht hair. During my absence she had sent the ring to the goldsmith for repair, as I heard on coming home.]—*Note by van E.*]

*Van E.* "This must be somebody else. She wears no rings at all."

*Nelly.* "It may be somebody belonging to the cap-man. I do not want to put you off. But next Thursday I promise you that he will speak. I want you all by myself."

(Mr. Myers and Mr. Hals enter.)

*Van E.* "Tell me about Miss C.'s little brother."

*Nelly.* "It was a grown-up man saying 'This is my sister.'"

"This matter (the suicide of the cap-man) was all in the newspapers. But he is sorry, because there was a mis-statement of facts in one newspaper. This grieves him, because it was already bad enough for his friends."

[The facts of the case were misrepresented in the newspapers to the detriment of the deceased man's friends, but van E. could not find out what particular newspaper was more to blame than the rest.]

"He wants to know why his life is to be talked over in a foreign country."

(End of Sitting.)

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SITTING VII.—JUNE 7TH, 1900.

At Mrs. Thompson's house. Present: Mrs. Thompson, Dr. van Eeden.

Since the last sitting on June 5th Mrs. Thompson has had a peculiar cough quite unusual to her. It was like that of the suicide. [Mr. Myers writes: "Mrs. T. independently told me that this huskiness began when she first saw van Eeden on this visit of his to England, and continued throughout his stay, and went off half-an-hour after his departure. She had no cold."]

Trance began at 3.15 after a long wait.

*Nelly.* "That gentleman that made my mother have a sore throat, he came and tried to make mother write. He wanted to say something about the name of that place."

Mrs. Thompson showed van E. what she had written on a sheet of paper after the last sitting on June 5th, in a state of trance. It was:

*Votten Velp.* [First name unknown to van E. Velp is a well-known village in Holland. Van E. does not know if his friend had ever been there. See p. 83.]

*Zwart.* [The dead man had no relations of this name, so far as van E. knows. See p. 83.] (An illegible name follows.)

*Wedstrijden.* (Meaning "races," the *ij* being written *u*.)

[Races were held near van E.'s house every year.]

*Nelly.* "He has not come yet, but I am waiting for him."

(Van E. takes the parcel from a small bag.)

*Nelly.* "I don't want that glass bottle with brushes in it. I want the treasures." (Takes parcel.) "The glass bottle is on the washing stand."

[There had been such a bottle in the bag the day before.]

"Do you believe in cremation like he does? He has not got experience by being cremated himself. But he wanted to be" [D.].

(Mrs. Thompson's hand tries to write with pencil on paper. Writes: "Wedstruden" again. Long silence. Mrs. Thompson seems very restless, feeling her throat with her hands.)

*Nelly.* "He wants you to speak Hollands, Hollands."

(Van E. speaks a few words in Dutch, asking if his dead friend heard and understood. After this comes a very expressive pantomime, during which Mrs. Thompson takes van E.'s hands firmly as if to thank him very heartily, making different gestures.)

*Nelly.* "He understood. I was not talking through mother then. Your journey to England has been very successful. I mean political [R.]. I don't mean cap-man."

"This gentleman looks such a big man beside you. All this side (right) is all light. He's got a dead brother [D.]. He was very much surprised to meet him. He was dead longer [D.]. (Speaks hoarsely, like van E.'s dead friend.)

"He could not talk better. All the time he is nearly in possession of mother. That's what makes my mother's throat so." (Rummaging in the parcel.) "I am trying to get a fresh place in the parcel."

"What's 'Vrouw Poss' . . . 'Poss.'"

*Van E.* "Vrouw Post—Ik versta je."

[This was the exact pronunciation—the final "t" being but slightly sounded in Dutch—of a name very familiar to van E. *Vrouw* (= Mrs.) *Post* is a poor workwoman who used to come to his house every day.]

(When van E. repeated the words and said "ik versta je" (I understand) Mrs. Thompson laughed very excitedly and made emphatic gestures of pleasure and satisfaction, patting his head and shoulders, just as his friend would have done.)



*Nelly.* "He is so glad you recognised him. He is not so emotional usually.

"What is Wuitsbergen . . . Criuswergen?"

[This is very nearly the right pronunciation of the word Cruysbergen, the old name of van E.'s place, Walden. Van E. writes: "It is remarkable that it was not at all like the pronunciation of the word as if *read* by an English person, but as if heard. This name is still in use among us, and my dead friend used it always. The new name Waklen, which was often in my mind, and which I even pronounced before Mrs. Thompson, never came in her trance."]

*Van E.* "Ik weet wat je zeggen wil, zeg het nog eens." ("I know what you mean, say it again.")

(Nelly tries again and says "Hans.")

She then says that she is going away for two minutes. Mrs. Thompson awakening says: "I smell some sort of anæsthetic stuff like chloroform. I can taste it in my mouth. I was dreaming about being chloroformed, and your trying to wake me up.")

["This is very remarkable, the taste being probably that of iodoform, which was used in healing the wound in the throat of my dead friend. Mrs. Thompson, in reply to inquiry, said that she did not know the smell of iodoform."—*Note by van E.*]

4.45. Trance came on again suddenly in the middle of conversation.

*Nelly.* "That gentleman *was* pleased and delighted."

*Van E.* "Why does he not give his name?"

*Nelly.* "It is like Sum, Thum, or like Sjam. Not quite this. Please, do you pronounce it properly."

*Van E.* "Yes, indeed, it is Sam."

*Nelly.* "That is it. He says it sounded like Sjam through his bad throat.

"There is a Charles, or what they call Charles in England. (Coughs.) What's that stuff in my throat?"

*Van E.* "I suppose that's what made mother (*i.e.* Mrs. T.) smell chloroform."

*Nelly.* "Yes. Have you got his watch-chain?"

*Van E.* "No."

*Nelly.* "Sjom, Sjum. It seems that the thing he died for came all right after. He said '*sprik Hollands,*' '*Sam—Hans—O Sam—Hoest.*' (*Hoest* = cough.) He wants to know who has got his books . . . his books."

"Spreek Hollands," meaning "speak Dutch," van E. asked in Dutch: "Hoe noemde je my?" ("How did you call me?")

*Nelly.* "He says it is not like Fred. He wants me to tell you all about the Sunday that he was last with you. 'Wocken,' he keeps saying 'Wocken,' 'Brief voor.' . . . ('Letter for') . . . 'Hans geeft'm . . .'"

["After this I had no time to write down what happened, or was said, *verbatim*. In the other parts of the notes I have been as exact as I could."—*Note by van E.*]

(Van E. asks in Dutch who were Zwart and Notten. Nelly says Zwart shot himself in the forehead. Taking a pencil Mrs. T.'s hand writes that "Notten is a cousin, with me Amsterdam." Again "Wedstruden"—"near us"—*i.e.* near Bussum. Van E. says he understands. Then "We know well by us." [This expression "We know by us" is a distinct Hollandism.] The names Sam and Poss are written. Then the name Paul is spoken. Mrs. Thompson appeared now to be completely under the control of van E.'s dead friend, and began to speak in a low hoarse voice.)

*Sam.* "Head muddled mine was. When I was regrettable—thing. I must know where friends. Success for me."

*Van E.* "Zeg den naam van je vriend." ("Say your friend's name.")

(Different gestures to show that the words must be drawn out of the mouth and pressed into the head, gestures expressing great difficulty.)

*Sam.* "Max . . . Frederik make progress. People shall read and read and re-read and your plans shall be carried out after you. [This points clearly to van E.'s social plans.] *Truth.* Do not (. . . ? . . .) away the truth. I shall talk in our own beloved Dutch. In the sleep helps to clear out that woman's head."

*Van E.* "Welke vrouw?" ("Which woman?")

*Sam.* "This woman." (Mrs. T. presses her own breast.) "I shall speak more clear." (Hoarse voice.) "Why try and make me live? Not come back."

(Van E. asks, always in Dutch, after the friend who imitated his suicide. Violent gestures of disquiet and horror. Mrs. T.'s hand takes the cap and shows it.)

*Sam.* "When I was in England greatest disappointment. I went to England just before." [He was never in England.] "Did you think dreadful of me?"

*Nelly.* "Dr. van Eeden, the gentleman is gone. Sends nice thoughts to you. He will write down in Dutch words in mother's sleep."

(Van E. tells Nelly that he had dreamt that he would visit England in his 59th year.)

*Nelly.* "That Sam told you that . . . Samuel . . . He was in England." [W.]

*Nelly.* "Did you understand what was 'Wedstruden'?"

*Van E.* "O yes. But what is it in English?"

*Nelly.* "I cannot find out."

(It must be understood that van E. spoke the few Dutch questions without translating and got answers immediately.)

## APPENDIX II.

(1) The last sitting of Dr. van Eeden's first series was on Dec. 4th, 1899. He returned to Holland a day or two later.

Extract from Sitting on Jan. 5th, 1900, 87 Sloane St., S.W. Present : Mrs. —, Mrs. F., Hon. E. Feilding, and J. G. Piddington.

*Nelly.* (to J. G. P.) "Tell Dr. van Eeden he kept calling me last night (*i.e.* Jan. 4-5). He was inside those curtains. He wears curtains round his bed ; he was inside them and he called me. I went to him and I think he knows it. He told me so, and he is waiting to hear if you send my message. He was asleep. 'Now, Nelly, you come to me and remember,' he cried out. His wife was stout. . . . He was in bed alone, not with his wife, he was by himself. He had had a hard day's work, yet was sufficiently awake to call me."

J. G. P. sent a transcript of the above to Dr. van Eeden and received the following reply :

Walden, Bussum, Jan. 10, 1900.

Dear Mr. Piddington,

In the diary of my dreams I find on January 3rd that I had what I call a "clear dream" with full consciousness on the night of [Jan.] 2-3, between Tuesday and Wednesday. In those dreams I have power to call people and see them in my dream. I had arranged with Nelly that I should call her in the first dream of this sort, and I did so on the said night. She appeared to me in the form of a little girl, rather plump and healthy-looking, with loose, light-coloured hair. [Note that at sitting on Nov. 29, 1899, Nelly had described her hair as black and curly, in van E.'s hearing. See note ad loc., p. 90.—J. G. P.] She did not talk to me, but looked rather awkward or embarrassed, giving me to understand that she could not yet speak to me ; she had not yet learned Dutch. This was the second dream of the sort after my stay in England. The first occurred on Dec. 11. In this dream I also tried to call Nelly, but it was no success. Some grown-up girl appeared, who spoke Dutch, and as my consciousness was not quite clear, I had forgotten that she was to be English.

The particulars are true. I slept alone, in the bed with the curtain, or rather drapery, hanging before it. I was extremely tired, and slept deeply and soundly, which is always a condition for that sort of dream.

The mistake about the date does not seem very important, as it was probably the first sitting you had after Jan. 3. [It was the first sitting since Dec. 18, 1899.—J. G. P.] . . . Tell Nelly next time she was right about my

calling, and ask her to tell you again when she has been aware of it. But let her not make guesses or shots. I shall try to give her some communications.

Yours very truly,

F. VAN EEDEN.

Nelly made no reference to Dr. van Eeden at sittings held on the 10th, 12th, or 16th of January.

(2) Extract from record of sitting of Jan. 18, 1900, at 87 Sloane Street. Present: Mr. J. O. Wilson (pseudonym) and J. G. Piddington.

At end of sitting J. G. P. asks Nelly: "Have you been to see Dr. van Eeden?"

*Nelly.* "No. I haven't. This is a mixture. Dr. van Eeden has summoned me twice, and Elsie,"—(here J. G. P. interrupted Nelly to ask who "Elsie" was, not having heard her mentioned before) "a little girl that used to talk before I came—Elsie Line—came to me and said 'Old Whiskers in the bed is calling you.'"

*J. G. P.* "When was that?"

*Nelly.* "It was before the sitting with"—(Nelly then proceeded to describe the personal appearance of a lady and gentleman, both unknown by name to Mrs. Thompson, who had attended the sitting of Jan. 16). "Both times was before that" (*i.e.* before Jan. 16). "I said: 'Bother Whiskers! you go instead of me'—and very likely she did go. I hope he didn't think she was me. You want my description. I haven't red hair. It's as light as mother's—not red—more look of brightness like mother's—and then I've nicer eyes than mother . . . dark, wide open eyes. I'm fat, and look as if I was seven; I am older." . . . [but cf. sitting of Nov. 29th, 1899, p. 90].

The following is an extract from Dr. van Eeden's diary.

Jan. 15, [1900]. After the letter from London, I made the plan to tell Nelly in my dream the name "Walden"; afterwards to tell her to think of a little monkey of mine that died some time ago.

The dream began with a great popular festival somewhere near Brussels. The music was very pleasant to me. Then I walked away towards mountains, and found myself before a large bay or inlet of the sea. Then I got full consciousness and recollected my plans. At first I called out "Elsie! Elsie!" but then remembering that this was wrong I called "Nelly! Nelly!" Nobody came. I became anxious, feeling that she would not come, and called "Nelly, you must come, and think of Walden, Walden. That's where I live." I did not pronounce the word monkey. I awoke without having seen anybody.

(3) Sitzings were held on Jan. 23rd, Jan. 25th, and Feb. 1st, 1900, but no reference was made to Dr. van Eeden.

Extract from record of sitting of Feb. 6th, 1900, at Mrs. Thompson's house. Present: J. G. Piddington alone.

Directly after Mrs. T. had become entranced, *Nelly* began :

“Haven’t you (*i.e.* J. G. P.) got a letter from van Eeden in your pocket?” [J. G. P. had not got a letter from van E. in his pocket, but had received a letter from him on Feb. 2nd, *i.e.* subsequently to the last sitting on Feb. 1st. Mrs. Thompson, however, would have known in her normal state that it was at least not unlikely that correspondence would be passing between van E. and J. G. P. at this time.]

“He hasn’t been so frisky as usual—not so much up to his work—out of sorts—not very well.” [On Jan. 21st, van E. was suffering from a “rather violent catarrh,” which kept him in bed for one day, and in his room for two days, his first indisposition for two years.]

“I haven’t been to see Dr. van Eeden.”

*J. G. P.* “For how long?”

*Nelly.* “I haven’t been not since I talked to Mrs. C. on a Friday, I think [perhaps Jan. 26th, 1900]. I went there the night of the day when mother had neuralgia after a sitting at your house [perhaps Thursday, Jan. 25th, 1900]—on a Thursday—but van E. wouldn’t talk to me. That’s how I sensed he wasn’t well; and there’s a boy who isn’t very well at his house.”

Dr. van Eeden wrote on receiving the transcript of the notes of this incident:

On Wednesday, Jan. 24, I went again to my hut and slept there, though not yet quite “frisky.” I had no dreams about Nelly, as my “clear” dreams only come when I am healthy and well-disposed. My boys were in good health all the time. I saw Nelly in my dreams on Jan. 20th and talked with her: on Febr. 1st she seemed to turn back as soon as I saw her.

Although it has not been possible to fix with certainty the day of Mrs. T.’s visit to Mrs. C., nor the Thursday on which Mrs. T. had neuralgia, yet it seems clear that knowledge was obtained of Dr. van Eeden’s state of health at the time in some supernormal manner.

(4) The next sitting was on April 19th, 1900, J. G. Piddington present alone. In the course of it Nelly, independently of any hint from J. G. P., said:

“Dr. van Eeden and I were talking last night. I couldn’t make him understand. He wasn’t like asking me to talk like the time before, but he knew I was there. He’s going to have a sort of breakdown in his health before August.”

*J. G. P.* “How can you foretell that?”

*Nelly.* “I see a picture of him in his bed—wanting nourishment. He’s prostrated, unfit for work. He’s doing some writing, and he shouldn’t go on with it. That’s what I tried to say to him in the bed last night.”



Dr. van Eeden writes :

Walden, April 25 [1900].

I do not remember any remarkable dream about Nelly since February. But what she has said seems to have a meaning, considering the following facts.

At the end of March I got an attack of influenza and was obliged, for the second time this year, to stay a day in bed. Being accustomed to work in the fields every day, I took up that work again very soon in rather cold weather. This brought me down again, with fever, pain in the muscles, etc. I gave up labour for a few days until I seemed to be strong again and began anew, but again with the same result. This has occurred *thrice* until I resolved to stop manual labour for a fortnight. All this corresponds pretty accurately with what Nelly has been saying. On April 19, however, I was all right again, and I have been doing my usual work without hindrance since that time. I think there is no reason to see a prediction in her statements, as they correspond so exactly with the facts which occurred shortly before the séance.

## IV.

## A RECORD OF TWO SITTINGS WITH MRS. THOMPSON.

BY J. O. WILSON.

*Communicated by J. G. PIDDINGTON.*


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[IN presenting a pseudonymous paper to the Society I am breaking through a salutary rule. I should therefore state that the gentleman who is here called Mr. J. O. Wilson wrote the paper at my special request. It seems to me far better for the actual sitter, if a careful and intelligent observer and thoroughly conversant with the problems involved, to record his own impressions of the phenomena than for a third person to intervene with his opinion of matters with which he is only indirectly concerned. Mr. Wilson was an admirable sitter, cautious and discrete, yet sympathetic. Nelly hit off one of his characteristic traits with her usual bluntness: "This gentleman would tell the truth, he'd own to everything"; in other words, Mr. Wilson, though of a critical disposition, yet exhibited none of the reluctance, which is, I fear, not uncommon with sceptics, to admit the correctness or the approximate correctness of statements made by the medium in trance.

Mr. Wilson's reasons for concealing his identity appear to me satisfactory. They have been dictated solely by his anxiety to avoid causing pain to some members of the family of the lady who is the chief subject of the communications, and not by any personal objection to publicity. I am responsible both for the detailed record of the sittings and also for the notes on the evidence embodied in the record; but the facts given in the notes were supplied to me by Mr. Wilson either verbally or in writing, and have in every case received his approval.

The omissions, which are shown thus . . . , relate in every instance to matters unconnected with Mr. Wilson.

J. G. PIDDINGTON.]

SITTING I.

January 18th, 1900, 5 p.m.; at 87 Sloane Street, London, S.W. Present: J. O. Wilson, J. G. Piddington, Mrs. Thompson.

R. = Right.

W. = Wrong.

D. = Doubtful or unrecognised.

(Before trance J. O. W. speaks of reporting sermons and shows knowledge of Mr. F. W. H. Myers. Mrs. Thompson aware that J. G. P. has noted mention of sermon reporting.)

*Nelly.* "I don't like mother to use that (crystal) ball. I'm not nervous."

(J. G. P. gives a lady's stocking to Mrs. T.)

"Has he got the square envelope with the mark on it?"

[Not recognised; but see further references to envelope below.]

"There's a sore throat about this. [W.] Let that gentleman come and sit there by me. There isn't a dead influence about this."

[Incorrect, and perhaps some slight indication given by J. O. W.'s manner that the information was wrong.]

"Yes—wait a minute. . . . This gentleman (*i.e.* J. O. W.) would tell you the truth—he'd own to everything."

[True and characteristic, I should say.—*Note by J. G. P.*]

"The feeling is of live influence. Please tell me if it is of a dead influence."

(J. G. P. says "Dead" on receiving intimation from J. O. W.)

"I can see a girl with hair down her back, darker than mother's but not black, not pushed back, but a cutting over the forehead like a fringe."

[This is a very good description of a girl cousin of the deceased lady, who is in these records called Miss Clegg, and who died at the age of 24.]

"She (*i.e.* Miss Clegg) seems to be taking charge of a little boy, a tiny brother or baby who died a long time ago." [See below.] "The baby looks up to her not as to a mother, but as if to an elder sister. There is some one very clever at drawing: and this girl (the cousin) is always so interested in drawings: she seems to go and watch some one drawing."

[This seems to refer to a man—an intimate friend both of J. O. W. and of Miss Clegg's family—who can draw cleverly, and is fond of amusing children by impromptu illustrations of fairy tales, etc. The girl-cousin was especially interested in watching him draw.]

"Is it too ordinary to say blue dress with white braid on? Sort of sailor dress."

[All this fits well for the deceased lady's cousin, who at the time was wearing a kind of sailor dress trimmed with white braid.]

"Oh, dear! something like something coming. There is something in an envelope I ought to have belonging to the lady. The girl in blue and the lady connected with the stocking are not the same person."

[Throughout the sitting, with perhaps one slight exception, *Nelly* kept the "lady of the stocking"—Miss Clegg—and the "girl in blue," who is assumed to be her cousin, quite distinct. The "girl" was at the time of

the sitting staying with Miss Clegg's family, with whom J. O. W. himself was just then residing. The "girl" and the "lady" were devoted cousins.]

"I've got it in my head that this stocking has been round somebody's throat." [Nothing known of this.]

"There's an envelope—long in shape—with stamped monogram or something on the back. It's got G. at the back." [The lady is not known to have used envelopes stamped with a G., but G. is the initial letter of her Christian name.] "There's a rather old-fashioned bookcase with glass doors." [R.] "The envelope is there." [The envelopes would have been kept in the bookcase.] "This (*i.e.* the stocking) has been taken off the lady before she died. [R.] It hasn't a laundry association [R.]—but was taken off when the lady was not very ill." ["When she was not ill at all" would be correct.] "There was an old lady with white hair in the room when the stocking was taken off—not quite white hair, but streaked." [Probably wrong.] "There is a chest of drawers in the room with a white cover on. Old-fashioned cover—do you call it Marcella? White, with a pattern all over and a looped fringe."

[All references to the bookcase are good; description quite accurate.

The room opens into a bath-room—in the bath-room is a chest of drawers with a white fringed cover. This room where the bookcase stands is perhaps the most intimate association that could have been named.]

"She wore a twisted brooch. It was like as if it formed a name or figures."

(A glove is given to Mrs. T., who keeps stocking.)

*J. G. P.* "Can you see the name or figures?"

*Nelly.* "It's like Gertrude. No, it isn't Gertrude. Gertrude was a very great friend of the blue dress girl."

[The lady had a brooch of decorative scroll-work, but none forming a name or figures. But a sister of Miss Clegg states that the description immediately suggested to her this brooch, and that at first sight the scroll work looks like a name. The lady's name was Gertrude, though Nelly does not say so, but merely says, "Gertrude was a very great friend of the blue dress girl," which was true.]

"The blue dress girl is a person of great importance. The lady was taking charge of her."

[Both these statements are somewhat indefinite. If "of great importance" means "in the life of the lady," it would be more or less true, though perhaps somewhat overstated. The lady could not be said to have taken formal charge of the girl, though the statement has some significance.]

"I associate this glove with a sailor dress, and with the house where the funny bookcase is. [R.] The bookcase nearly comes to the top of the house—I mean, of the room. It's like old-fashioned mahogany, red coloured. [Quite correct.]

“There is some trouble about an examination with the girl in the blue dress.”

[J. O. W. had been going over work with the girl for an approaching examination, and he writes that the girl was also “very anxious” about an examination which her brother was going in for in a few months’ time.]

“You wouldn’t think the girl delicate, as she is full of vitality and of a happy disposition [R.], and proud of a chain round her neck that she wore. She didn’t look like a ‘die-y’ girl.”

[This seems to suggest a momentary confusion in Nelly’s mind between the “girl” and the “lady.”]

“The chain is like stones, and had something hanging on it.”

[J. O. W. did not recognise this with certainty at séance, but wrote later: “Yes, such a chain was given her at Christmas. She has hung a silver brooch from it in rather an odd-looking way.”]

“I don’t know if this gentleman’s name is Smith, but it seems written over him, and associated with him.”

[A vague remark, but J. O. W. had been visiting a medium recently in the company of a Mr. Smith.]

(Mrs. T. holds J. O. W.’s hand.) “The blue girl is a relation of the other lady.” [R.—cousin.] “The girl with the blue dress came home with a lot of examination papers [true of three months later] and broke something, and there was a fuss about it. [W.] The lady’s brother wears glasses. [R.] He is alive. [R.] She has got a Margaret—belonging to that lady.” [R.—a cousin, as intimate as a sister would be, who used to live with her.]

“You mustn’t be sad in your heart. You’ve got a much greater trouble ahead of you than you think.” [Not true so far.] “You don’t look very married in your heart. [R.] Strange heart this gentleman has to get into. It’s divided (*i.e.* probably the bookcase, not the heart) into portions, and there’s a long paper in the bookcase [R.], and if I can’t find the lady’s name you’ll find it all there.” [Quite intelligible.]

“She was an *old-fashioned young* lady—retiring, unassuming, not fashionable.” [Fairly good description.]

“There’s a feeling of illness as if stocking had been taken off dead person.” [This is wrong, and is in contradiction to what was said earlier. Cf. below similar contradiction about bicycle.] “Not a laundry sort of feeling. [R.] It hasn’t been washed. [R.] There was a bicycle with gold marks on the rim associated with that lady.” [Quite accurate, but cf. p. 125.]

“That long paper. You pull it (*i.e.* probably ‘the drawer’) out, and then find a long one.” [R.]

“It doesn’t matter about all those books. Do you (*i.e.* J. O. W.) write with a quill pen? because I see a quill pen there.” [J. O. W. does not use a quill pen, but the lady did.]

“Those books would just suit old —, they are about all kinds of dull and dirty old things.”



[This statement seems to refer to the bookcase so often mentioned, in which is contained the family library,—which might fairly be described as “heavy reading,”—not the books generally read in the household.]

*J. G. P.* “Can you describe and give title of one particular book?”

*Nelly.* “The third one from the end on the left hand side bottom of the row is a red one. Can’t read the title, it’s inside.”

[The third book in bottom row was covered with brown paper, and had the title written outside. It was a French dictionary, with green back and red sides.]

“In that room there’s one of those chairs that makes a noise when you sit down on it: an old creaky chair.” [A very definite and apt reference.]

“She has got a dead baby with her.”

[J. O. W. was doubtful of this at first, having forgotten that the lady had two sisters who died, one as quite a baby.]

“I’ve got one of mother’s dead babies at our house. Mother doesn’t think it was a little live boy—but it was.”

*Trance breaks.*

(Mrs. T. re-entranced after an unusually short interval, while J. O. W. and J. G. P. were out of the room. On entering they found Nelly chattering volubly to nobody.)

“Something about Emma that belonged to the lady—or Emily.” [Lady had an Aunt Emma.]

“Give that ring to me.” (Mrs. T. might have overheard whispered conversation between J. O. W. and J. G. P.—the former having proposed to hand a ring to the medium. This conversation took place before Mrs. T. was first entranced.)

“She came here and said, ‘Please ask him to give you my ring,’ but didn’t call him Henry.” [J. O. W. was wearing a ring which had belonged to the lady. The mention of the name Henry is meaningless.]

“This lady doesn’t belong to town at all: she used to live right away in the country.”

[Her home was in London, but during the greater part of her engagement, and before, when at school, she lived in the country.]

“She has got a little satchel with an outside pocket. It’s not like mother’s—not a bag—your sister gave it as a present to the lady.” [The lady had a little satchel of the kind described, but had bought it herself.] “I want the ring—it has got pimples in it.”

[Stones are set into the gold of the ring which J. O. W. was wearing, which do give it a rather ‘pimpley’ appearance.]

“It’s like mother’s ring, that she lost: just like that. That bag is there now—it’s in existence.” [R.—J. O. W.’s notes give “You’ve got it,” which was true of the satchel.]

*J. G. P.* “Ask the lady for a message.”

*Nelly.* “About Worthing?”

*J. G. P.* “What about Worthing?”

*Nelly.* "She had a friend at Worthing, when they had typhoid fever there." [W.] "She used to wear a deep fur cape, not long but rather short. He (*i.e.* J. O. W.) had something to do with buying it: not a mantle, but short."

[The lady had no such cape, and J. O. W. never had anything to do with buying one.]

"Gold and twisted brooch—twisted like a Staffordshire knot—a quantity of S's, and a little stone in the middle."

[J. O. W.'s comment at the time was: "Perhaps right, but I think not." Later, a sister of the deceased lady thought this was a reference to the scroll-work brooch already mentioned, which, however, contained no stone.]

"If that lady had lived a bit longer, she would have been better off in money." [A certain definite, though quite small, sum of money would undoubtedly have come to Miss Clegg on her marriage, which was to have taken place a few months after the actual date of her death.]

"When you're at our house, you're not sorry that you've left your loved ones. It's not selfish."

(Trance breaks at 6.25. *Nelly* promises to return in eight minutes.

Trance resumed after a shorter interval than usual. J. G. P. absent.

*Nelly* asks for something long and black.)

"You won't mind me saying that there is a dead baby in connection with this stocking." [See above.]

"Some one named Dorothy associated with that lady" [a very intimate cousin] "not an old person [R.] more like Dolly" [not called Dolly].

"That lady sends her darling sweetest best love." [Phrase not characteristic.]

"You know that lady says that you have of hers a broad silver bracelet." [R.]

(J. G. P. returns) . . .

"I like this gentleman (*i.e.* J. O. W.) very much,—it's very important. Common names occur. This lady is asking about Jane. Where's Jane? Where's Jane? Who is Jane? Ask her." [Jane has no meaning.]

"She (*i.e.* evidently 'the lady') says, 'what made me ask about shawl was because when ill I did have a shawl, though not a black one, round my shoulders; it was a grey one.' She said it isn't black, you must guess its colour." [W.]

"Take care of this for Dorothy." [Dorothy died before the lady.]

"There's an old customer come along now. He used to wear an Inverness coat—father, or grandfather rather, of lady—great difficulty in breathing, though not fat. He had a boot-jack—was rather irritable—he'd bang that boot-jack down. He is with that lady now. He has got a Samuel."

[This old gentleman is a reminiscence from another series of sittings. There is no connection between the old gentleman and J. O. W. or Miss Clegg.]

“It seems as if this ring was put away somewhere—not direct like that stocking—in a box with some fluffy wool before that gentleman wore it.”

[It was sent to the jewellers’ after the lady’s death, but was only away a few days, and had since been worn by J. O. W.]

“She wasn’t a lady of great jewelry [R.], but had ear-rings like little bee-hives. [W.] She has gone away now. I see these things like a panorama. Katie knows a lot more about her than I do.” (“Katie knows” said very indignantly.)

[The only association with the name Katie is a young servant, who was always treated as a friend of the family, and is alive.]

“Mrs. Cartwright is coming to talk to me. Mrs. Cartwright has nearly got wings;—that’s what they say here; that’s a proverb, a saying at our house. (To J. O. W.) You tell them to take all those furs out of the drawers: otherwise the moths will get at them. Flip it on the table, and the feathers will fall out. [W.] She’s worrying over that detail.”

“Mr. Myers is feeling rather cross—I don’t know why. Something rather upset him—he’s ruffled. He seems as if he had come here. Tell him he has got his feathers ruffled.” (6.50 p.m.)

[Mr. Myers wrote, “rather good, . . . but coincidence not close.”

J. G. P. knew at the time that F. W. H. M. might be feeling annoyed. See below.]

(References here followed to Mrs. Benson and to Dr. Van Eeden, which are recorded elsewhere.)

(To J. O. W.) “Look for that letter with G. at the back. I’m not sure it’s a G. at the back. It’s like a round O. It *is* like a G. Katie knew all about family; she could tell you much better.”

[Katie did not know “all about the family,” but necessarily must have known a good deal.]

*End of sitting.*

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## SITTING II.

January 25th, 1900, 5 p.m.; at 87 Sloane Street, London, S.W. Present: J. O. Wilson, J. G. Piddington, Mrs. Thompson.

[Before trance Mrs. Thompson said that Nelly had told her that “the lady from the time before (obviously referring to ‘the lady’ of the sitting held on January 18th) had wanted to show her (*i.e.* Nelly) varicose veins on her left leg, and that this was the reason of her very hurried departure at the close of Mrs. Benson’s second sitting on January 23rd, 1900.”]

*Nelly.* “You’re talking philosophy. Where is Ben? There’s a Ben belonging to the stocking lady with the bad leg.” [R.—Intimate friend of family.] “It wasn’t a long black shawl: it was a stocking. I want that letter—not the stocking. It wasn’t only her leg, but varicose veins as well under her thigh.” [W.]

"It was true about the bracelet, wasn't it?"

J. O. W. "Yes."

Nelly. "Because you didn't know it was true last time." [W.]

(A slip of paper containing rough notes of small expenditures, written by Miss Clegg, was then handed to Mrs. T.)

"A peritonitis feeling about this letter. [W.] It's like Auntie A——'s peritonitis—that sort of pain—toothache in your inside." [Auntie A. is a deceased sister of Mrs. Thompson.]

"Bound books of music belonging to this lady." [W.]

(To J. O. W.) "You're untidy, but *she* was very tidy—always putting tidy after somebody."

[J. O. W. writes: "Just the reverse true." J. G. P. notes: "But this is more a matter of opinion than of fact."]

(To J. G. P.) "I know what Mr. Myers had his feathers ruffled for. It was your fault. It was because of something you wrote."

["True."—Note by F. W. H. M. . . . See above.]

"It doesn't seem to help me on much, this letter. I want that lady to come and talk to me. Does it matter if her mother comes as well?" [The lady's mother is living.]

"She has got an old lady named Annie with her." [D.]

"I'm very undecided about this (*sotto voce*). It's very strange. This had been inside the pocket of fur cloak with fur inside." [W.]

(At this point or shortly before a purse had been handed to the medium, but the notes do not record the fact.)

"You know shoes with cloth material tops and leather soles. She used to wear these in the house, the lady of the purse—the peritonitis lady. That's the association with the influence of the purse. [R.] The money used to be emptied out and the purse given to some one else to put money in. The purse not always belonging to one person." [Vague, but perhaps right.]

"I can see that gentleman going by Richmond, looking out of the train. A sort of Ealing feeling. He has to walk along a road that's not paved nor curbed. It's a made road—with lamps in it—but unfinished—not a new road." [Miss Clegg's home was in a suburb, which is reached by the Richmond or Ealing trains. J. O. W. had often visited Miss Clegg there, and was staying there at the time of these sittings. The description of the road is quite accurate, except that it is not "unfinished."]

"This—the purse—was under the pillow when the lady was ill in bed. [W.] You know those glass things that shake—lustres; some of those—they are downstairs in the lady's house—immediately underneath the room where the bed was where the lady was ill." [D. She died in a stranger's house.]

"This lady has got an umbrella with white handle. It's a straight—like ivory—handle. [W.] She's not near enough to talk to. It's rather a strain."

“She isn’t a lady who takes notice when I tell her I’m talking. She was rather in one groove, and did not like thinking in a different way.”

[Characteristic of lady—but Nelly’s account hardly tallies with the lady’s alleged anxiety to inform her about the varicose veins. But see note by J. G. P. at end of paper.]

“Why isn’t there any glass in that wardrobe in the lady’s bedroom? It’s like a big flat cupboard without glass in. [R.] I’m not sure if the old lady’s name is Annie or Anna—but I think Anna. [W.] There was somebody the old lady used to call Peggy—no, Patty—but her real name was Martha.”

[Right—and given without hesitation. No indication of dissent made by J. O. W. when the name came out first as Peggy. Martha was the real name of an aunt.]

“The old lady used to keep a tin box of special biscuits, to give to people.” [D.]

“That lady of the purse used to work on canvas, cross-stitch; there’s a cushion worked by her now in existence; cross-stitch—wool-work—in blocks—in pieces—in colours—different coloured blocks.”

[J. O. W. did not find this was right till March, 1901. There is a cushion worked in cross-stitch by the lady now in existence.]

“That man has got colours all round him like paint pots. So his name has got something to do with colours.” [The lady painted; J. O. W. did not.]

“Have you got that mother-of-pearl—like tortoiseshell—cardcase? The one I mean pulls off—it hasn’t got a hinge. I don’t want the one with a hinge.” [W.]

(J. O. W. hands a small leather cardcase to Mrs. T.)

“No; that’s not the one. It pulls off like that (making a very characteristic upward movement with one hand, while seemingly holding in the other hand the lower portion of an imaginary cardcase)—it’s hard.” [W.]

“I couldn’t find the lady anywhere. I could only find a brother of this gentleman who died when he was quite a tiny microbe baby.” [R.]

“What does financial crash mean? Some one belonging to this has had a financial crash.” [There were pecuniary losses, but not a “crash.”] “It’s a brother or relation like that of this lady. He was a gentleman who wore *pince-nez*.”

[The father lost money. That he wore *pince-nez* J. O. W. did not discover till March, 1901.]

“Uncle Philip wants something. An old gentleman—old gouty gentleman, rather fond of curiosities, had a lot of coins.” [W.—Perhaps a confusion with some other sitting.]

“You seem to have a lot of old-fashioned furniture at your house. [R.] That old bureau with those bright handles. [R.] The stocking lady’s ashamed about her leg.”

J. G. P. “Perhaps she’ll come, if I go away.” (J. G. P. leaves room.)

Nelly. “Will you come and talk secrets? Perhaps the lady will come in



a minute. Do you know I put my hand over my eyes. She couldn't bear it on her eyes."

(When saying this the medium looked up at the electric light over her head.) [The lady suffered slightly from weakness of the eyes.]

"Where's mother's handkerchief?"

(Mrs. T. takes J. O. W.'s hand, and Nelly asks for purse instead of cardcase.)

"This—the purse—was always being used, and the cardcase only occasionally." [R.—but rather obvious.]

"I told you about Dorothy. Dorothy was a little girl this lady used to sew for. Used to have sleeves tied up, not like mother's."

[Dorothy, three or four years younger than the lady, was an invalid, and was companioned for some time by Miss Clegg, who also did sewing for her at times. Dorothy was a child, and would have sometimes had her sleeves tied up.]

"The lady had not fat hands, but long and thin and white." [W.] "She used to have her hair divided in the middle and not pushed back." [R.] "She didn't seem to me to ride a bicycle, though everybody does."

[Wrong, and this wrong statement is all the more curious, as in the first sitting Nelly had given correct details of a bicycle belonging to the lady (see p. 119), and furthermore, the lady's death was due to a bicycle accident. In spite of these contradictory statements the reference to a bicycle in connection with Miss Clegg must be accorded considerable weight, because a bicycle accident caused Miss Clegg's death, and this is the only mention of a bicycle in all the sittings (about 30) recorded by J. G. P.; also in 19 sittings recorded by Mrs. Verrall, a bicycle has been mentioned once only and a tricycle once only, both references being definite and correct. This shows that Nelly does not use bicycles as bait to "fish" with (if the mixed metaphor be allowed), in spite of bicycling being so prevalent a pastime in all ranks of society.]

"There's an Edith belonging to this lady, who suffered with neuralgia." [W.]

"Somehow or another I think that lady sent a message. On the next time I come to Mr. Piddington, I shall send you some messages if you'll leave the purse with Mr. Piddington. She doesn't want you to believe it's her till it's proved it's her."

[J. O. W. writes: "Would be a very characteristic view."]

"She wouldn't have thought she'd have been so heterodox. She's rather orthodox."

[This is all characteristic.]

"You'll believe that Mr. Piddington has written it down."

(Referring to message to be given at another séance to J. G. P. for J. O. W.)

"I will send word what her name is before and after she's married."

[Miss Clegg was not married, nor does Nelly elsewhere suggest that she was; and here Nelly may have meant, "I'll tell you her maiden name, and what her name would have been if she had married."]

"She wants to know if she convinces you. Will you make Bob believe?"

*J. G. P.* "Who is Bob?"

*Nelly.* "Some one you have almost daily dealings with, and you wouldn't think you could mention the subject to him, but you will." [W.] "You understand how difficult it is? She was a woman who disliked scent." [R.] "She didn't like the smell of scent on mother's handkerchief. She says it's a silly proud custom, and thinks it barbaric." [Characteristic.] "Do you know there was some money in the Post Office belonging to this lady, and it was a trouble to get it out." [R.] "She wants to know if you got it out all right. Ask him, but she doesn't want an answer."

[In order to withdraw some money left by Miss Clegg at her death in the Post Office Savings Bank, various troublesome formalities had to be complied with; *e.g.* all the members of her family had to sign a legal document before two witnesses.]

"An Eva or Eveline belonging to her. Eva is going to have an illness. It sounds like Eva." [W.] "You know netting, not knitting. This lady could net most beautifully." [W.] "She used to wear a drab-coloured coat and skirt." [R.] "Give the purse to Mr. Piddington."

*Trance ends 6.50.*

#### APPENDIX.

(1) *Extract from Sitting held on February 1st, 1900; 4 p.m.; at 87 Sloane Street. Mrs. Thompson, Medium. Present: J. G. Piddington, alone.*

(After speaking of matters connected with Mrs. Benson, Nelly says, *à propos de bottes*):

"Now I want to tell you about the varicose veins lady. This doesn't seem the proper day for the purse. The cardcase isn't the only cardcase—the one he brought was wrong."

(Nelly then reverts to Mrs. Benson's belongings. Later, no reference to Mr. J. O. Wilson having been made, she says):

"What about Alice? Alice was sister, or mother of the purse lady—an Alice in the family."

[Had Miss Clegg's marriage not been prevented by her death, she would have had an Alice for a sister-in-law, and this Alice had a special interest in Mr. Wilson's sittings.]

"Whenever I see that lady I see her leg bleeding dreadfully. Her leg was bleeding when she died, they couldn't stop it. Exhaustion, that's the sort of thing."

[The leg may have bled internally, but did not externally, and Miss Clegg's death was due neither to exhaustion nor to injury of a leg.]

"When in the Express Dairy I nearly controlled mother then. Express Dairy near the Marble Arch."

*J. G. P.* "Why did you?"

*Nelly.* "Because I wanted to be preparing her to tell you about all these things."

[After trance Mrs. T. told J. G. P. that when in a tea-shop at the end of Park Lane earlier in the day she had been nearly entranced. She did not know the name of the shop.]

"The purse lady's name is Mrs. Gibson. No, not that. You know Dr. Gillies, it's something like that."

[J. G. P. at this time did not know the real name of the dead lady, who is called in this record "Miss Clegg," so he cannot have given any indication of whether the names Gibson or Gillies were near or wide of the mark.]

"Funny the way I get names. I get an association with flowers or trees or places or all kind of things."

*J. G. P.* "How do you know when it's right?"

*Nelly.* "There's a feeling of *satisfaction* when the right association is found, which tells me it's right."

(While Nelly had been talking, J. G. P. had placed on the table the purse which had been used at the sitting on January 25th, 1900.)

"Can I feel inside the purse?"

*J. G. P.* "Yes." (The purse was empty.)

*Nelly.* "You'd have smiled if you'd have seen the purse lady. She was the sort of lady who wears elastic side boots." (Laughing.)

[The lady's style of dressing was not "smart," nor conventional: but Nelly's statement must be taken in a highly metaphorical sense to have any accordance with the truth.]

"I'll go now, and try to meet them all."

(A short reference follows to a matter entirely unconnected with the "lady of the purse," and then Mrs. T. comes out of trance at 4.40 p.m. She does not fall into trance again until 6.15 p.m. The control is then assumed chiefly by "Mrs. Cartwright," who, in the course of various statements having no reference to Mr. J. O. Wilson, says, while Mrs. T. is fingering the purse):

"This seems to belong to an elderly person who is a young mother. It's rather—well, well—somewhat peculiar designation for a person. It's just what I feel when I touch it. Yes—um—Now, Nelly, you come. I go."

(2) *Extract from Sitting held on February 6th, 1900; 3.30 p.m.; at Mrs. Thompson's house. Present: Mrs. Thompson and J. G. Piddington, alone.*

(Towards the end of the séance, which had been principally occupied with communications for J. G. P., *Nelly* suddenly said):

"Was Gillies right for the purse lady?"

*J. G. P.* "I don't know."

*Nelly.* "It's like this Marlow name (*i.e.* a name connected with J. G. P., which Nelly had been making various attempts to pronounce). Gillies

suggests it, it isn't Gill. It's a short name like Gill or Gibbs." [The names "Gill" and "Gibbs" present as close a resemblance to the pseudonym "Clegg" as to the lady's real name.]

(The purse is then handed to the medium.)

"This lady has a sister alive [R.], and she will die just the same way." [Not true, so far.]

*J. G. P.* "What way?"

*Nelly.* "Her leg was bleeding so, like internal exhaustion. Bessie is the sister's name. I promised to tell that gentleman (*i.e.* J. O. W.) lots of things, but somehow I can't say them now." [Bessie is not the sister's name, but it was the name of the owner of some objects which had been given to Mrs. T. earlier in the sitting, and was mentioned now for the first time.]

#### STATEMENT BY J. O. WILSON.

[This statement was originally written on March 16th, 1901, and revised and enlarged September 28th, 1901.]

I have never met Mrs. Thompson before, between, or after the two sittings of January 18th and January 25th, 1900; and on these occasions we had the very slightest afternoon-tea conversations before she went into a trance. I am very clear that she could have learnt nothing about me from anything said in her presence by Mr. Piddington or myself beyond the two details mentioned in the notes above that I had sometimes made reports of sermons for newspapers and that I knew Mr. Myers. But Mr. Myers knew nothing of the circumstances with which the sittings were concerned, beyond the bare fact of the death of the lady who is here called Miss Clegg. With the general outline of the circumstances it will be seen that Nelly showed no acquaintance.

Absolutely no one except Mr. Piddington and myself knew when my sittings with Mrs. Thompson were to be, though a sister of mine living in the country, who had had previously some sittings with Mrs. Thompson, had suggested my seeing her, and knew that a sitting was to be arranged for me.<sup>1</sup> The sister and brother with whom I am living in London knew I was seeing something of Mr. Piddington, but had no thought of my taking any personal interest in psychical matters.

In connection with the possibility of Mrs. Thompson's having in her own conscious person obtained the information given, one or two

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Thompson was unaware of the relationship between us, and has never heard my name.

further points may be noted at once: (1) As shown above, she could scarcely have obtained this except through Mr. Piddington, and he knew very little indeed of my personal life. We had then been acquainted for a short time only; I doubt if we had actually met as many as five times. He was not even at all accurately acquainted with my reasons for wishing to have a sitting, being under the impression that I had recently lost a wife and was left with several children. Whereas I have never been married, but was engaged at the time of her death to Miss Clegg, who was killed in a bicycle accident in the summer of 1899, and with whom Nelly was supposed to be in communication. Mr. Piddington had never heard this lady's Christian or surname. (2) If, however, Mrs. Thompson had, in her own person, obtained any knowledge of me, Nelly certainly made no use of it. She gave no information about me and showed scarcely any interest in me, but confined her remarks entirely to Miss Clegg. The one fact mentioned about me—that a brother of mine had died as a baby—is common to many people, and as it occurred before I was born, is not likely to have been elicited by ordinary investigation.

On the other hand, she gave the right Christian name for Miss Clegg, and had no idea of mine. She gave a very close and correct indication of where Miss Clegg lived, and showed no knowledge of my home. Almost all the other persons correctly named were friends of Miss Clegg's, and only associated with me through her.

Yet, on the supposition of fraud, Mrs. Thompson could only have obtained information about Miss Clegg, of whom Mr. Piddington and Mr. Myers knew nothing, *through* what she might have been able to find out about me. Had she done so, it would have been almost inevitable that she should endeavour to make her statements about the dead more convincing by the parade of more startling knowledge of the living. It would have been easy, and natural, to try to obtain my confidence in the "communications" from Miss Clegg by making it clear that she had experienced no difficulty in "discovering" me.

I have no desire whatever to bring forward these points as an argument that the facts given by Mrs. Thompson are more likely to have come from direct communication with a "spirit" than from telepathic insight into my consciousness. There seems to me little or nothing in these sittings that adds to the evidence for communication from the dead, and indeed certain details, which I shall mention later, tend rather to suggest that Mrs. Thompson's impressions were actually guided by my thoughts and interests *at the time of the sittings*.



I am here only concerned to bring out my general impression that Mrs. Thompson's statements do not show any of the kind of knowledge which might have been most naturally and easily obtained through ingenious "fishing" or deliberate fraud. This consideration affords much stronger evidence in support of her "genuineness" than my saying that she *could not have found out* this or that fact. I am led to the same conclusion by noticing that while the information given about Miss Clegg was largely concerned with intimate details particularly significant to me, it left entirely untouched the striking manner of her death and the most obvious facts about her everyday life. These must have been the first discoveries of any fraudulent investigations, and Mrs. Thompson could hardly have failed to make use of any such knowledge, if only for the purpose of convincing me at once that Nelly was speaking of *the right lady*. On the supposition that the information had been obtained by fraud, it is sufficiently correct to *prove* that Mrs. Thompson had rightly conjectured Miss Clegg's identity; while it would have been *impossible* for her to have found out (through ordinary channels) so much without discovering more, and inconceivable that she should not have used such information—to give me confidence.

It is now more than a year since these two sittings took place, but the perfectly definite impressions produced on my mind by them are as clear to-day as they were then, and have been confirmed by three recent examinations of Mr. Piddington's notes.

I have carefully gone over the notes again by myself, with Mr. Piddington, and with one of Miss Clegg's sisters. There is no doubt about which of the statements made by Nelly are true and which are false, and on this matter the authority of Miss Clegg's sister entirely supports my own conclusions, while it enables me to be positive in the few details about which I was uncertain. This lady did not see the notes or know anything of the sittings until March, 1901. She now feels with me that the number and character of the facts correctly stated are very remarkable.

The first impression I carried away from my sittings with Mrs. Thompson was of her clear and unhesitating manner. She never brought out the first syllable of a name under her breath in order to feel her way towards its completion. Nearly every sentence was spoken continuously, so that the fact or idea to be conveyed was seen to have been in her mind *before* she began to speak, and was not in any way "fished" for. I should say that on the whole she gave a stronger impression of definiteness, both in true and false statements, than can be conveyed by Mr. Piddington's literal and most exact report. A series of

detached statements may easily look more vague on paper than they sound in conversation, and they may suggest (what would be quite untrue of these instances) that more was said or done than is herein reported. Mr. Piddington has clearly indicated the few occasions on which he thought it wise to direct—or divert—Nelly's attention, or when he answered her questions; and I am sure that he never did so in any other case. He has also noted everything I did or said myself which could have influenced Mrs. Thompson, the fact being that I scarcely spoke at all. There were several instances in which the temptation was very strong to lead Nelly on by asking questions, or suggesting that she should pursue a hint, but I saw that my doing so would largely destroy the evidential value of anything she might say, and I rigidly maintained the silence which Mr. Piddington had enjoined on me. He was himself so seldom aware at the time of whether Nelly's statements were true or false that he *could* not have given her much assistance.

Mrs. Thompson, both in her own person and when speaking for Nelly, struck me as singularly sincere; and while I have already noticed the absence of the slightest attempt at "fishing" in her trance-talk, it may be well to add further that when in a normal condition she made no attempt whatever to "draw" me, directly or indirectly. She made on me the impression of scarcely giving me any personal attention except what was required by the ordinary courtesies of conversation, talked very little at all, and for the most part on her own affairs. To do this was to miss an obvious opportunity for fraud, if fraud were designed, as any sitter in my circumstances would have been in a somewhat strained mental condition and, if led into conversation of any significance, whether personal or theoretic, would almost infallibly have betrayed himself unconsciously. By practically leaving me alone, Mrs. Thompson provided an undesigned and effective witness to her sincerity. It seemed to me, again, perfectly obvious that she was genuinely quite unaware of what Nelly had told us. On such a point it is, of course, almost impossible to produce evidence, but the extreme simplicity and easiness of Mrs. Thompson's transitions from trance to wakefulness unquestionably produce a strong impression of absolute truthfulness.

The information given was undoubtedly all familiar to Miss Clegg during her life-time, except the remarkable statement about money in the post-office. It was also known to a few other persons now living, *e.g.* her mother and sisters. Most of it was immediately recognisable as true or false by myself, but there are two facts which I did not

consciously know at the time, and which I am not aware of having ever known: namely, (1) that Miss Clegg had worked a cushion in cross-stitch, which still existed; and (2) that her father wore *pince-nez*. It is, of course, just possible that these facts had once been mentioned to me, and that they had remained in my sub-conscious memory; but I am fairly certain that I never knew the second fact,—that Mr. Clegg used to wear *pince-nez*. He died before I ever met Miss Clegg or had even heard her name, and it is not shown in the photographs of him with which I am familiar.

The names and facts given were in the main particularly associated with my own relationship towards Miss Clegg, though certainly not, in every case, those I should first think of in connection with her. A very intimate girl cousin named Dorothy, for instance, is mentioned, who died before I knew the family; but I am familiar with her picture, and my brother is married to her (Dorothy's) sister. The Margaret also mentioned is the third sister in Dorothy's family, and an intimate friend of mine. The room which figures so conspicuously in Nelly's visions is one which had only become Miss Clegg's since 1898, and had earlier associations with quite other members of her family. No events of her life before my knowledge of her are alluded to, and no friends of her childhood, except her father and the Dorothy aforesaid.

Indeed much of the information dealt directly with matters on which my mind had been busy during the months since her death. I was living at that time at her mother's house, and using as my own the room with "the funny bookcase" and the creaking chair. I had been having a good deal of trouble about the small sum of money left in the post-office at her death. The "girl in a blue dress," who was a younger cousin (not in the same family as Margaret and Dorothy), was also staying with Miss Clegg's mother at the time, and was always a great favourite with me.

It is important to say in connection with "the girl in the blue dress," that Mr. Piddington and myself are perfectly clear that Nelly never confused her with Miss Clegg, to whom she referred as "the lady," or "the lady with the stocking," etc. It is not quite possible to convey this impression by a literal report of Nelly's words, but *we were never in any doubt* as to which of the two she was speaking of, and we could always see that she kept the two clearly apart in her own mind. She was apparently aware of the danger to be avoided, and once stated emphatically that the two were not the same.

I may add, perhaps, a few words about the articles belonging to Miss Clegg, which were handed to Mrs. Thompson. The *stocking* had not been washed since it was worn by Miss Clegg, though it had been put away for the wash a few days before her death when she was in perfectly good health. I had myself carefully preserved it in this condition with a view to possible sittings.

The *purse* had been constantly used by Miss Clegg, and was in her pocket at the time of the accident from which she died.

The *slip of paper* was taken from a drawer in the book-case containing diaries, account books, etc., and had written on it rough notes of small expenditures.

The *ring* was Miss Clegg's engagement ring. As I have myself always worn this since her death *in addition to my own engagement ring*, it would have been easy for Mrs. Thompson to notice my having two, and she might have observed that one of them looked like a lady's ring. This might possibly have suggested to her that I had been engaged, but not married.



*Note by J. G. Piddington on three incorrect statements made by Nelly about Miss Clegg.*

(Sitting of January 18th, 1900.) "She wasn't a lady of great jewelry, but had ear-rings like little bee-hives."

(Sitting of January 25th, 1900.) "It wasn't only her leg, but varicose veins as well under her thigh."

"A peritonitis feeling about this letter. It's like Auntie A——'s peritonitis—that sort of pain—toothache in your inside." (See also the note which precedes record of sitting of January 25th, 1900.)

The foregoing paper and record were read at a meeting of the Society held on November 29th, 1901, at which Mrs. Thompson was present. Assuming that Mrs. Thompson has no recollection of what she says when in trance, this was her first opportunity of acquainting herself with the subject matter of Mr. Wilson's sittings.

On November 30th, Mrs. Thompson wrote to me as follows :

Dear Mr. Piddington,

How Nelly does mix things! My sister died eight years ago of peritonitis. . . . She had a gold brooch and ear-rings exactly as Nelly described, and (with the aid of a magnifying glass) you will see in the enclosed photo. the identical brooch and ear-rings. When a girl at home she suffered with varicose veins, but I do not know if she had suffered in that way before her death, as I did not see her for several years.



The ear-rings convinced me Nelly must mean my sister, as never before or since have I seen any of that particular pattern. In the photograph the little "bee-hive" does not show very well, but it was formed of a very fine twisted gold wire.

Yours sincerely,

ROSALIE THOMPSON.

At an interview on December 3rd, 1901, Mrs. Thompson gave me the following additional information, viz. :

Her sister, Mary Alethea Turner, died of peritonitis, in the month of October, 1893, at Handsworth, eight or nine days after childbirth. She possessed little jewelry, but had and often wore a brooch and ear-rings, on each of which was a design, worked in twisted gold wire, resembling a bee-hive, and she was in the habit of referring to these ornaments as "my bee-hives." Another sister, Annie Wade Middleton, unmarried, also died of peritonitis at the age of twenty-two, on March 21st, 1894, five months after Mrs. Turner's death. Both sisters had been attended by Dr. Foster, of Handsworth, both died in the same house, and both were buried in the same grave in old Handsworth churchyard.

Some of the facts here mentioned have no immediate bearing on the three points in question, but Mrs. Thompson readily consented, at my request, to give such details, in order to facilitate the verification of her statements.

I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Benjamin Davies, an Associate of the Society, residing in Edgbaston, for a full and careful corroboration of such of Mrs. Thompson's written and verbal statements as relate to the illnesses and deaths of her sisters. In the certificate of death of Mrs. Turner, of which Mr. Davies has sent me a duly certified copy, the cause of death is given as "Childbirth, 13 days, Phlebitis, 7 days, Peritonitis, 3 days."

In the certificate of death of Miss Annie Wade Middleton (of which I have also received a certified copy) the cause of death is given as "Peritonitis. Haematemesis." With regard to the varicose veins, Mr. B. Davies writes :

Finding that this disease was not mentioned in either of the certificates of death, I went to interview the doctor who attended the sisters, viz., Dr. Foster, of Hall Road, Handsworth. Dr. Foster, being himself a student of psychical phenomena, took a particular interest in the inquiry directly I mentioned the purpose of my visit, and very kindly offered all possible assistance.

Dr. Foster, speaking from memory, was quite certain concerning the varicose veins, saying that they certainly did not exist in either case. Dr.



Foster is of opinion, however, that the phlebitis in Mrs. Turner's case might quite easily have led the medium to describe the disease as "varicose veins."

On December 5th, 1901, I received the following letter from Mrs. Thompson, who had written to her sister, Mrs. Rudge, with reference to the varicose veins :

December 4th, 1901.

Enclosed you will find my sister Harriet's letter (Mrs. Rudge's) in reply to my question if she knew anything of Pollie's (Mrs. Turner's) varicose veins. I also asked Mrs. Rudge if she knew where the "bee-hive brooch and ear-rings" were, and also if Mrs. Turner had any other ear-rings.

You will find a full reply to my questions.

I can honestly state I never knew of the "thigh veins," or of any at all after my sister's (Mrs. Turner's) marriage. . . . I have cut away from my sister's letter the part not bearing upon the subject.

Mrs. Rudge's letter was as follows :

51 C— Road, R— Park, Dec. 4, 1901.

My dear Rosa,

I fear I shall not be able to give you very much information, for my memory is, and always was, so bad. I never seemed at home much with Pollie [*i.e.* Mrs. Turner], and so never heard her say anything about veins in her single days. But after marriage she had them, and on the inside of her thigh, I know, just before G — was born, she suffered a good deal with them. . . .

Now as regards brooch and ear-rings, I do not know for certain, but I believe A — has them. I believe some one said they saw her with them on—feel almost sure. I never knew her with any others except plain ones, those you wear first when the ears are pierced. . . .

Your affectionate Sister,

HARRIETT.

It appears then that Mrs. Rudge does not corroborate, though she does not contradict, Mrs. Thompson's recollection that Mrs. Turner suffered from varicose veins before her marriage. Mrs. Rudge admits that her memory is not very clear, and her statement that Mrs. Turner had varicose veins after marriage must not be taken as conclusive, for it is plain that her one definite recollection is of Mrs. Turner's condition shortly before the birth of her child, when the symptoms were perhaps not due to varicose veins but to phlebitis. But I see no reason for doubting Mrs. Thompson's statement that her sister, Mrs. Turner, did suffer from varicose veins, as this complaint, she tells me, is common to other members of her family, and some support is independently afforded to her statement by the fact that persons who suffer from

varicose veins are somewhat more liable to phlebitis than the generality of people.

I have examined, under a magnifying glass, the two photographs of Mrs. Turner, in one of which she is shown wearing the brooch and earrings, and in the other the brooch only. I cannot categorically state that the ornamentation does represent a bee-hive, but it certainly resembles one closely. A jeweller to whom I submitted the photographs is of the same opinion, and was quite certain that the design was, as Mrs. Thompson stated, worked in gold wire.

In face of this fresh evidence, I think it cannot reasonably be doubted that the three statements (bee-hive ear-rings, varicose veins, and peritonitis) wrongly given by Mrs. Thompson in trance in connection with Miss Clegg, owe their origin to reminiscences of Mrs. Thompson's dead sister, Mrs. Turner, which "Nelly" got hold of, but used in a wrong relation. But because the source of Nelly's information has thus been traced, the problem presented is none the less puzzling,—indeed, if anything, the puzzle is all the greater.

I fail to see how any hypothesis involving conscious fraud on Mrs. Thompson's part can provide a solution.

If we regard Nelly as merely a secondary personality and invoke telepathy from some living mind as an explanation, we must assume that this secondary consciousness, while cognisant of the personality of the sister Annie and of the fact that this sister suffered from peritonitis, can only discover certain definite facts which would have been true of the other sister, Mrs. Turner, but cannot assign these facts to the right person, although that person is the medium's own sister; and moreover associates them wrongly with another person, between whom and Mrs. Turner there is no connection whatever.

If, however, Nelly is the spirit of Mrs. Thompson's daughter, then,—unless her powers of communication happen to have been obstructed at this particular point by some fortuitous defect in the "machine,"—we must assume that her knowledge is limited in a curious manner:—that she knows her Aunt Annie, but does not know her aunt Mrs. Turner, nor recognise her when she sees her, although the two photographs which I have seen show that a strong family likeness existed between Nelly's mother, Mrs. Thompson, and Mrs. Turner. But some light is perhaps thrown on this point by information furnished me by Mrs. Thompson in a letter dated December 23rd, 1901, in which she states that whereas "Aunt Annie" was a constant visitor at her house and often helped to attend Nelly during her illness, Mrs. Turner

never saw Nelly, and there had been but rare intercourse between herself and Mrs. Turner for some years before the latter's death.

On December 3rd, 1901, I went carefully through the record of Mr. Wilson's sittings with Mrs. Thompson, but she did not discover any other references which could be applied correctly to her sister, Mrs. Turner.

In conclusion, I may remark that there was and is no connection of any kind between Miss Clegg or Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Thompson or her sisters or family.

## V.

## REPORT ON SIX SITTINGS WITH MRS. THOMPSON.

BY RICHARD HODGSON, LL.D.

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I ATTENDED six sittings with Mrs. Thompson in July and August, 1900, and quote here the detailed records of these, so far as they concern myself or the lady present at the first two sittings. Pseudonyms have been substituted for the real names in the case of this lady and the most important incidents connected with her. The portions omitted concern Mr. Myers, or other previous sitters, and I learned from Mr. Myers after the series of sittings was over that none of these references to other matters could be regarded as having any evidential value. Mrs. Thompson knew who I was, and I had interchanged a few words with her on at least two previous occasions.

So far as I know, the lady, Mrs. Barker, was unknown to Mrs. Thompson, and was scarcely known to Mr. Myers. I knew little about her life and friends myself. She had visited America for the purpose of having some sittings with Mrs. Piper, and was so anxious to receive communications from her deceased husband that I arranged with Mr. Myers for a trial with Mrs. Thompson.

It will, I think, be clear on perusal of the detailed records that the statements made by Mrs. Thompson concerning myself and my relatives or friends do not—considering the opportunities which she has had for obtaining information about me—suggest even *prima facie* any proof of supernormal power, and they need no special comment.

The statements relating to Mrs. Barker, however, notwithstanding the many that were incorrect, do include such correct or partially correct specific statements that the first conclusion suggesting itself to most readers would probably be either that some supernormal power was manifested, or that Mrs. Thompson, or her trance-personality, had obtained information surreptitiously.

I may say here at once that the view which the consideration of these six sittings inclined me to take is that Mrs. Thompson exhibited no supernormal power at all during their occurrence, and that she was

in a normal state the whole time. Mrs. Barker, at the time of her sittings, independently reached and still holds the same conclusion as myself. In the detailed records, of course, I made notes under the headings of "trance," etc., in accordance with what the manifestations purported to be, and the reader can form his own judgment of the apparently incriminating circumstances from the notes appended to the sittings in connection with some further comments and analysis which I give here on some of the most important statements concerning Mrs. Barker. My own view of the methods which I suppose were adopted by Mrs. Thompson in acquiring and using information concerning the sitter will be sufficiently indicated by the few following points :

(1) From the preliminary conversation at Sitting I. Mrs. Thompson obtained the information that "three years ago or so" the sitter was desirous of having sittings. At beginning of Sitting II. Mrs. Thompson says : "Things are so difficult after three or four years."

(2) Mrs. Thompson guesses (wrong) that a cap has been brought, and on the production of the spectacle case guesses (wrong) that it belonged to the sitter's *father*.

(3) Mrs. Barker and myself leave the room, and Mr. Myers remains. After a short time Mr. Myers left the room to call Mrs. Barker.

I should explain here that the sittings were held in what I may call Room 2 of the S.P.R. Rooms at 19 Buckingham Street, to distinguish it from Room 1, the Library Room, usually occupied by Mr. Bennett. The sitter and myself on this occasion, after leaving Mr. Myers with Mrs. Thompson, went into the general hall space outside the rooms of the S.P.R. altogether.

I suppose that during Mr. Myers' absence Mrs. Thompson looked into Mrs. Barker's opened parcel, and read the address or part of the address on at least one of the envelopes lying there, and thus obtained the name "Miss Dorothy Gibson."

(4) Mrs. Thompson gives the name Dorothy for the sitter, who acknowledges it, and then guesses (wrong) that the sitter wishes to hear from her *mother*. See (2). Mrs. Thompson then guesses (partially right) "man, his hand used to shake," and (wrong) that he was "ill a long time." Mrs. Thompson now knows definitely from her several guesses and from Mrs. Barker's treatment of them that the desired communicator is not the sitter's father or mother, and is a man, and she guesses (wrong) that the desired communicator was named Gibson (probably a guess at the sitter's *brother*).

(5) I return, and Mrs. Thompson expressly refers to the sitter as



“Miss Gibson.” She was, however, married nearly eight years before, and the letters taken to the sitting had been written to her before her marriage.

(6) Mrs. Thompson indirectly asks for letters, and, as letters are being given to her, asks that they should be wrapped up, as though to suggest that the furthest thing possible from her mind was the thought of reading anything on the envelopes. The sitter wrapped them so thoroughly that it would have been at least difficult for Mrs. Thompson to look inside the envelopes without drawing the special attention of the sitter to her manipulation of the package. After a short interval Mrs. Thompson requested me to arrange the letters so that her fingers could touch the writing. This, of course, in itself was a reasonable request, but it also gave opportunities for Mrs. Thompson to look in the envelopes or even to take the letters out, as she took up such a position that the articles she handled both at this and at later sittings were concealed from my view by the desk. The notes of the sittings are inadequate as regards the articles handled by Mrs. Thompson later on; I believe that on the resumption of the trance the articles used before were again given to Mrs. Thompson. When Mrs. Barker was alone with Mrs. Thompson she took my position at the desk to make notes. It is perhaps immaterial just exactly when Mrs. Thompson may have looked into the envelopes. My impression at the time of the sittings was that she probably took the opportunity after my leaving the room in the second part of the sitting. In any case I suppose that Mrs. Thompson did look inside the envelopes and read the following passages:

“I shall not forget the waiting-room at Altringham for a long time.”

“Your Sodjer, Harold,” and other words suggesting an accepted proposal.

“I am glad you did not come up to town with us yesterday. I drove to Waterloo, and had to take my uniform case.”

“P.S. The girls sent a letter to me the other day in a parcel from home, addressed H. R. Guthrie, Esq. !!!”

As I found by personal inspection, these passages could be easily read without removing the letters from their envelopes. The signature at the end of one of the letters, which might also have been similarly read, was an H. B. joined together.

(7) The relation between the above passages and various statements made later by Mrs. Thompson indicate very strongly that she was drawing inferences and guessing—making also some interesting mistakes

—on the basis of the information acquired from looking inside the letters.

“You wished him good-bye when he was going on a boat—he went on a boat.”

“He wants to know what his sisters—the two girls—are doing.”

“Poor Harold is dead now.”

“This dead Harold was a soldier.” (S. “Was he?”) “You have seen him in uniform; why do you say ‘was he’?” (S. “Ask him to tell me some more about his being a soldier.”)

The remarks here of the sitter apparently suggested to Mrs. Thompson that perhaps the references to “sodger” and “uniform,” which she had read in the letter, might not after all mean that the person concerned was a soldier. Accordingly, in the next sitting (July 31), she says, “That was no soldier,” and in the fifth sitting (August 13) she apparently guesses that the uniform was connected with a yacht. Later on again, in the sixth sitting (August 14), she goes back to the “soldier.”

But perhaps the most important passages bearing on the question of whether the letters were read or not are the following:

“He wants to know if you remember the romantic place where he proposed to you.” (S. “Ask him where it was.”) “He says it was in the station waiting-room you promised to be Mrs. Guthrie.” “No one else proposed to you at Altringham in the waiting-room.”

It seems fairly clear from these that Mrs. Thompson inferred from the statements read in the letters that the name of the communicator desired was Guthrie, and that he had *proposed* at a *station* waiting-room; not unreasonable inferences for a normal intelligence who had read the passages quoted above from the letters and was otherwise unaware of the facts of the case,—but nevertheless wrong. (See the notes appended to the record of the first sitting, p. 148.)

(8) At the next sitting a handkerchief was presented with the name Barker on it, and the only new information of special significance given in connection with this sitting was the name Barker.

(9) I need not lengthen this introduction by entering into further details concerning obvious inferences and guesses and mistakes. For example, at the end of the first sitting:

(S. “Ask him one more thing. Does he really mean that he proposed in a real waiting-room?”)

“No, no. He says you promised him in the waiting-room.”

The point of the sitter’s question was missed, as was plain from the answer then, and also from the statement at the sixth sitting (August 14).

“It was at the station when she said, *Yes, I will.*”

It was really at a “dining room” of Mrs. Barker’s then residence where the proposal was made and accepted.

(10) On the other hand there was not the slightest perception at the first sitting, on the part of Mrs. Thompson, that Mrs. Barker was a married lady. Mrs. Barker was dressed in ordinary mourning, not in widow’s weeds, and was very young-looking. She was nevertheless wearing a specially heavy wedding-ring, and I suppose that Mrs. Thompson regarded this as a deceptive ruse. It was not till Sitting IV. that any explicit mention was made of Mrs. Barker as a married lady; and I feel bound to say that in preliminary conversation with Mrs. Thompson, at the beginning of this Sitting IV., the lady was, in a moment of forgetfulness, spoken of as “Mrs. Barker.” In that sitting later came the words “Dorothy, my wife.” That Mrs. Thompson herself was aware of the inferences concerning lack of supernormal power that might be drawn from her previous references to “Miss Gibson” is indicated by her apparent attempt, in Sitting VI., to explain such references.

“I always call that lady Miss Something. I always call her Miss Gibson, because you see the old Grandma Gibson always speaks of her like that. I say the old, because she was grandma,—she wasn’t old when she came to us. You know that old lady; she’s so interested in a soldier, a man in uniform, and she wants to take care of him for some one else.”

Upon which Mrs. Barker’s comment is: “My father’s mother died, I believe, before my birth.”

I should add that the letters taken by Mrs. Barker were not taken with any thought of deceiving Mrs. Thompson, either by the contents of the letters or the addresses on the envelopes.

My conclusion is that the order of the events, the relative sequence of the knowledge exhibited by Mrs. Thompson, and the erroneous inferences from the written words on or in the envelopes, all combine to show that Mrs. Thompson read the words in question by normal vision. As the order of opportunity arose for becoming possessed of the information by ordinary means, Mrs. Thompson obtained it (first, the names on the envelopes; next, such contents of the letters as might be easily read; last, the name on the handkerchief)—and *not till then.*

The question then arises whether Mrs. Thompson in her normal state acquired the information in question surreptitiously, or whether she was dominated by a secondary personality to whom the surreptitious procedures are to be attributed. There may be some who will

adopt this latter view. For myself, I saw no reason to suppose, in the whole course of my six sittings, that Mrs. Thompson was at any time in any "trance" state of any sort whatever.

The records are nearly verbatim, except for the passages excluded as having no reference to Mrs. Barker or myself. These are indicated by three asterisks. Two asterisks indicate the omission of a few words that were not caught or recorded at the time they were spoken, and I believe that these were unimportant. Dots . . . indicate pauses or breaks in the utterances of Mrs. Thompson; they do not indicate omission of any words spoken by her. Most of the commentary notes were made either immediately after the sittings or within a few days. Additional notes were made in February, 1902, in further consultation with Mrs. Barker, and these are preceded by the letter A. Mrs. Barker was alive to the importance of recording as fully as possible, and especially of writing down exactly whatever she herself said. In one or two cases, when it was impossible to give the exact words, I gave the substance of the remark or remarks in square brackets. Comments made after the sittings are also in square brackets, and the remarks of the sitters at the sitting are in round brackets.

#### DETAILED RECORDS OF SITTINGS.

##### SITTING I. JULY 23RD, 1900.

At 19 Buckingham Street, Straud, W.C. Present: F. W. H. Myers, R. Hodgson, Mrs. Barker (called S. below), and Mrs. Thompson.

[*R. H. notes.*] [During preliminary conversation M. asks if Mrs. T. has had any experience. 3.25 p.m. \* \* \* Talk about Miss A., and S. says she has been promised a sitting with Miss A. through a friend . . . in reply to question from M. as to circumstances. S. said it was three years ago or so. 3.47 p.m. Trance coming on. 3.48. . . . Trance ?]

" \* \* If lady has brought a cap or something." [No cap brought.]

(*M.* "Is that Mrs. Cartwright?") "Yes." [Mrs. C. asks for pencil.]

(*M.* to *S.* "Give something.") [*S.* gives spectacle case and silk wrap. *R. H.* gives pencil and block-book, which Mrs. C. takes in lap. Writes :]

"Where are your father's glasses? I do not know why these should be here \* \* \* " [Writing ends].

[Pause.] "I must see what Bates wants to do with it." [Not specific enough to determine. A. Persons named Bates known to S. and her husband.] [Here control suggests that S. and R. H. should go out, leaving "Mr. Myers alone." S. and R. H. go out.]

[*Myers notes:* Mrs. T. wakes and complains of feeling muddled. Thinks she is going to be ill. Saw herself in the spirit-world looking ill. Saw her Mother, who said she was ill in that world.]



"I believe I have been haunted by Stainton Moses. Last Saturday he came. He said 'How many more of you are going to try me?' I felt as I feel when other mediums are there. I said, 'I don't want to have anything to do with you until you tell me those names.'"

[*Contemporary note by R. H.* Here M. left the room to call S., and meanwhile a parcel of articles brought by S. remained partially opened on the table. S. returns without M.]

[*S. notes.*] "I have been wanting to speak with you! Who calls you Dorothy?" (*S.* "That is my name.")

"Mother calls you Dorothy." [True if applied to my own Mother.]

"Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. . . . This belongs to a man—his hand used to shake." [True in his last illness. A. A habit in his illness was to hold up his left hand and look at it, and in this position it would shake through weakness.]

(*S.* "I think it did. Tell me about him.")

"He was ill a long time—some months." [About three weeks.]

(*S.* "Is he with you now? I want to talk to him.")

"He won't be able to come. He makes you write. He says you have his ring."

(*S.* "Yes. Will you tell him I am anxious for a message.")

"He sends his love. Why is he so sad?"

(*S.* "Ask him to tell me who he is, so that I may know if he is really there.")

"Gibson." [Maiden name of sitter.] ". . . Gubson. He is not afraid of Hodgson—he tried to communicate with you before" [true] "he gave you several things" [true] "he can come in." (*S.* "To take notes?") "Yes." [*S.* calls R. H.]

[*R. H. notes.* R. H. returns. 412.]

"Nollie [?] doesn't mind. She doesn't mind. Why does Miss Gibson come with you? Why does she come with you?"

(*R. H.* "Oh, because I help her with her friends.")

"You know she's like you, you know, Mr. Hodgson, she wants tests, tests, tests." (*R. H.* "Yes.")

"What's . . . when I ask a question don't answer it. \* \* "

"Mother's head seems very bad." [?] (*R. H.* "Yes.")

[Holding up spectacle case and silk wrap.] "This dear man, his hand shakes. . . . What's the matter with that woman and child, so ill when you were coming over?" (*R. H.* "Oh, I don't know that.") [A. S. recalls that during the passage from Boston to Liverpool the doctor of the ship mentioned at table that a baby had been born in the steerage. R. H. has a vague recollection of this. S. and R. H. came over in the same ship.]

(*S.* "Will you ask that gentleman to give you some more messages, please?")

\* \*

"Well, I've communicated before, but where are the pictures?"

(*S.* "What sort of pictures?")

"It was the sheep." [?] (*S.* "The *sheep*?") "Yes."



[I brought some photos in a parcel, not opened, amongst which was one of a pony which I have some very vague recollection that we called, among other names, the *sheep*. A. The pony's name was Daniel or Dan, or a Hindustani modification of this. Owing to its habits, it was sometimes spoken of as a *cow* or a *sheep*. The query after *sheep* was absolutely contemporary, and the present impression of R. H. is that he understood *ship*.]

"He says you've got heaps of letters of his,—heaps of letters, have you, Dr. Hodgson?"

[S. brings two letters. R. H. is about to give them to Mrs. T.]

"Wrap them up, wrap them up." [R. H. gives to S., who wraps much tissue paper round them and hands them to Mrs. T.]

"He asks her to stitch his book, stitch it up, yes, stitch it up." [Unintelligible.]

[Control asks R. H. to arrange letters so that finger can touch writing. R. H. takes and arranges and returns.]

"Not a very great letter writer. [True.] You ought to be very glad of them. What's Corrie doing now. . . . What's Corrie. . . . He wants both Ellen and Corrie. Yes. Bobbie's dead." [These names as given not significant. A. Robert was one of the names of husband of S., also of his cousin (usually called Bob), both dead; but S. does not know whether latter was dead at time of sitting or not.]

[Pause.] "George. He can't come here." (R. H. "Who?")

"George. He can't come here. He's afraid of all these strange places."

"Dr. Hodgson. You ought to make that lady write. She can." (R. H. "Oh, she can?")

"Yes. You ought to insist upon it. George says so." [Possible reference to G. P.]

"There comes a little boy too with this [silk wrap], a little boy too." [A possible reference to my child, but of no importance. A. Not used by child. S. is uncertain whether her child was a boy or a girl, although the doctor said it was a girl.]

"What's he doing with all those bottles . . . all those bottles? . . . He seems to be doing something with those bottles." [Allusion significant.]

"Where's the baby—the baby? . . . I want the baby. Poor Mr. Myers. Is he neglected? Does he want to go? Let him go. I'm not afraid."

(S. "He doesn't want to go. He wants to wait.")

"He doesn't help with that baby. Does Kitty know all about it now? You ought to tell Kitty about it. \* \* All one thing after another." [Kitty, an intimate friend, made since my husband's death, to whom I have talked freely on this subject.]

"Hark at those wretched war . . . shootings . . . wretched things. He went to Montril [?] too. Yes, he went to Montril [?]. It was nice and cool when he went. [Unknown.] Yes, and his pen too, you know. You haven't brought me his pen. His pen in a case too, you know, that he always wrote with." [He always wrote with an ordinary stylographic pen, which I gave to one of his nurses who asked for a keepsake. A. He did not use a case.]

“Yes, he knew Henry James, you know—the brother of our James, you know . . .” (*R. H.* “Yes”); “he knew him.” [Not true so far as I know.]

“Yes, big ships; such big ships; . . . yes, if he goes on that big ship you won’t see him again. Don’t let him get on. Dr. Hodgson, don’t let him get on. Bad . . . very bad. I’m going to clear it all up and come back in a minute or two.” (*R. H.* “Very good.”) \* \* \*

“Dr. Hodgson, without giving any suggestion, can you tell me what I shall ask him for?”

(*R. H.* “You might ask him of his own accord to tell you anything at all that will impress this lady. Leave it to him, or judge yourself.”)

[4.32 1/2. Trance stops. M. comes in. Tea. In the interim conversation, S. referred to the remarks I addressed to her when we first met each other, and I mentioned her coming to *Boston*.]

[4.47 1/2. Trance again. *R. H. alone notes*.]

“Yes. James is better now. Professor James is better.”

(*R. H.* “I’m glad to hear it.”) [Pause.]

(*R. H.* “Shall I call the lady in?”)

“Yes. I’ve been talking with that man about her. What did he say? . . . Yes, he wouldn’t mind writing through her hand. He was very pleased about her . . . she’s wearing a ring of his . . . isn’t any stone in, but that doesn’t matter. It was his. It was one Sunday it came into her possession.”

[True about the ring which I was wearing. My husband died on a Sunday. A. It was a crested signet ring and plainly a man’s ring.]

“Do all the mediums hold this [silk wrap?]”

(*R. H.* “Oh, I don’t know.”)

“It’s more than the man’s own.” [Not sure.]

(*R. H.* “Yes, I understand.”) [I think I understood this to mean that there were more “influences” than one about the article.—*R. H.*]

(*R. H.* “Shall I call the lady?”) “Yes, yes, yes.”

[*R. H.* calls S., who comes in.]

“Where’s his watch? Dr. Hodgson, you’ve got his watch. [*S.* begins to take her watch off.] . . . Not this one” [*i.e.* not *R. H.*’s watch, which was on the table. *S.* nods her head affirmatively, and gives the watch she was wearing. *S.* thinks that *Mrs. C.* here remarked “the half hunter.” *R. H.* goes out. *S. notes*.] [*A. S.* was wearing her husband’s watch, which was neither a whole nor a half hunter, in her waistband, and it was usually partly visible, and was obviously a man’s watch.]

“Has Hodgson gone? His chain is one of those thick heavy ones [not specially heavy], and . . . He ought not to have worn glasses—not an old man—he could not see very well.” [True.]

“Yes, will—no, tell me, why did he use a crest?—not a man of title [true]. Why should he use a crest?”

(*S.* “Ask him why he did.”)

*Mrs. C.* “He said he had a right to. Yes, . . . You wished him good-bye when he was going on a boat—he went on a boat [true]. He wants to know if you are happy now.” (*S.* “Not very.”)

“He doesn’t like you to be unhappy, don’t be.”

[Piece of lining had been presented some time before.]

“Is that cut from his old coat?” (S. “Yes.”) “It was his old favourite.”

[The coat he wore when he was married.]

(S. “Ask him if he remembers anything about that coat.”)

“Yes. Is it at your house now? The old coat. It was at your home.”

(S. “He used to call that coat by a special name for a special reason.”)

“He always had that on—a sort of cuddle coat. He always had it on. [Wrong.] Herbert and Harry know it.” [Harry has some relevance, but Herbert not. A. The significance of Harry is that a *Henry* was closely associated with the wedding.] “You must not be unhappy, etc. He wants to know what his sisters—the two girls—are doing.”

[He was interested in his *three* sisters. A. One of these was married before his death. During his lifetime he was anxious about the other two, as he was one of their trustees, and their money affairs were in a somewhat unsatisfactory state. He had wished that they should marry or take up some definite career. But since his death the second one had married and the third had become a successful hospital nurse.]

(S. “Shall I tell you, Mrs. C.?”)

“No, but he wants to know . . . he . . . what they are doing . . . is unhappy about them. He said the coat was in England, made in England.” [True.]

(S. “Yes, I think it was.”)

“Yes, poor Harold is dead now. Do you grieve for Harold?” [The first name of my husband.] (S. “Yes.”)

“Yes, yes, you do. That is the feeling of being . . . seems to be in a foreign country in the coldest of weather; he doesn’t mind the cold. [We were in parts of India where there was extremely cold weather. A. During part of the year, but at other times it was very warm. It was warm weather when husband of S. died.] This dead Harold was a soldier.” [True.] (S. “Was he?”)

“You have seen him in uniform; why do you say ‘was he’?”

(S. “Ask him to tell me some more about his being a soldier.”)

“Yes.” [Makes excuses for being long in getting things.]

“He had a great difficulty in telling you his surname when he came.” [True.]

“He wants to know if you remember the romantic place where he proposed to you.”

(S. “Ask him where it was.”)

“He says it was in the station waiting-room [in a room which we called the waiting-room] you promised to be Mrs. Guthrie. [Name wrong.] What *does* he know? He wants to know. He was in a foreign country when he died.” (S. “Yes.”)

“He says. Put the things away. . . . He don’t want his things shown to Hodgson.”

[S. gives envelope containing hair.]

"Why haven't you got it in your locket? You have some in your locket; put it in. [True about hair and locket. A. At the time of making the preceding note S. did not grasp the significance of what Mrs. T. said. It now seems clear that Mrs. T. intended to advise her to put the hair from the envelope into her locket. She was wearing a locket at the time, though it was not visible, which already contained her husband's hair.] He said—Dorothy, you were my own after all. What does he mean?" (S. "I understand.")

"What are those brutal Spaniards up to now? [No relevance.] He loves you to wear his watch."

(S. "Please tell him that I want to talk to him, but that Mr. Myers does not wish it. That is why I don't say much. Tell him that in case he thinks me unkind. We want him to prove his identity first.")

"No one else proposed to you at Altringham in the waiting-room." (S. "No, no one did.")

[Remark made by Mrs. C. that she must go.]

(S. "Ask him one more thing. Does he really mean that he proposed in a real waiting-room?") "No, no. He says you promised him in the waiting-room. Let him come again. I must go. Let . . . Inside he had something internal. Yes, he looks so well, and yet there was something internal." [A. He died of typhoid fever, during which he looked very ill.]

(S. "What was it?") "He was torn internally in some way. Yes, that is the truth, dear." [Vague, but relevant.]

"Yes, you must come and talk with him again."

(S. "Shall I call Mr. Myers?")

[Trance ends about 5.10 p.m.]

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*Note by R. H.*

The comments in square brackets concerning the significance or otherwise of the statements at the sitting were made immediately after Mrs. Thompson's departure shortly after the trance ended. The comments were made by S. in conjunction with F. W. H. M., and R. H. The significance of the allusion to *bottles* was not told to R. H., who left the room while S. explained it to M. While we were commenting on the sitting, S. drew attention to the fact that some of the names mentioned by the control were on the envelopes which she had been holding, and S. then inspected the letters themselves and found that the other most specific references made by the control were also in close relation to words in the letters. We thought it advisable that a special statement on these and connected points should be made in a final note.

In the opened parcel left in the room with the medium alone, when M. went out to call S., were two letters, one of which was addressed *Miss D. Gibson*, the other to *Miss Dorothy Gibson*. The names *Dorothy* and *Gibson* were mentioned by the control in the next section of the sitting, when S. was alone with medium.

The unopened parcel of photos was visible on a chair in the corner of the room.



After S. had been alone with medium for a short time, R. H. was called in, and during this section of the sitting the control asked for letters, and the arrangement of these by R. H., at request of control, so that the fingers might be inserted, also made it possible for the writing to be read to some extent by normal means without withdrawing the letters from the envelopes. Later inspection showed that among the words and passages which might be read without such withdrawal were :

"I shall not forget the waiting-room at Altringham for a long time."

"Your Sodjer, Harold," and other words suggesting an accepted proposal.

"I am glad you did not come up to town with me yesterday. I drove to Waterloo and had to take my uniform case."

"P.S.—The girls sent a letter to me the other day in a parcel from home, addressed H. R. Guthrie, Esq. !!!"

It is clear that the most important correct statements made by the control could have been suggested by the above-mentioned contents of the envelopes. There were also mistakes in connection with some of these points that suggest erroneous inferences from a knowledge of these contents.

The name of the communicator was apparently offered as Gibson (not true). The name of S. is not now "Miss Gibson." *Guthrie* is the *third* Christian name of husband of S., and not his surname. He proposed to S. in a dining-room which they called "the waiting-room," but the words in the letter about "the waiting-room at Altringham" referred to a good-bye actually spoken in the *station* waiting-room.

The preceding note was drawn up by me on July 26th from memoranda made in conjunction with S. immediately after the sitting. I forwarded it to S. for consideration, and have now received it back with one or two further explanations from her, in consequence of which I have made some slight changes. The above is the revised form.

July 30th, 1900.

R. H.

Mrs. B. also writes in a letter received by me July 30th, 1900 : "Also in the letters my husband said nothing about not being a good letter writer. I said it might be inferred he was not from short sentences, etc. As a matter of fact, he wrote very good amusing letters to people he knew well, and especially, of course, to me, but disliked writing duty letters extremely."

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SITTING II. JULY 31ST, 1900.

[At 19 Buckingham Street.] Present : F. W. H. Myers, R. Hodgson, Mrs. Barker, and Mrs. Thompson.

[*R. H. notes.* Mrs. T. arrives 10.30 a.m. Mrs. T. said she was in trance last night between 11 and 12 p.m. S. arrives 10.45 a.m., and goes with R. H. into Bennett's room with M. R. H. closes door, but almost immediately opens it, and goes to other room. \* \* \* S. enters room with M. at 10.55 a.m. 11.2. Trance ?]



"Have you brought anything, Mr. Myers?" (*M.* "Is that Mrs. Cartwright?") "Yes." \* \* \*

[*S.* gives a shoe and handkerchief. Pause.]

"Things are so difficult after three or four years." [*Husband of S.* died nearly four years ago.] \* \* \*

"That was no soldier." [*Holding up handkerchief.*] (*M.* "Who was no soldier?")

"No, that was no soldier." (*M.* "That handkerchief you mean?") "Yes. A man in civilian dress. Yes, he wanted some water." (*M.* "This man to whom the handkerchief belonged?")

"Yes."

(*M.* "Is it the same as the shoe man?")

"I don't know."

(*M.* "He wanted water, you mean when he was ill?")

"Yes, he asked some one to give him some water."

[A similar statement made through Mrs. Piper, but is unverified.]

"Where's the piece of his wedding coat; the little piece of his wedding coat?"

[*S.* leaves room and returns with piece of cloth.]

[A control of Mrs. T. at previous sitting with *M.* alone said that this was his wedding coat, referring to this same piece of cloth. Correct.]

[*M.* knew after the sitting on July 23 that the piece of cloth was cut from the wedding coat. After a sitting which he had with Mrs. T. alone between July 23 and 31, he told me that a "control" had referred to this piece of cloth (presented on July 23) and had stated that it was taken from a wedding coat.—*R. H. A.* It was a piece of silk lining.]

"You know she hardly liked cutting this, but anything, anything, anything, to get evidence." [*True.*] \* \* \*

[Control has pencil, and starts as if to write on table. *R. H.* gives block-book. Written:]

"*H R B* what do you know the the [?] *R* [?] *B* . . . [undec.]" [*My husband's initials were H. R. G. B.*]

(*R. H.* "Kindly write that again, that last.")

"*B* . . ." [undec.] . . . [Further scrawls below.] [End of writing.] \* \* \*

[Tries with inkless pen to write. *R. H.* takes it away and gives pencil.]

"*B* . . . [undec.] 15 [written above to right.] . . . [undec.] *B* . . . [undec.] . . . [scrawls.]" [End of writing.] "He must accept that . . . fifteen."

(*M.* "What about it?")

"Did he die that day? [?] What a patient girl she is this morning!" [apparently referring to *S.*]

(*M.* "Well, you haven't given her much for herself.")

"Like her by herself."

[*M.* and *R. H.* go out 11.20 a.m. *M.* called in 11.34.]

[*S.* notes.]

"What's Dorothy? Is that you? I want Dorothy." (*S.* "I am here.")

“Yes, yes. It was good of you to be patient.”

(S. “No matter. I have waited. . . .”)

“Waited so many years, you’ve got patient.”

“B . . .” [couldn’t catch] “he’s trying to write . . . you . . . The worst is we read the contents of a letter without getting the message of the spirit. His uncle is Robert—you know. [I believe true. A. True.] He said you always used to tease him and say how silly and absurd he was, but it is more difficult now, he feels, and not as silly and absurd; you know he was very sentimental—delightfully sentimental. What had Brownman to do?”

[Writing:] “B . . . [undec.] Brown [?] B Bow m an. Richard . . . H . . . P.” [?] [End of writing.]

(S. “What—Brown man—?”)

“Yes, Richard Bowman he knew—he says Richard Bow man. When he travelled down to Altringham whilst he was there there was a very heavy storm and he stayed on.” [The name Altringham has significance. See previous sitting, July 23. The rest is irrelevant.]

“Might I hold his ring that he used to wear—it is the one you gave him.” [I never gave him any ring, and he never wore a ring. A. The man’s crested signet-ring that S. was wearing her husband used to carry in his waistcoat pocket as a seal.]

(S. “Can he tell me anything about that ring?”)

“Why does he say you gave it him when you were his? The one you had was diamond.” [True. He gave me a diamond ring which I was wearing.]

“He says that the girls were very vexed with you for trying to hear from him. Think it absurd.” [Probably true, from what I know of them.]

“What’s Horace—Course I don’t. . . .” (S. “Horace?”) “Yes, belong to one of the girls; he always spoke of them as the girls—funny way to speak of them.” [I have a cousin Horace living, but unknown to the girls or my husband.]

[Writing.] “My crest and yours.” [End of writing.]

“What made him cough so—he coughed—yes. [Pause.] Some one put something on his chest and round his back too, but you had something grey straight down when you did it—grey dress.” [My husband had mustard plasters over the heart, not put on by me. A. He died of heart failure due to typhoid fever with pneumonia as a complication, but he did not cough except the choking cough preceding death. S. thinks that the doctor and the nurse together put on the mustard plaster. The nurse was wearing a grey dress with a white apron. S. was wearing a straight down blue wrapper.]

“Is Bob there now—Is Bob there—who drove to the station. Yes—yes . . .” [Writing.] “B . . .” [Something undec.] [End of writing.] “No, mustn’t say it. . . .”

[Came out of trance. S. calls M.]

Mrs Thompson saw “Ada” written up while Mr. Myers and Sitter were talking about a typewriter whose name is not Ada.

Mrs. Cartwright. Yes, I think it would be best not to have any more just now. \* \* \*

[*R. H. returns and notes.* 11.47 a.m.] \* \* \*

"Five years ago. . . . Where's that ring . . . some one's lost a ring."

(*S.* "I took it off. I put it on again.")

"Some one's lost a ring belonging to you."

(*S.* "No. I don't think so.")

"A little old-fashioned ring, Dr. Hodgson, that's lost." [Looking about and moving hands as if searching for something. Loss not known.]

[11.55 a.m. Trance ends.]

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*Note by R. H.*

Mrs. T. wakes and says she heard Mr. Myers say, "That's in the peerage." Complains, after a short interval of conversation, that she feels muddled. M. suggests that S. and R. H. go out, while [another control] has opportunity to come, as Mrs. T. feels clear always after [that control]. S. and R. H. go into other room; and S. takes the shoe and handkerchief. Some time afterwards, not noted, ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, M. first and shortly afterwards Mrs. T. come in; and after a short conversation Mrs. T. leaves. Soon afterwards we adjourn to the séance room to make notes, and it is found that the words "Barker is here" are written on a fresh page of the block-book R. H. had presented for the *automatic writing*. The words appear to have been written rapidly, and not in the style of the previous automatic writing, and must have been written after S. and R. H. left the room. (The last words written while I was in the room were on p. 7 of the block-book, and the words "Barker is here" were on p. 8. R. H.) M. did not notice their being written while he was in the room with Mrs. T. alone, but thinks that they *may* have been written during that time. The only other times apparently at which they could have been written were just after M. left the room and before Mrs. T. followed him,—or after Mrs. T. said good-day and before we returned to the séance room.

The name "Barker" was clearly marked on the handkerchief presented by S., a fact which did not occur to her till after she had given it. R. H.

July 31st, 1900.

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SITTING III. AUGUST 7TH, 1900.<sup>1</sup>

At 19 Buckingham Street; present: F. W. H. Myers, R. Hodgson, and Mrs. Thompson.

[*R. H. notes.* Mrs. T. arrived about 3.15 p.m. a few minutes after me. \* \* \* M. arrives 3.30 p.m. Mrs. T. says that she has been haunted by a man named Barker, "a tall, young aristocratic-looking man." [Right, but too general description.—M. B.] "He seemed very excited, and explained it by

<sup>1</sup>In this and the following sittings the sentences in square brackets signed M. B. are Mrs. Barker's comments on the record.

saying that it was my fault, as I wouldn't listen to what he was saying. I asked if he was connected with ——, and he said, no, he didn't know ——."

(*M.* "What kind of hair?")

"Dark hair,—he looked bronzed altogether, his face and hair looked dark together." \* \* \* [Remarks apparently qualifying first statement that hair was dark.] [Quite wrong—*noticeably fair* would have been right.—*M. B.*]

"I saw Barker first when I was awake, and heard 'let go,' and then passed into trance."

(*R. H.* "Could you describe Barker any more?")

"No, couldn't see him very clearly, he was trembling like one of those biograph pictures." \* \* \* [Trance.] \* \* \*

(*M.* "And what about this man Barker whom your medium saw?")

"You mustn't come back to that again."

(*M.* "Yes, do just as you think right.") . . .

"Barker . . . Ho . . . Barker . . . Harold. . . ." [Names given at previous sittings.—*M. B.*] "No . . . this man a . . . his neck was very prominent . . . his chin was very prominent . . . he was really handsome, but his neck was so thin, and it gave his chin a rather pointed appearance." [Quite wrong, especially about the neck—chin was very square.—*M. B.*]

\* \* \* [Ordinary conversation and tea.] [Trance 4.50.] \* \* \*

[Trance ends 5.18 p.m.]

SITTING IV. AUGUST 8TH, 1900.

At 19 Buckingham Street; present: F. W. H. Myers, R. Hodgson, Mrs. Thompson.

[*M. notes.*] \* \* \* [*R. H.* 10.32 *notes.*] \* \* \*

[During trance.]

[Written:] "Surely there is hope for Dorothy, my wife." [Dorothy given at previous sitting.—*M. B.*] "H.R.B.[?] H.R.B. . . . H.R.B. . . . H.R.B.[?] H.B.B." [H.R.G.B. correct initials.—*M. B.*] [See sittings July 23 and 31.]

\* \* \* [11.55.]

[Spoken.] "Where's Mr. Barker's slipper?"

(*M.* "Would you like to see her again next week?")

"Yes."

[Control appears to be searching for something. *M.* explains that the slipper is not here.]

"Who's his great friend, a man whose name begins with C and only has four letters? I'll try to give you that on . . . I think the *things* best without the person."

(*M.* "Yes, simply the shoe, brought by Dr. Hodgson.")

"Not Clune . . . Clune [?] . . . because he was asking about him." [Will find out; but so far do not know the name.—*M. B.* A. Name still unknown.]

(*M.* "He's still alive, this friend?")

“Yes. I suppose you didn't notice when the — control was talking that he was there.”

(*R. H.* “Yes, we got it after.”)

[M. does not understand what is referred to, and control explains about “Barker is here,” and says it was written when the — control was present. R. H. reminds M. of the incident. See sitting of July 31.]

[Control asks R. H. to bring article of some other person as well.]

“Don't bring any letters with names in to lead one astray . . .”

(*R. H.* “Articles of some entirely *different* person, you mean?”)

“Yes. Dr. Hodgson has lady friend who has some old lady died belonging to her lately. Bring something of the old lady's.” [Significance not known.

—R. H.] \* \* \*

[Trance ends about 12.10 p.m.]

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SITTING V. AUGUST 13TH, 1900.

At 19 Buckingham Street ; present : R. Hodgson and Mrs. Thompson.

(*R. H. notes.* Mrs. T. arrives 3.27 p.m. \* \* \* Trance 4.02 p.m.) \* \* \*

(*R. H.* “Is this Mrs. Cartwright?”) “Yes. I think Mr. Myers told you to let me have the slipper.” (*R. H.* “Yes.”) [Giving shoe in tissue paper.]

“It doesn't matter about being undone, does it?” (*R. H.* “No.”)

[Apparently taking off tissue paper, but operation not *visible* to me owing to position of desk. I found later that the handkerchief was there also.—R. H.]

“I remember your saying, Mr. Myers, about how could I see, etc. \* \* \* This is not the same slipper that I had before—it seems different.” [It was the same.—M. B.]

(*R. H.* “I asked for the same, or rather I simply asked the lady for the shoe, as you requested. It may be . . .”)

“It seems quite a clean one, quite fresh.”

(*R. H.* “Yes? I don't know any more.”) [Pause.]

“I wonder why this makes . . . there's something about this a difficult influence to get at . . . it is indeed, yes. You see he was alive and quite well in ninety-two. But he did something the year afterwards . . . but what did he do . . . he got married in 1893 . . . I see 1893 so distinctly.” [Married in 1892 (Nov.).—M. B.] (*R. H.* “You *see* it?”) “Yes, quite distinctly 1893.” \* \* \*

“Bobby . . . Bobby who?” [to Sp.] [Robert is communicator's second name. Once I called him “Bob” for fun.—M. B.]

“You know, Mr. Myers, I seem to be taken to a large seaport, where all the vessels . . . he seemed to go over a large vessel. I'm referring to the boy belonging to the slipper . . . I say boy . . . he was only a young . . . he didn't seem to be more than 23 when he was married.” [He was married when 28.—M. B.]

“I don't like the looks of his throat now . . . it was his throat. He used



to have something just here" [indicating neck from left ear down towards front.]

(*R. H.* "Yes.") [My *yes* indicating understanding what was meant by the description.] [There was no trouble with his throat.—*M. B.*]

"He wants to know what made the girls so furious about her going there . . . Dorothy went . . . she went for my sake, he says." [Not the case as stated.—*M. B.*] \* \* \*

"I say, Dr. Hodgson, I see now you're not Mr. Myers; do forgive me for calling you Mr. Myers, but I haven't been able to see. \* \* \*

"Harold Barker . . . do you call him? . . . well, I'll call him that."

(*R. H.* "Yes.") [See sittings July 23 and 31.]

"He knows Mererva . . . Mererva . . . well, when he went to the house she was there. You know what I'm talking about?" (*R. H.* "Yes.") [Mrs. Piper's younger daughter's name Minerva.—*R. H.*]

"You know he once wrote the name of a town—it gave him a lot of trouble." [Not relevant to Piper sittings.]

"He wants to write the name of a town." [Drawing.]

"That's the stick he was so fond of" [indicating drawing].

[Slight noise apparently just outside door, perhaps a light tap.]

"What's that woman doing, listening?" [*R. H.* goes to door: servant there says tea ready.] ". . . listening."

(*R. H.* "No, it was only tea.")

(*R. H.* "That stick, Barker?")

"It was straight across . . . like a railway signal . . . silver here, silver there" [pointing and marking].

[He had an ordinary stick, with handle as drawn, possibly one band on silver.—*M. B.* *A. Mrs. B.* possesses the top of the stick. The stick doubtless had one silver band, but certainly not at either of the two points indicated by *Mrs. T.*]

"He could draw very well, you know; if he could get hold of *Rosa's* hand, he could make her draw. Have you ever seen some of those caricatures he's drawn of the boys?" (*R. H.* "No.") "They were very good."

[He did not draw as far as I know. I have never seen him caricature.—*M. B.*]

"Strong smell of cigar smoke. I suppose it's those . . ." [Sniffing.] (*R. H.* "Mine?") "Yes." (*R. H.* "Mine, is it?") "Yes, you're not smoking now, I can see. But you could just as well have finished it; I was long enough." [I had been smoking, but finished my cigar about ten minutes before *Mrs. T.*'s arrival. On a previous occasion, as known to *Mrs. T.*, I left an unfinished cigar on the mantelpiece.—*R. H.*]

"I wish you'd . . . they all want those girls to do something. Can't they do something and help their mother? I feel rather cross. They think as long as their mother has anything, they can have it. They want speaking to. It seems to me that that Barker wore a uniform, because the buttons look round and bright. Has he got a yacht?" (*R. H.* "I don't know.") "Because I can see him so distinctly walking on board."

[If "girls" refers to communicator's sisters—two are now well married, and the third is a successful hospital nurse. Their mother is long since dead. Communicator *did* wear a uniform; but see sitting July 23. He did not possess a yacht at any time.—M. B.] \* \* \*

"It's in a case, his pipe. Mr. Barker's pipe, in a case . . . like that, rather a small one like that" [indicating drawing just made]. [He *did* (but rarely) smoke a pipe. There was nothing special about any pipe of his I can remember.—M. B. A. No recollection of any pipe-case.] \* \* \*

[Trance ends 4.34 p.m.]

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SITTING VI. AUGUST 14TH, 1900.

At 19 Buckingham Street; present: R. Hodgson and Mrs. Thompson.

[*R. H. notes.* Mrs. T. arrives 10.30 a.m. Trance 10.50. Mrs. C.]

"It's 10.51 now, 51." (*R. H.* "Yes.") [I had spoken 10.50 aloud while writing it.]

"You haven't anything belonging to the boy, have you?"

(*R. H.* "No. Would you like the shoe?")

"Yes." \* \* \*

"This'll never be very good." (*R. H.* "Oh.")

"No. There's something about it that I can't get at. The . . . the . . . What brings old Mary here? . . . she travels everywhere."

(*R. H.* "Is that to do with the shoe?")

"No, it's to do with Dr. Hodgson, with *you*." (*R. H.* "Yes.")

[Meaning that I understood that control referred to me. *Mary* has no significance in this connection.—*R. H.*]

"You know with this shoe man, I can see him falling from a horse. He was not very upright, he used to lean a little forward, a little head first, he was tall and it gave him that appearance."

[He had never any horse accident of any kind that I know of; it is possible that he leant a little forward when riding, as most tall men do, though he rode well.—*M. B. A.* Mrs. B. was mistaken in saying this. She now recalls that he fell from a horse several times, but never received any injury worth mentioning.]

"Why does Constance always come up with you, always comes up with you . . . four or five times." (*R. H.* "With me?")

"You've written down about Constance several times with other people. Constance committed suicide. She came and told you, and you wrote it down."

[I have no recollection of any Constance.—*R. H.*] \* \* \*

"I wish you had something with a different influence from this. It seems to be hunting for something that won't come."

(*R. H.* "Will you have some articles of my own?")

"The old . . . the old . . . I always call that lady Miss something. I always call her Miss Gibson, because you see the old Grandma Gibson always speaks of her like that. I say the old because she was grandma,—she wasn't

old when she came to us. You know that old lady, she's so interested in a soldier, a man in uniform, and she wants to take care of him for some one else. It was at the station when she said, *Yes, I will.*" (*R. H.* "H'm.") "Yes." [Pause.]

[My father's mother died, I believe, before my birth. No such incident as the above implies occurred at a station. See July 23rd.—M. B.]

(*R. H.* "And the Grandma's interested in him?")

"Yes, the Grandma Gibson, you know, not the other one. And what's the name of the old lady that died with the internal complaint, some growth internally belonging to the old lady?" [No relevance known.—R. H.] "I don't call her *old* lady, because she was wonderfully sprightly.

"Yes, I'll have something of yours, please. There are people that one can get at, and another one cannot."

[I give bunch of keys from pocket. Pause.]

"Yes, but this belongs to a man I was to have seen at Mr. Myers's house. I want to talk about Eleanor." [Pause. It was my own bunch of keys. Eleanor no significance.—R. H.] \* \* \*

(*R. H.* "Would you like some more articles of mine?")

"Yes . . . yes . . . it's rather dark, isn't it? [Purse given.] What have you been writing in this for?" (*R. H.* "No.") "Oh, it was the purse you gave me yesterday that was written in."

[No purse given yesterday. Mrs. T. had talked to me about a purse of her own that was written in.—R. H.]

"The old lady didn't like your coming to England. She'd like you to have stayed there, but as long as you had to go she'd come with you." [No significance that I know of.—R. H.]

"It was your duty to go, wasn't it?" (*R. H.* "Yes.") \* \* \*

"There's a dear old lady with brown wavy hair, brown, and she died on a Friday. It was rather a lonely life she led, and . . ." [No relevance to *me.*—R. H.]

"What was that account you were writing down? putting some figures down . . ." (*R. H.* "Well . . .") "This morning—you put down figures on paper." [Wrote nothing whatever, except numbering the pages of these sheets.—R. H.]

"Do you remember your baby sister dying long ago?" (*R. H.* "Yes.") "Because . . . croup, you know, croup." (*R. H.* "Yes.") "She had croup as well . . . she had something like croup for a day or two." [Mentioned in Part XXI. that little sister died when I was very young. I believe not croup.—R. H.]

"What a lot of Annies, not—but Annie belonging to your little sister, your little sister you know." (*R. H.* "Yes?")

[Rebecca name of dead sister. Annie is name of living sister.—R. H.]

"Do you think your little sister altered your mother's hair, because your mother's hair changed afterwards?"

[My mother's hair did not change for at least twenty years after little sister's death.—R. H.]

“Don’t put down your mother as an old lady, because she wasn’t old . . . good figure, she had a good figure.”

[My mother died at the age of 78. “Good figure” has not any special appropriateness.—R. H.]

“Don’t you remember the stockings she kept knitting you, and knitting you and kept you supplied with?”

[She did knit some stockings for me, but I believe only very few, perhaps two or three pair.—R. H.]

“Don’t you remember some friend of yours fell, had a fall, and died with it, in some foreign country . . . ”

[Possible reference to G. P.—R. H.]

“Uncle Henry, . . . no, . . . Uncle Henry . . . ”

[Never had an Uncle Henry.—R. H.]

[Written.] “Maria says you were not always such a scattered family.”

[No Maria in our family that I know of.—R. H.]

“Your mother had fearful headaches, and the boys had to keep quiet; and the animals, what was it she went out to feed,—with her apron on?”

[Mother not specially subject to headaches, so far as I know. I have seen her feed fowls, in which she took special interest, with an apron on.—R. H.]

“Have you cashed that cheque? You’ve got to cash a cheque, you know. It’s written out now. I think it’s written out now.” [No relevance.—R. H.] \* \* \*

“Where was your father going when he had his watch stolen? He was going from one place to another when he had his watch stolen.” (R. H. “Oh, I don’t remember that.”)

“Yes. It was not a valuable watch, but it was taken. It was stolen. Where is that other watch of his . . . will you give it to me?” [holding out hand]. (R. H. “I haven’t got it.”)

“Haven’t you got the watch with the loose case? What went with the watch with the loose case?” (R. H. “I’ll inquire.”)

[I have no recollection that any watch was ever stolen from my father. I never possessed a watch that belonged to him, and know nothing of watch with loose case of his.—R. H.]

“You know Mrs. Barker deserved to get something when she travelled from one side . . . she did get something, but the great anxiety, the anxiety’s more on one side than on the other.” (R. H. “Ycs?”) “It is really.”

[In conversation on July 23, I mentioned *Boston* in connection with meeting Mrs. B. there.—R. H.]

“There’s an old gentleman by you now that walks rather lame.” (R. H. “H’m.”) “He’s something to do with your mother and he walks lame.” [No relevance known.—R. H.]

“You know you used to be very united, but after that you were scattered” (R. H. “Yes.”) “not as an individual, but as a whole family. The . . .” [Pause. The rest of our family continued to live in the neighbourhood of home.—R. H.]

[Written.] “George says he told you about his sister’s box.”

(*R. H.* "Yes.") [Box, but not sister's. In Report, Part XXXIII.]

"Why do you call him Pelham? That isn't his name, you know. . ." [as if talking with Sp.] ". . . Oh yes, I see. Because you see the ones left behind. . . . Had he two wives?"

(*R. H.* "Not that I know of.")

"He seemed to have two people."

(*R. H.* "Can you see more about them?") \* \* \*

(*R. H.* "Yes.") [Correct real name of Pelham, but of no evidential value.—*R. H.*]

"That was one . . . get Phoebe do you know . . . what was his name?"

(*R. H.* "*Phoebe*, did you say?") "Yes, Phoebe. He left two behind, one had his name, and *her* relative, dead Phoebe, is here."

[*G. P.* never married. His father, living when I last heard, married twice; his second wife was deceased wife's sister.—*R. H.*]

"Have you *five* at your house?" [Pause.] "No, I mustn't ask questions. What's your mother got to do with five children?" [Pause.] [Four children living, two dead.—*R. H.*] (*R. H.* "Yes.")

"You know that little baby girl mentioned with the croup. Don't say that's cause of her death, because it wasn't. But there was something the matter with her throat from her birth." [Not that I know of.—*R. H.*] "And the boy wasn't so fully developed as the girl?"

"What do you want me to do with these three sovereigns?"

[Three sovereigns in the purse, it seemed to me easily ascertained by feeling, and Mrs. T. felt purse a good deal. I asked a lady afterwards to guess what it contained by feeling, and she guessed two sovereigns and a half-sovereign.—*R. H.*]

(*R. H.* "Anything. Take them out if you like.") [Pause.]

(*R. H.* "Perhaps the influences on them make my things harder to see?")

"It seems to me that I can see three sovereigns quite distinctly. The whole thing's written so distinctly. Three sovereigns."

[Written.] "R . . R . . 5 . 5 ."

"I feel sure you're going to get those names. You want Mrs. Piper to get you a name. They've promised to and they will . . ." [Possible reference to names of Emperor group.—*R. H.*] \* \* \*

[Trance ends 11.42.] \* \* \*

[Trance, 12.17.] \* \* \*

"Is Dr. Hyslop in England now? It seems he's coming over here." [Not that I know of.—*R. H.*] (*R. H.* "He is not here now.")

"He's coming over, and I'm going to speak to him." \* \* \*

(*R. H.* "Do you think we had better give up this shoe person altogether?")

"Yes, I'm quite sure it won't be any use. I told—so. It's impossible. It puts away other things you know. You know it's a far greater strain to find something that's not there." (*R. H.* "Then . . .") "I should say we can't get anything more, anything at all." (*R. H.* "It's no use spending time if you feel that there are obstacles.") "Absolutely useless." (*R. H.*



“I had better tell [M.] that no more experiments will be made with the articles or the lady. Do you think that will be best, or . . .”

“You see he might be able to get near to some one else, but he’ll never get near to Rosa. You see Mrs. Cartwright sees the picture clairvoyantly and reproduces it again for Rosa. She doesn’t get any direct word from the spirit.

“The old lady connected with it was quite clear this morning, but the man was not a real personage. You know, Dr. Hodgson, from your own experience, that it’s no use straining after a thing when nothing comes. If so, you’ll only get muddle and confusion.” (*R. H.* “Yes.”)

[Written.] \* \* \* “Every person cannot communicate” \* \* \* “any more than every one can receive communications.” \* \* \*

[Trance ends 1.11 p.m.]

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*Note.*

Mrs. B. adds, in a letter of December 10th, 1900:

“I have re-read the enclosed reports [July 23 and 31, August 7, 8, and 13] carefully, also the letters which I took to the sitting, and nothing fresh suggests itself to me. [A. This was in reply to my enquiry whether there were any other passages in the letters that seemed to have been made use of by Mrs. T. beyond those quoted in connection with Sitting I. Apparently there were not. Mrs. B. allowed me to see portions of the letters in question, but not to read the whole contents.—*R. H.*] The only points Mrs. T. could not have culled from the letters are: (1) that my husband died abroad, (2) travelled by large vessel, (3) the length of time since he died, (4) the asking for water incident. The ‘bottle’ allusion is very poor and improbable now I come to think it over again. There are quite as many wrong statements to balance these, *i.e.* the sisters helping the mother, that I gave him the ring and that he always wore it, etc.”

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NOTE BY EDITOR.

[Mrs. Barker has sent us the following further particulars of the two letters used at her first sitting, giving rather more fully the passages which—as appears from their position on the sheets—might perhaps have been read without taking the letters out of their envelopes.

(From letter of October 2nd, 1890, addressed to “Miss D. Gibson.”)

“. . . I am very glad you did not come up to town with me yesterday. I drove to Waterloo and had to take my uniform case. . . .

“. . . I shall not forget the waiting-room at Altringham for a long time. . . .

“*Your sodger,* HAROLD.”



## VI.

NOTE ON A POSSIBLY AUTOMATIC INCIDENT OBSERVED  
IN THE CASE OF MRS. THOMPSON.

BY ALICE JOHNSON.

IN his Introduction (see above, p. 65) Dr. Lodge has spoken of what he calls "suspicious circumstances" in Mrs. Thompson's sittings, when information which there is more or less reason to think was obtained normally is given out by the "control" as if obtained supernormally. Supposing that in such cases the source of the information is really normal, two interpretations are possible: (*a*) that either the medium or the "control" deliberately misrepresents the circumstances; or (*b*) that the impressions of the medium are reproduced automatically by the "control." Dr. Hodgson maintains the former interpretation of some instances that came under his observation. I give below a case occurring in my own experience which appeared to me suggestive of the latter.

The account is written from my notes, made at the time of the sittings.

At my first sitting, on July 25th, 1899, I had given to Mrs. Thompson an envelope (A), fastened up, containing (1) a postcard, and (2) a letter enclosed in a second envelope (B), not fastened. She had asked to be allowed to put her finger inside envelope (A), so I had torn it open, and she held it for a little while with her finger inside, I watching her meanwhile. I could not see that she read anything, but I think it possible that she could have done so without my detecting it. There was no sign, however, that she did so; and none of the information given in the inner letter or postcard was reproduced. She gave the whole back to me, and I brought it again to my second sitting on the following day just as it was.

At this sitting Mrs. Sidgwick was the only person present besides Mrs. Thompson and myself. The sitting was chiefly occupied with statements about an "old lady," whom I identified as an aunt who had died on June 11th, 1899, aged 81. The description of her was fairly correct.

I then took envelope (B) out of envelope (A) and gave it to Mrs. Thompson to hold. Envelope (B) was addressed to one of my sisters by a friend, B. G., who had died on July 2nd, 1899, and it contained a letter from B. G. to my sister. Mrs. Thompson, holding this letter, made a few rather

vague remarks, which were more or less applicable to B. G. Then the trance ended.

Envelope (A), still containing the postcard mentioned above, was lying on the sofa on which Mrs. Thompson and I were sitting. Without getting up from the sofa, I began collecting the papers, etc., which I had brought to the sitting, when suddenly Mrs. Thompson became re-entranced, and said in a rather excited manner, "Put down, give my love to all at 3 Bristol Road [assumed address]. That's what the old lady said."

"3 Bristol Road" was B. G.'s address, so that the remark appeared very significant. Immediately afterwards, however, I saw that it was written at the top of the postcard inside envelope (A), and could just be seen by looking towards the open end of the envelope. I can hardly doubt that Mrs. Thompson caught a glimpse of this—probably quite accidentally—as I took it up to put it into my handbag. My impression is that she was not conscious that she had seen it; and that her subliminal self or "Nelly" reproduced the percept without any idea of its real source, just as she would probably reproduce any information she acquires through whatever means. Though "Nelly" often knows that some of her information is directly derived from Mrs. Thompson, and represents it as so coming, there seems evidence in other cases (*e.g.* in the incident of the bee-hive earrings, etc., in "Mr. Wilson's" sittings, see above, pp. 133-7), that sometimes it really comes from Mrs. Thompson, while "Nelly" is under the impression that it has some other source.

Considering how much general evidence there is that different strata of consciousness in the same person may remain entirely unaware of each other's activities; also that the memories of different personalities may partially overlap, while certain regions of them remain distinct;—I see no difficulty in the supposition that the part played by Mrs. Thompson in the incident just described may have been purely automatic,—that she had no intention either of obtaining information by underhand means, or of representing it as acquired in a manner different from that in which it really was acquired. Mrs. Sidgwick, who also witnessed the incident, allows me to say that this statement represents her view of it, as well as mine. Mrs. Thompson's manner at the moment was, as usual, open and unembarrassed; there seemed no attempt at any concealment; and I had, and have still, a distinct impression of her entire sincerity in the matter.

## VII.

## NOTES ON THE TRANCE PHENOMENA OF MRS. THOMPSON.

BY MRS. A. W. VERRALL.

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MRS. THOMPSON, as is probably known to many of the readers of this paper, is a highly developed sensitive, a non-professional medium, who has been for some years under the observation of Mr. Myers and other members of the S.P.R., and has lent herself most freely to their suggestions. The opportunities therefore of observation and experiment have been exceptionally good and many, and the results obtained correspondingly valuable. I propose in this paper to confine myself to the description and criticism of such phenomena as I have myself personally observed in my intercourse with Mrs. Thompson. I shall therefore not attempt to enumerate or classify all the abnormal occurrences that have been noted in her case, nor to give an account of her previous history, or the development of her powers, interesting as such a history would be. The present notes are only a contribution to the history of the Trance Phenomena of Mrs. Thompson, and supplementary to the records of other observers.

Under these circumstances I do not propose to discuss the question of fraud on the part of the sensitive; when I come to treat in detail of the facts communicated to me, I shall do my best to state what opportunities there could have been for the normal acquirement of the knowledge shown, and leave the reader to judge whether the hypothesis of fraud, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the medium will explain the facts. At the same time, I should like to say at the outset of this paper that on no occasion in my frequent meetings with Mrs. Thompson have I had the slightest reason to suppose that she has taken any steps to obtain information about my concerns or those of my friends; on the contrary, more than once she appears to have missed obvious opportunities of acquiring such information. Further, scrupulous exactitude has been shown by her, in the normal as well as in



the abnormal condition, in acquainting me with any knowledge of my affairs of which she has become possessed. Into the question of how far in the state of trance when her eyes are apparently shut she is able to see, I shall not enter, as it is simpler to assume that what she could know she did know. I shall hope to prove that much of the knowledge shown by her could not have been obtained by any normal methods hitherto recognised. The hypothesis of "fraud" seems to me in the case of Mrs. Thompson not only improbable but inadequate.

The sittings discussed in this paper took place between April, 1899, and December, 1900. I first made Mrs. Thompson's acquaintance in January, 1899, when I met her in a friend's house, by arrangement, and talked to her for some half-hour or so; my husband was in the room at the time, but had no conversation with her. I had no other opportunity of meeting Mrs. Thompson till April, 1899, when I spent an afternoon and evening with her, also at a friend's house; and it was then that I had my first experience of the phenomena of her trance. On this occasion, the trance occurred in the presence of several persons, and the greater part of the communications were made by Mrs. Thompson in writing; these communications I did not see, as they referred to matters spoken of in earlier sittings with which I had no concern. Towards the end of the trance she made some statements which applied to me. No regular notes were taken of these, but, immediately on my return, I wrote down from memory what she said to me, and my recollections were confirmed by Mrs. Thompson's host, to whom I showed my notes on the next day. This sitting is referred to in the following observations, but does not form one of the series which I have analysed fully for statistical purposes.

On all other occasions referred to in this paper, full notes were taken during the sitting. At my first two sittings in July, 1899, the notes were taken by Miss Alice Johnson; at one very short and unexpected sitting, with my daughter alone, the notes were taken by her. On the other occasions I was the note-taker; sometimes I was alone with the sensitive, but more often there was another person present. When mine were the only notes taken, I went through the rough notes carefully with the other sitter before writing them out, but we seldom found anything to correct; once, when the other sitter had also taken notes, I sent my copy to him for comparison, and received them back with only one small verbal correction. The taking of fairly full notes is not very difficult; there are often pauses of considerable length in the course of the sitting, and the trance personality is always

willing to repeat any remark that has not been accurately heard by the note-taker.

I append a complete list of the sittings that I have had with Mrs. Thompson, and of messages received from her whether by letter or through other sitters.

1899.

1. April 5. Sitting in Cambridge, not at my house; no regular notes;
2. July 27.<sup>1</sup> Sitting in Cambridge, not at my house; Miss Johnson's notes;
3. July 28.<sup>1</sup> Sitting in Cambridge, not at my house; Miss Johnson's notes;
4. October 5.<sup>1</sup> Sitting at Hampstead, alone; my own notes;
5. October 10.<sup>1</sup> Message concerning me spontaneously obtained by Mrs. Thompson (not during a sitting) and subsequently sent to me;
6. October 20.<sup>1</sup> Message concerning me given at a sitting to another sitter and sent by that sitter to me;
7. November 2.<sup>1</sup> Sitting at Hampstead, alone; my own notes;
8. December 4. Sitting in Cambridge at my house; Sitter, Dr. van Eeden; my own notes.
9. December 5. Sitting in Cambridge at my house; Sitters, Mr. and Mrs. A.; my own notes;
10. December 5. Sitting in Cambridge at my house; Sitter, Miss Helen Verrall alone; Miss Verrall's notes;
11. December 6. Sitting in Cambridge at my house; Sitters, Miss Verrall for a few minutes, then Miss Jane Harrison, and for a short time Mrs. A.; my own notes;
12. December 7. Sitting in Cambridge at my house, alone; my own notes;
13. December 7. Letter from Mrs. Thompson written in London containing message for Miss Harrison;

1900.

14. January 2. Sitting at Hampstead; Sitter, Miss Harrison; my own notes;
15. May 2. Sitting at Hampstead; Sitter, Mr. Z., my own notes;
16. May 10. Message concerning me given at a sitting to another sitter and sent by that sitter to me;
17. May 14. Sitting at Hampstead; Sitter, Miss Harrison; my own notes;

<sup>1</sup> Full reports will be found in Appendix D, p. 223.

18. September 8. Sitting at the Society's Rooms, Buckingham Street; Sitter, Mr. Z.; my own notes;
19. September 14. Sitter, Miss Harrison; my own notes;
20. December 4. Sitting in Cambridge, not at my house; Sitters, two gentlemen; my own notes;
21. December 14. Sitting at Buckingham Street, alone; my own notes;
22. December 17. Sitting at Buckingham Street; Sitter, Mr. Y.; my own notes.

For the purposes of this paper I have used the notes and messages as above enumerated with the exception of Nos. 8 and 20, when I acted strictly as note-taker, and no remarks on my own concerns were made to me. No. 8 forms part of the series of Dr. van Ecden's sittings, which he has himself described, and No. 20, a very short sitting, belongs also to another series. For the statistics with which this paper deals I have counted all the statements made in Nos. 2 to 17 inclusive,<sup>1</sup> (with the exception as above stated of No. 8,) so far as those statements referred to myself, my daughter (No. 10), Mr. and Mrs. A. (No. 9), and Miss Jane Harrison (No. 11 and subsequently). I have not included such statements made in the second and third sittings as obviously referred to Miss Johnson, but wherever it was uncertain to which of the two persons present, Miss Johnson and myself, the trance personality was speaking, I have counted the statements as made to me, so that the percentage of unidentified statements is probably slightly higher in those two sittings than in the others.

Before proceeding to the description and classification of the various statements made to me or in my presence by Mrs. Thompson, it will be convenient to say a few words as to the manner in which the information has been conveyed; I may say briefly that in my experience information has been conveyed in the following ways:

- (A) Directly from Mrs. Thompson, who has transmitted to me in writing "messages" received by her when I have not been present;
- (B) Indirectly through Mrs. Thompson, entranced in my presence. In the trance occasionally statements have been

<sup>1</sup>These statistics were originally compiled for a paper sent to the Paris Congress of Psychology in August, 1900, so that the statements in sittings subsequent to that date have not been included. I have analysed them roughly and find that their inclusion would not affect the general result.

written by Mrs. Thompson with pencil on paper, but usually the communications have been made by a supposed personality speaking through Mrs. Thompson. The principal personalities which have appeared within my observation claim to be :

- (a) Nelly, a child of Mrs. Thompson, who died as a baby ;
- (b) Mrs. Cartwright, a former schoolmistress of Mrs. Thompson ;
- (c) A friend of my own, not long dead, whom I shall here call Mrs. B.

In this paper, without prejudice to the question whether these personalities have an independent existence or are modifications of the personality of Mrs. Thompson, I shall distinguish them by using the names to which claim is made. I may say that they differ among themselves and from Mrs. Thompson, so that there is no possibility of a sitter confusing them. I shall say more about these personalities later on,<sup>1</sup> and will now pass to the consideration of the actual statements made by them.

The most obvious classification of the statements made is to divide them according to the time to which they refer—past, present, or future. For our purposes, things referring to the past or present, being generally known or ascertainable, may be separated from things referring to the future, the truth or falsehood of which is not known and cannot be immediately ascertained. Proceeding to a further classification by results, we may have, in the case of statements referring to the future, predictions *fulfilled* (true), *not fulfilled* (false), and *unfulfilled* (not yet tested), besides a fourth class too *vague* or too general to be worth noting at all. In the case of statements referring to the present or the past, we have, if we classify by results, three possible classes, things *true*, things *false*, things *unverified or unidentified*. The following table sums up the above classification :<sup>2</sup>

#### I. Predictions :

- (A) Fulfilled (true).
- (B) Not fulfilled (false).
- (C) Unfulfilled (neither true nor false).
- (D) Not capable of classification.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> For details of I., see Appendix A ; for II. *F*, Appendix B ; for II. *G*, Appendix C ; II. *E* is dealt with in the paper.



## II. Statements referring to the present or past :

(E) True.

(F) False.

(G) Unidentified or unverified.<sup>1</sup>

Instances of nearly all the seven classes have come within my personal observation. To begin with the predictions, the total number made in my presence<sup>2</sup> is 16, of which 6 come under Class C, 9 under B, and 1 under A.<sup>3</sup> A list of these predictions is given in Appendix A. It will be seen that they deal for the most part with matters of trifling importance and common occurrence. Under these circumstances, as it is impossible to estimate the value of the results by comparing them with the ascertained number of successes and failures in a similar series of random guesses, and as further the number of predictions not fulfilled (B) is relatively very large, I confess that I am not waiting with any particular interest or anxiety for the results of the predictions hitherto unfulfilled. As far as my personal impression and experience go, I have had no reason to believe that Mrs. Thompson, or any of her personalities, possesses the gift of prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

If we pass on to the classification of statements referring to the past or the present, the material is much more abundant and the results, as it seems to me, very striking. It is difficult to count statements exactly when they have to be sifted out of miscellaneous conversation, but I have gone carefully through the notes of my sittings<sup>5</sup> between April, 1889, and June, 1900 (sittings 2 to 7, 9 to 17, in the list given above), and endeavoured to make a list of actual statements

<sup>1</sup> I call those statements unidentified which seem to have no connexion with the sitter or the sitter's concerns; unverified statements, on the other hand, are statements that are definitely connected with facts or persons known to the sitter, but whose accuracy it has not been possible to ascertain.

<sup>2</sup> Some predictions concerning me, directly or indirectly, have been made to other sitters, but the consideration of these does not enter into my scheme, as this paper deals only with my personal observations.

<sup>3</sup> The solitary "fulfilled prediction" concerned the occupation at a specified hour of the trance personality, and therefore is not strictly speaking a prediction in the ordinary sense of the term, but as it is a statement referring to the future it must be classified under this head.

<sup>4</sup> I have classed, for statistical purposes, all references to the future as predictions, but in many cases I think that the statements made were hardly so intended. See Appendix A for full list and discussion of details.

<sup>5</sup> Detailed reports and criticism of some of the sittings will be found in Appendix D.



made. When the same thing has been stated more than once, I have counted it as one statement. Three statements appear twice over, as there were at first definite false statements of facts, which, with no suggestion from me, were corrected wholly or partly on subsequent occasions. The form of correction varied; once the controlling personality deliberately referred to her own previous remark, and put it right; once the fact which had been incorrectly stated by Nelly was correctly stated by Mrs. Thompson's handwriting in trance; once a true statement inconsistent with a previous false one was correctly given without any reference to the previous version. Tentative or vague remarks subsequently defined have been counted in their final form only; these, I may say, were very few. On one occasion Nelly made a rambling series of remarks which seemed at the time hopelessly confused, but the next day Mrs. Cartwright disentangled and sorted the various observations and these therefore have been counted as finally stated by her.<sup>1</sup>

The total number of statements made to me between the dates mentioned above has been 238; of these 64 come under Class G, unidentified or unverified; 33 under Class F, false; and 141 under Class E, true. It will thus be seen that the percentage is as follows:

Class E (true), 59.

Class F (false), 14.

Class G (unidentified), 27.

In Appendix B will be found a complete list of the false statements, and in Appendix C a general description of those that are unidentified;<sup>2</sup> here I propose to deal with the correct statements in detail, and to consider what possible sources of information were open to Mrs. Thompson.

#### CLASS E. CORRECT STATEMENTS.

The reader will, I think, be prepared to admit that unless the statements made were of the most commonplace and vague kind, the large percentage of correct statements excludes the possibility that the cause of the success is to be found in accidentally accurate guessing. Fortune, no doubt, favours the bold, and much must be allowed for a lucky accident: such a percentage of success as 59 would not warrant

<sup>1</sup> See p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the general head of unidentified statements includes remarks totally differing from one another both in nature and in value. See Appendix C.

us in assuming a supernormal intelligence on the part of the guesser were the statements like those of the ordinary "palmist" or the society fortune teller, such, for instance, as that a "dark lady acquainted with the sitter" had recently had a "trouble connected with money," or that the sitter had lost a friend through "an accident" or by "a violent death." The statements that appear in my notes are not of this nature; many of them will be given in detail later on, but a few specimens taken at random will serve to show that we are dealing, for the most part, with perfectly definite statements. I find among my notes the following statements: that the sitter's husband has two brothers and one sister living; that a lawyer called Stephen or Steevens was intimate in a certain house; that the sitter had been occupied during the last day or two in turning over sheets of paper and making corrections upon them; that the name of a new sitter introduced during the sensitive's trance was (let us say) Kitty; that a letter held by the sensitive had been kept in three places, viz., a left-hand drawer, the locked-up cupboard of a writing table, and an old-fashioned writing-desk. I have made no selection in the above enumeration; some of the statements are correct, some incorrect, but the reader will not deny that they are definite.

Granting then that accident will not account for the success shown by Mrs. Thompson, let us see whether statistics throw any further light on the question whether the information undoubtedly possessed by the sensitive has been acquired normally or by some method or methods not hitherto generally recognised as available. I may say that under the head of knowledge normally acquired I should include not only everything consciously learnt by the sensitive, but everything that she can have gathered from half-forgotten conversations, from the clever piecing together of clues accidentally given, from the rapid glance at written words or names that have been within her range of vision, even from so fraudulent a performance as the deliberate conveying to her, without her consent or knowledge, by some other person, of ascertainable information. Thus, if facts obtainable from the *Peerage* or *Who's Who*, or such other source, were given, not at the first interview with a stranger, but at a later sitting after an interval during which the sitter's name might have become known, I have counted such information for my present purpose as normally acquired, though I must not be understood as thereby implying my belief that it was so acquired. So that, when once a person described by the sensitive has been recognised

and named by the sitter, all such subsequent information about that person as could be found out by an enquirer counts for my present purpose as normally obtained knowledge.

Of the 141 correct statements made to me, including the three that were corrections of previous errors, 51<sup>1</sup> were matter that could have been learnt by normal means and 90 were not. It will thus be seen that the percentage of correct statements obtainable by the sensitive from normal sources of knowledge is 36, so that the non-ascertainable statements constitute 64 per cent., or nearly two-thirds of the whole number of correct statements.

Thus, after putting aside unverified or vague remarks, incorrect assertions, and such correct statements as were normally obtainable, there remains an irreducible minimum of 90 out of the total of 238, or 38 per cent., which are correct and not to be obtained by the sensitive through any normal recognised means of information. This large percentage, taken in conjunction with the detailed nature of many of the assertions, warrants the belief that Mrs. Thompson has some source of information not generally accessible.

With regard to the nature of that source of information, there does not yet seem to be sufficient evidence to justify a dogmatic assertion. The information given, in my experience, varies considerably in distinctness as well as in value, and the general impression left upon me is that the source is not always the same. Occasionally, for instance, there seems to be direct telepathy between the communicating personality and the sitter, while on other occasions such telepathy is conspicuously absent. I have endeavoured to classify the information given according to its possible sources, and in the account that follows I have grouped the incidents together according to the class under which they seem to fall. Some classification is necessary to guide the reader through what would otherwise be but a hopeless tangle of isolated facts about a stranger's concerns. It is rather with the intention of stating than of solving the complex problems arising

<sup>1</sup> Among the 51 I have reckoned 6 very remarkable statements as to the contents of a certain letter which was "psychometrised," as Mrs. Thompson calls it, for me by Mrs. Cartwright;—not that I believe the information to have been normally acquired, but, as the letter was in the same house as Mrs. Thompson, and as Mrs. Thompson was once alone in the house for three-quarters of an hour, though it is exceedingly unlikely that she had seen the letter, and indeed impossible that she should have come across it by accident, it is not a physical impossibility that she should have read it. Her statements therefore, as to its contents are not counted as due to supernormal knowledge. See pp. 204-7 for detailed account.

from the phenomena presented by Mrs. Thompson that I have adopted the classification which follows.

#### FACTS NOT ASCERTAINABLE BY THE SENSITIVE.

The correct statements of facts not ascertainable by Mrs. Thompson have been grouped under four heads :

- (a) Things known to the sitter and directly present in his consciousness ;
- (b) Things known to the sitter, but not immediately present in his consciousness ;
- (c) Things that have been well known to the sitter, but are at the moment so far forgotten as only to be recalled by the statements of the medium ;
- (d) Things unknown to the sitter.

Illustrations will make clearer the distinctions between these classes : (a) Things known to the sitter and directly present in his consciousness. Under this head fall all the statements as to articles brought by the sitter, and all remarks about friends of the sitter when once there has been identification of the person described by Nelly with an actual acquaintance. Thus I class under this head Mrs. Thompson's correct statements with regard to a small locket which I had given her ; namely, that it belonged to another lady who had given it to me, that "at the beginning of it all" was an old dead lady called Annie or Anna, that the white hair in the locket belonged to a different dead lady, not Anna. But I do not put under this head but under the next (b), further correct statements which she made about the old lady Annie, or about a ring belonging to the owner of the white hair, as these further statements, though true, had no sort of connexion with the locket and were not present in my consciousness at the time. Under this head (a) comes a very striking allusion (see p. 214) to the circumstances connected with the death of a certain lady, Mrs. B., made by Mrs. Thompson immediately on taking into her hands a letter from a relative of the lady's ; the letter contained no reference to Mrs. B.'s death, but had been given to Mrs. Thompson in the hope of obtaining from her definite information concerning the lady, known to both the sitter and the note-taker. Descriptions of objects brought by the sitter, given before the objects have been seen by the sensitive, come into this class, as do also instances of apparent direct response on the part of Nelly to a



thought in the sitter's mind. Some very clearly marked instances of this last have fallen within my own observation; the cases are not very numerous, but the response from the "control" to what has been thought but not uttered by me has been so rapid and complete that, were it not for the evidence of the other sitter, I should have been disposed to believe that I had unconsciously uttered the thought aloud.

Thus on one occasion Nelly said that a red-haired girl was in my house that day, and I was wondering whether a certain friend of my daughter's who is often at the house would be there, when Nelly added, "Not So-and-so," mentioning by name my daughter's friend, exactly as though I had uttered the passing thought.<sup>1</sup> Again, when Nelly was describing a certain bag given to me for my birthday, something she said made me for a moment think of a small leather handbag left in my house by a cousin and occasionally used by me, and she said: "You had an uncle that died; it was not long after that." The father of the cousin whom I had just thought of is the only uncle I have known, but his death long preceded the giving to me of the bag as a birthday present, which was what she had quite correctly been describing till my momentary thought apparently distracted her attention to the other bag.<sup>2</sup> I have had in all some five or six instances of such apparently direct responses as the above to a thought in the sitter's mind, but when at Nelly's suggestion I have fixed my attention on some detail for the sake of helping her to get it, I have never succeeded in doing anything but what she calls "muggling her."

I pass to the next class (*b*), much more abundantly illustrated in my experience; things known to the sitter but not immediately at the moment present in his consciousness. The greater number of the correct statements made to me by Nelly come under this head, so that to illustrate this class fully would be to give a complete account of some of my sittings. A single illustration must suffice. In what was practically my first sitting with Mrs. Thompson—for I had only been present once before with several other people while she was entranced—Nelly gave me a series of descriptive touches of a dead lady with whom I was intimately acquainted, all of which were true, characteristic, and familiar; but they were not the leading traits in this lady's personality, the points on which I should have seized had I wished to recall her to a third person. Nor was my attention fixed on this particular friend at the beginning, for I had

<sup>1</sup> See App. D, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> See App. D, p. 242.



given the sensitive a small hair cross and was expecting information about its owner. But the statements of Nelly were definite and accurate, referring to small details of dress,—among other things saying that my friend wore a black silk apron trimmed with lace fastened by an elastic and button round the waist, that this apron had belonged to some one else before her (the lady had often told me that it was her mother's), and that she folded it in a particular way; Nelly also described correctly the lady's objections to the low-necked frocks which my child wore as a baby, and imitated a habit she had of pulling up the child's under-vest to cover her bare neck; she further successfully reproduced a facial trait of this lady, a characteristic movement of the lips, and finally described her as puzzled at the situation, doubtful as to the truth of Nelly's statements that I was really present—all this very characteristic—but engaged in obtaining explanations of the circumstances from Dr. Arthur Myers. There was no sort of reason why Mrs. Thompson should associate the lady in question, had she known her name, with Dr. Myers; as a fact they had not met more than three or four times, but on those occasions my friend had been in the habit of discussing the problems investigated by the S.P.R. with Dr. Myers, because, as she used to say, his explanations made the things easier for her to understand.<sup>1</sup>

These statements then, it will be seen, were definite and accurate; they were characteristic, but they were not present in my mind; they were not obvious, nor were they what I should have myself selected had I wished to recall memories of my dead friend to another acquaintance. Other and more intimate things than details of dress and personal habits were in my thoughts as soon as the characteristic points given by Nelly had made me realise of whom she was speaking, but to these no allusion was made. Telepathy there may have been—it is difficult to say where telepathy may not be—but it cannot be said that direct telepathy from the immediate consciousness of the sitter can account for all the statements that come under this second head (*b*), as might be said of the statements classed under (*a*).

The third class (*c*) contains "things that have been well known to the sitter, but are at the moment so far forgotten as to be recalled only by the statements of the medium." It is not always easy to draw the line between this class and the preceding one, but

<sup>1</sup> See App. D, Sitting 2, p. 223.

the distinction is between the things that are not prominent in one's mind and the things that have altogether passed out of one's supraliminal consciousness, though the mention of them recalls them to memory. Under this head (*c*) comes Nelly's mention of carpet slippers with foxes' or animals' heads upon them in connexion with a certain dead Theodore who "belonged" to me. Only one Theodore "belongs" to me, and such points in the general description as were given seemed to be appropriate. My recollections of this Theodore were few, though fairly vivid; he had died about five years before the sitting, having lived in Australia for the last thirty years of his life. I had written to him shortly before his death, but had had no answer and had not seen him since I was a child of five or six years old, when I knew him well. At first I could attach no memory to the slippers with their foxes' heads, but a recollection came back, was strengthened by time and confirmed by the remembrances of other members of my family, that I had worked him some slippers, putting in the ground behind the foxes' or animals' heads which were on the work when it was bought. Nelly's definite account of my working the slippers, given at a later interview, comes under class (*a*), as I then asked her about Theodore, with the intention of seeing whether her information would be more complete now that my recollection was more definite, but the early reference at my very first interview to Theodore's slippers<sup>1</sup> comes under the head of more than half-forgotten things.<sup>2</sup>

The next class (*d*)—things unknown to the sitter—is the most interesting, as the information given can hardly be due to telepathy, unless we are to give to the word a much wider significance than has hitherto been done. Communication with the mind of the sitter will not explain the correctness of statements demonstrably unknown to the sitter's consciousness, and if such statements occur too frequently to be ascribed to chance, we must seek for their explanation some other source of information, such as clairvoyance, or communication in some form with the minds of persons absent and unknown to

<sup>1</sup> As perhaps throwing some light on the origin of Nelly's information in the first instance, I may say that I have many recollections of Theodore much more vivid than the slippers are, even now after many efforts to recall their story; but I think that Theodore can have had very little knowledge about me, and if pressed to say something of me, would probably have known only two things—that I was my mother's daughter, and that I had once worked him some slippers.

<sup>2</sup> See App. D on Sitting 2, p. 227.

the sensitive, perhaps even of the dead. It may be said that it is difficult to demonstrate that any particular fact is and has always been unknown to a sitter, especially if, while granting the possibility of telepathy, we further suppose that what is known to a person's habitual associates may have been communicated to that person's subliminal self. But for the purposes of my present paper there is a clearly defined class of things unknown to the sitter, and this is the class of which I am speaking.

The number of cases of this kind has been small in my experience—ten in all; and I propose to relate them here in detail,<sup>1</sup> adding such information as I have been able to obtain as to the possession by others than the sitter of the knowledge shown, so that the reader may judge what is likely to be the sensitive's source of information in each case. Some of the cases are in themselves trifling, and would be of little interest if they made part of a long series of random guesses. But in the rarity of such random guesses, comparatively trivial or commonplace matters are of interest and value.

(1) My daughter had received as a birthday present from an aunt during her absence from home a small old-fashioned brooch, under the following circumstances:<sup>2</sup> she and a cousin had been offered by the aunt two little trinkets of her own, this brooch and a ring, and the cousin, being the elder, had been given her choice. She chose the ring on the ground that she already happened to own a brooch in other respects exactly like the brooch offered, but set with red stones instead of blue. I knew of the aunt's gift and of the fact that the cousin had chosen the ring, but not of her motive for so doing. I took the brooch to Mrs. Thompson about a fortnight after my daughter's return home.

Nelly (*a*) described the brooch without seeing it, and said (*b*) that it had belonged to an old lady, and (*c*) that there was another similar brooch connected with it. It will be observed that (*a*) the appearance of the brooch was known to me, the sitter, that (*b*) the fact—correctly stated—of its former ownership was a reasonable inference for any one who, like me, had seen the brooch, but that (*c*) the existence of a similar brooch was unknown to me, but known to at least three living persons. It was only when I restored the brooch to my daughter and related what the sensitive had said that I heard about the existence of the similar brooch, which was in

<sup>1</sup> The tenth case is too private to be related; it is briefly described on p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> See App. D, Sitting 4, pp. 234-7, for full account.

fact an element of some importance in the story, as it determined my daughter's ownership of this brooch.

(2) I had shortly before Mrs. Thompson's visit to me in December, 1899, marked in a shopman's catalogue a small pendant for wearing on a watch chain which I intended to give my daughter as a Christmas present. I had not mentioned my intention to any one, and the catalogue had been put away with other papers where it was not accessible. Nelly, in a talk alone with my daughter when I was out of the house, told her that some one called Margaret—which is my name—would give her a trinket to wear on her chain if she asked for it. When I found this statement in the record made by my daughter of Nelly's sayings, I consulted my daughter and showed her the marked catalogue; but the present was not given, as I found she preferred something quite different.

The knowledge thus shown—if it is not to be called a guess, and it should be noted that no other such guesses were made—was possessed only by me, who was out of the house when the statement was made.

(3) My daughter, who was away from home, had received among other presents at Christmas a book which I had not seen, though I had been told its title. I did not know that it was illustrated. Nelly said to me on January 3, 1900, at Hampstead, in the presence of another sitter, who knew nothing of my daughter's presents, that Helen had received a book for a Christmas present with a picture of a ship in it. This was, as I subsequently found, correct: there are six pictures in the book, in one of which is a ship, and this picture is reproduced on the cover.

The knowledge here shown—if it is not reckoned as a guess, and it should be noted that no other statements were made by Nelly about Christmas presents—was not possessed by me, the sitter, but was possessed by my daughter, by the giver of the book, and doubtless by other persons who had seen the book.

(4) When I gave Mrs. Thompson the locket mentioned above (p. 173), I believed it to have belonged to my youngest sister, who had died as a young child in 1866. There had been three exactly similar lockets, containing my grandmother's hair, given to myself and my two sisters, and after my little sister's death my mother carried the locket on her watch chain. After my mother's death in 1894, my sister, hearing that I had lost the hair out of my own locket, gave me hers, keeping the one that had belonged to my little sister and my mother. But I had misunderstood her, and



thought that it was this one that I had, and was taking to Mrs. Thompson. After saying that the locket was not mine, Nelly gave a short description of the lady to whom it had belonged, which was wholly inapplicable to my mother, though appropriate to my sister. I had consequently reckoned this statement as incorrect, and it was only on mentioning the matter to my sister that I found that I had been mistaken, and that Nelly's account of the previous ownership of the locket was, as far as it went, more accurate than my own.

The information shown on this occasion was thus not possessed by me, the only sitter, but was possessed, as far as I know, by only one other person, my sister, who had never seen Mrs. Thompson, and was not aware that I was intending to take the locket to her.

(5-9) The next five cases are closely connected, and the information purports to have been communicated to the sensitive by a dead relative of the sitter. The history of the way in which these statements were obtained is worth noting; it affords a curious illustration of what I have noticed more than once, namely, the apparent growth or development of information on the part of the trance personality, during an interval between two sittings, where there has been no possibility that the sensitive should have become possessed of further knowledge by normal means, even if we suppose her willing to obtain such knowledge surreptitiously. At an interview at my house when Mr. and Mrs. A. were present, and I was taking notes, Nelly made a rapid and confused statement, which seemed to Mr. A., sitting for the first time with Mrs. Thompson, to be wholly unintelligible. Mrs. A., who had been present at other sittings, thought that the remarks suggested confusion rather than mere imagination, but it was impossible to make anything of the statements as given. Mrs. Thompson was told on coming out of the trance that the sitting had not been successful, as there was a great confusion of statements. The next day Mrs. Thompson informed me that she had had a vision or trance when she was alone, in which Mrs. Cartwright had appeared, and had said that Nelly had made a great confusion between Mr. A.'s relatives, and that she should herself have to come to set things straight. Later on, after a long and very successful sitting under Nelly's auspices with another friend of mine, Nelly was replaced by Mrs. Cartwright. At Mrs. Cartwright's request, the notes of the previous sitting with Mr. and Mrs. A. were produced and read aloud, sentence by sentence, in the presence of Mrs. A. but without Mr. A. At each pause Mrs. Cartwright stated



whether the remark was true or not, and to whom it referred, so that, in the end, out of an apparently hopeless tangle a definite series of statements was obtained from the trance personality, some of them known by Mrs. A. to be true, some of them entirely unfamiliar to her. These latter were six in number; one of them appears to be wholly incorrect (App. B., No. 18); the other five are here related, Nos. 5 to 9.<sup>1</sup>

(5) It was stated that Mr. A. had a relative, an old lady, alive, a "rare old lady for knitting"; that this lady used to carry about with her a round knitting-basket which contained her "top-knot, an ornament for her head, a cap you might call it, but it was a top-knot." Mrs. A. was well acquainted with an old relative of Mr. A.'s, who was a great knitter, but had never seen her with a round knitting basket or any cap basket, and knew nothing of a "top-knot." Mr. A. could throw no light on the statement. Mr. A.'s sisters, on hearing the above account, said that the relative in question, having somewhat thin hair in middle life, before adopting the old lady's cap, with which Mrs. A. was familiar, had worn a little knot of black lace on the top of her head which her young relatives called her top-knot, and which she used to take about with her in a round knitting-basket.

(6) It was stated that Mr. A.'s mother, now dead, "was familiar with the wife of a retired naval officer; you could get information about this." It was known to Mrs. A. as well as to Mr. A. that his mother had few intimate or familiar friends, and of these there was only one, Mrs. C., whose husband's occupation was unknown to Mrs. A., as the lady was a widow when Mrs. A. first heard of her. Mr. A. supplied the information that the husband was called Captain C., but thought he had been in the army. Mr. A.'s sisters, however, said that he had been a captain in the navy, and had retired from the service before his marriage. They further said that this lady, the widow of Captain C., was the only person outside her immediate family group who had visited their mother during her last illness.

(7) It was stated that Mr. A.'s mother used to wear a "white Shetland shawl," and that the shawl was still in existence in her

<sup>1</sup> As Mr. and Mrs. A. do not wish their name to be printed, I am unable to print the record of this sitting in App. D. But I have quoted the actual words of the sensitive throughout whenever it was possible. The information not already possessed by Mrs. A. was obtained by her from her sisters-in-law, the Miss A.'s, about three weeks after the sitting, when she read to them my record of the statements of the sensitive and the comments of Mr. and Mrs. A. The Miss A.'s do not live in Cambridge, and had not heard of Mrs. Thompson till Mrs. A. showed them the record.

husband's house, "still here, not in your house (to Mrs. A.), in the other house." Neither Mr. A. nor Mrs. A. had any recollection of such a shawl, and Mrs. A. was sure that she had never seen her mother-in-law wear a Shetland shawl. But the daughters said that their mother used to wear a white Shetland shawl as an evening wrap, in their early childhood, before Mrs. A.'s acquaintance with her, and the shawl is still in existence in the husband's house. After their mother's death the shawl, which had special associations for her, had been kept by the daughters. It may be said that it would be a safe guess to say that a lady of the age of the lady in question had worn a white Shetland shawl, but it would not be a very safe guess to go on to say that such a shawl was still in existence in its late owner's house.

(8) It was stated that the same lady used to fasten the Shetland shawl with a brooch, and this brooch was described in detail. It was said to be about the length of a brooch held by Mrs. Thompson at the moment, but not so high, "more lengthwise, with open work of gold round it, and plaits of hair behind." Mrs. A. was further told "to ask the stouter lady" about the brooch. Mrs. A. had no knowledge of any such brooch; two brooches were known to her, but neither of them answered to the description. Mr. A. had no recollection of any of his mother's brooches. The daughters said at once that there was a brooch corresponding to the description in all respects, except that there was no hair at the back, the central stone being a topaz set transparently. The brooch had been worn by their mother during their early childhood, and by the elder daughter for a short time some thirty years ago. Mrs. A. asked what was to be made of the suggestion that "the stouter lady" should be asked about the brooch, as by the stouter lady she had supposed the younger and less thin daughter was meant, who, as so far appeared, had no connexion with it. She then found that the brooch with other trinkets had actually been in the charge of the younger daughter, and kept in a drawer in her room ever since their mother's death. Under these circumstances, Mrs. A. proceeded "to ask the stouter lady" for the brooch, and the brooch was fetched from the place where it had been kept undisturbed for six or seven years. It was found to have at the back a plait of two different kinds of hair, black and grey. The topaz, which looked transparent, was, in fact, set upon a coloured foil, and the centre of the brooch was solid.

(9) It was stated that Mr. A.'s mother, being "a clearing-up, methodical lady," possessed a manuscript receipt book,<sup>1</sup> still in

<sup>1</sup> "She had things put in a book of receipts."

existence in her husband's house, and that in this book were receipts other than cookery receipts, and in particular a receipt for pomade, or, as the lady herself used to call it, "pomatum." It was known to Mrs. A. that her mother-in-law had possessed such a receipt book as described, but nothing of its contents was known to her. The existence of the book was not known to Mr. A. The daughters knew of the book, and said that pomatum was certainly the word used by their mother for the article in question, but they knew nothing of any receipt for pomade. The book was fetched; it had been written in from both ends and was carefully indexed. No receipt for pomade appeared in the index, but after the experience of the brooch, sufficient confidence was felt in the accuracy of Mrs. Thompson's information to induce a search through the book. It was then found that the last five receipts, counting from one end, had not been indexed, and that among these was a receipt for making Dr. Somebody's pomade. The book had never, so far as is known, left the house where its owner had lived, and Mrs. Thompson had certainly never entered that house. The receipt was moreover in the middle part of the book, and, owing to its not having been indexed, was not very easy to find, even for those who had leisure to search.

With regard to the possession by others than the sensitive of the knowledge of the facts in these five cases, it will be seen that they have points of difference and points of resemblance. In all five cases the information (*a*) was certainly unknown to one sitter, Mrs. A.; (*b*) was certainly not consciously possessed by the other sitter, Mr. A.; (*c*) certainly had been possessed by the dead lady from whom Nelly represented herself as having obtained it. In cases 5 and 6 it is probable that Mr. A. had at one time or other known the facts about the top-knot and the profession of Captain C.; it is also likely that he had seen the white Shetland shawl (7), though he certainly did not know that it was still in existence. In case 8 it is very unlikely that, even if he had as a child seen the brooch, he knew anything of the plaits of hair at the back, and he certainly did not know that it was in the keeping of the younger sister. In the last case, 9, he was not aware of the existence of the receipt book, and it may be taken as certain that he had never read it. The greater part of the facts were known to some other living persons, as must always necessarily be the case if statements made by the sensitive and unknown to the sitter are to be capable of verification. These living persons were unknown to Mrs. Thompson and were themselves unaware that reference had been made to their family or

friends, so that their thoughts were not directed to reminiscences of deceased relatives. Moreover, the whole of the facts were not known to these living and absent persons. The only person who knew all was the dead lady herself. If such experiences as these were numerous, it would be difficult to avoid inferring that the source of information is to be found rather in the one consciousness that knew all the events than in the scattered consciousnesses which can, after all, not supply the whole. But more of such experiences would seem necessary before we are warranted in constructing even a provisional hypothesis of this sort.

Moreover, while the evidence from this group of cases (5 to 9) seems to point in the direction of communication from the dead as the simplest explanation of the knowledge of the sensitive, it must be remembered that no such source seems indicated by the evidence in the other group (1 to 4). There the facts, unknown to the sitter, were in three cases known to another living person not then present, but familiar with Mrs. Thompson, and interested in the sittings. In the last case (4) the knowledge was possessed by a stranger to Mrs. Thompson; but in none of these cases is there any reason to suppose that any dead person knew the facts, or was interested in them, nor did Nelly claim to have become possessed of the information through any other means than her own. In two of the cases the information concerned an article held by Mrs. Thompson at the moment, and in the other two, it concerned the doings of persons known to Nelly, who, it may be said, claims to be able occasionally to visit people whom she knows.<sup>1</sup> The only "person" then in these cases who could obtain the information given, and supply the common element, is the trance personality which we call Nelly. Of the question of the independent existence and interdependence of the various trance personalities I do not propose to treat in this paper; my present point is that the knowledge shown in cases 1 to 4, if it is to be regarded as something more than accidental, is not analogous to the knowledge shown in cases 5 to 9. Its explanation, be that what it may, clearly is to be found in the possession by Mrs. Thompson of some faculty other than that of obtaining information possessed by a deceased friend of the sitter.

<sup>1</sup>For other instances of knowledge shown where Nelly claims to have visited the person in question and "seen" what was being done, see p. 187 foll. But the analogy is not complete, for in the cases there related, the facts, though not consciously in the sitter's mind, were known to her, and therefore the hypothesis of telepathy from the sitter is not, as in the above cases 1-4, excluded.



## METHODS OF COMMUNICATION.

It having, as I hope, been shown that some, at least, of the statements made by Mrs. Thompson are such as cannot be due to random guessing or to information normally acquired, it will now not be out of place to say something about the methods by which the communications are made, and more particularly about the so-called personalities that are the main source of information. The methods employed fall, as has been already said (see p. 167), into two principal divisions according as the statements made are, or are not, known consciously to the normal personality of Mrs. Thompson. Some of the statements made to me have taken the form of written messages sent to me by Mrs. Thompson, recording things that she has heard or seen in a state of trance or ecstasy, and remembered on waking; but by far the greater number have been uttered through the lips of Mrs. Thompson—or, on some very few occasions, written by her hand—while she was entranced. There has been very little writing within my observation; what has been so written has, with one possible exception, been in the sensitive's own handwriting. The trance utterances purport to come from some spirit of the dead, who has for the time taken possession of the medium's person. I have, as I have said, received communications from three such personalities, Nelly, Mrs. Cartwright, and a personal friend whom I have called Mrs. B. The characteristics of the respective personalities are not very marked; all bear strong resemblances to that of Mrs. Thompson herself. The actual voice is hardly to be distinguished from hers, the words and phrases, so far as they are in any way distinctive, are such as she herself uses in the normal state; in fact, regarded as a piece of dramatisation, the performance is not striking. But, in spite of the absence of distinct traits, there is a marked individuality about each of the three personalities which makes it impossible to confuse them with one another or with Mrs. Thompson. It is no more possible to mistake Nelly for Mrs. Thompson, or Mrs. Cartwright for either, than it is to mistake one living person for another. The first words of Mrs. Cartwright or Nelly, though preceded by no change in Mrs. Thompson's manner, attitude, or gestures, show instantly and unmistakeably who claims to be communicating with the sitter. The characteristics of Nelly are much more vivid to me than are those of Mrs. Cartwright, but in both cases the general effect on the sitter is much what would be produced were they in effect what they purport to be, in the one case a child of Mrs. Thompson's, in the other a former schoolmistress. In this respect, in my experience, they differ greatly



from the so-called Dr. Phinuit, the sole control of Mrs. Piper when I sat with her. Although the change of voice and manner from Mrs. Piper to Dr. Phinuit was very much more marked than is the change from Mrs. Thompson to Nelly, Dr. Phinuit did not produce on me the impression of an actual independent being with whom it was possible to enter into normal relations. The two personalities of Nelly and Mrs. Cartwright, on the contrary, make the same impression as would two actual human beings with whom one had a normal acquaintance; you may like one better than the other, you may know one better than the other, you may recognise their merits and their limitations, but it never occurs to you to doubt their independent existence.

The third personality, Mrs. B., cannot be classed with the other two, as it differs from them in some important respects. Like them, it is not to be confused with Mrs. Thompson herself, but, unlike them, it presents so far no unity, no such characteristics as go to the making of an individual. Not only does it not bear the remotest likeness to the person it claims to be, but it has at present no individuality at all. It is something which is not Mrs. Thompson, which is neither Nelly nor Mrs. Cartwright, which is vague, colourless, undefined, speaking with difficulty and hesitation, hardly aware of its surroundings, unable to answer directly the questions of the sitter, sometimes apparently unconscious of the presence of one of the sitters, absorbed in the thought of the difficulties and strangeness of the occupation in which it is engaged. Very definite statements, quite impossible to obtain by any recognised normal means, have been made to me and in my presence about Mrs. B., but they have been made by Nelly, usually after the departure of the personality of Mrs. B. herself. This personality has now appeared to me four times, and each time it has made great advances as regards coherence and power of expression. It is possible that with time some characteristics of the lady herself might appear; the name has been given, the personality is asserted by Nelly to be that of Mrs. B., and its own statements are throughout consistent with the supposed personality; what is at present lacking is just that touch of individuality which is the distinguishing mark of Nelly and Mrs. Cartwright. The study of the development of a new personality, whatever be the explanation of such personalities in the case of Mrs. Thompson, is by no means the least interesting of the problems presented, but the material is not yet sufficient to enable me to do more than state the elements of the problem, and leave its solution for the future.

The question of the relations of the two leading personalities,

Nelly and Mrs. Cartwright, to each other and to Mrs. Thompson is a very complicated one; so far as my own observation goes, I have not been able to separate into groups the facts known to Mrs. Cartwright and those known to Nelly. As both these personalities claim—and seem—to possess the power of learning facts by super-normal means, this is not remarkable; where there is a possibility of the telepathic transference of knowledge in the sitter's mind (to take one probable source of information) to the communicating personality, it would be unreasonable to expect that the range of knowledge possessed by the two personalities should be widely different. Moreover, the two personalities claim to be in constant communication with one another, and Nelly sometimes quotes Mrs. Cartwright as the authority for a statement made by herself, so that I have found it quite impossible to distinguish between the things known to these two controls. But there is no difficulty in drawing such a distinction between the knowledge of these personalities on the one hand and that of Mrs. Thompson herself on the other. I do not mean that nothing is possessed in common by Mrs. Thompson and the trance personalities; on the contrary, I am convinced that occasionally facts that have been learnt by Mrs. Thompson in an ordinary way are reproduced by the trance personality, often with correct additions not known to Mrs. Thompson, sometimes with slight errors or confusion of detail. A clear illustration of this was obtained at one of my more recent sittings, the statements in which do not enter into the statistics quoted at the beginning of this paper.

On September 14th, 1900, during an unusually long wait before the entrancement of Mrs. Thompson, in the presence of the other sitter, Miss Harrison, I told Mrs. Thompson in the course of conversation the following facts:

(1) That during our summer holiday, my daughter had had an attack of chicken-pox, and that she and I had in consequence moved from our hotel at Baden to a pension<sup>1</sup> at Zurich, where we had been shut up in absolute seclusion for sixteen days in two rooms, with very little to do, and that we had occupied our leisure in trying the time-honoured means of divination by means of the "Bible and the key," only that the Bible had been replaced in our case by a paper novel.

(2) That once some years ago I had tried Planchette with a friend, and that we had written correctly the Christian name, Elizabeth, unknown to both of us, of a lady who was coming to dinner; that subsequently, with a view to discovering which of the

<sup>1</sup> The pension was a new one; I did not mention its name to Mrs. Thompson.

two manipulators contributed the more largely to the result, we had each read different books while sitting with our hands on the planchette, and that the words written under those circumstances by our two hands were the French words under my eye.

(3) That I had had great difficulty in inducing a very stupid postmistress in a small village in the Grisons to despatch a paper on Mrs. Thompson's trance phenomena which was to be read at the Paris Congress; that the woman would recognise no classification outside letters but "samples" or "printed matter," and that when I finally induced her to send the MS. by parcel post, she could tell me nothing of the probable date of delivery of my parcel, had never heard of Paris, and only knew of France that it was "very far away."

I transcribe from my notes of a later sitting (Dec. 14, 1900) remarks of Nelly's which seem to me to refer to the above facts; the reader will note that there are one or two slight errors, such as would be likely to occur if any one were relating after some weeks a story that had been once heard. But what is much more remarkable than these errors is the addition by Nelly of several details to the stories—details which she had certainly not learnt from me, which in some cases had been mentioned by me to no one, but which were correct. I give the account of the sitting as recorded by me at the time:

*Notes of a sitting at 19 Buckingham Street on December 14th, 1900—  
Present, Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Verrall.*

*Nelly.* "Helen had pimples and sat in a dark room; I saw her there."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you tell me about it?"

*Nelly.* "You had a pink blouse and you read to Helen when you had it on. There were stairs outside the house when Helen had the pimples. I watched you going to the Post Office; what a silly old woman! Shall I tell you a story?"

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly.* "Once upon a time Mrs. Verrall was in Switzerland and she wanted to send a round Christmas box. The old woman said, 'I don't know where Paris is, but it is a long way off.' She would not understand whether the parcel would get before the birthday. You know Professor Richet, who sent<sup>1</sup> mother the book with the pretty pictures in it?"

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, I know him."

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Thompson tells me that Nelly's statement that M. Richet sent her a book with pictures is not quite correct; in March, 1900, in his own library, M. Richet gave Mrs. Thompson such a book.

*Nelly.* "It was Professor Richet who wanted it to read."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you see what the old woman wore?"

*Nelly.* "She had a thing round her head, like a poker thing sticking up. I saw you. You know you speak French well, very; but she did so worry that one would think you couldn't speak French."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you see me in the room with Helen?"

*Nelly.* "When you opened the window you had to stick a pot hook in. I saw you sticking it in. It was troublesome."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, I had some trouble with that pot hook."

*Nelly.* "There was a curtain you screwed up and folded so that you could read."

*Mrs. V.* "How do you mean?"

Mrs. Thompson took out her pocket handkerchief and gathered it in parallel folds on her knee.

*Mrs. V.* "Where was the curtain?"

*Nelly.* "There were curtains to the window and the bed; I can't see where it was; the curtain is a separate picture. There was not a comfortable chair in the room where you sat and read; I can see you sitting like this."

Here Mrs. Thompson imitated a person trying in vain to sit comfortably on an upright chair.

*Nelly.* "Helen's eyes were bad and you read to her. What funny steps those were outside the house! There was a verandah by the Post Office where the parcels were; you seemed to pass a verandah not belonging to the Post Office. Where was the boy's mother? Why did she not go with you? She might have read to Helen."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you see the boy?"

*Nelly.* "He was rather thin, not like Helen."

Then came two or three discursive remarks about my daughter and a friend of mine, one of Mrs. Thompson's sitters, then quite abruptly:

*Nelly.* "Does Frank know about it?"

*Mrs. V.* "I don't know who Frank is."

*Nelly.* "Helen knows Frank. He belongs to people who were in Switzerland and could speak English; they thought the postmistress stupid. What a flat look there is at the back of her head! It is all put on in a piece; does she sleep in it?"

After some more talk about some one mentioned earlier in the sitting, Nelly said:

*Nelly.* "You know the willow pattern plates? Well, the house where you stayed when Helen had the pimples was like that, a sort of squarified house, not ordinary. The top of the house was like the plates; like a serviette doubled into four for 'top-hats.' What made the hook bad was that the hole was full of rust; it did make your finger dirty! It was rather a rickety place."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you see any one in the house?"

*Nelly.* "There was some one wore a short and round skirt who used to



go up the steps with a cap like a Dolly Varden carrying milk on her shoulders, a thing that went across her shoulders. There were stuffed birds in the room on the left side of the house where Helen had the pimples." (She then went through the action of sniffing and said with great emphasis :) "I did not like the lavatory" (then, as if puzzled), "but you had Mr. Willgar with you there. What made Helen kiss him? I can't fit him in."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you see any one else?"

*Nelly.* "Only the boy, Helen's cousin. I like Helen the best. Mother likes you the best, but I like Helen. I saw her when she was by herself. Did you write with a planchette? You and Helen had something you were pretending to write in Switzerland, trying as if with a table."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you see what it was?"

*Nelly.* "I can see a table with a glass, but that's here" (pointing to the bottle and glass before us), "that comes in front. It was a key and a Bible and a string."

Here I told Nelly that I had told her mother this, and she said she might have got it from her mother's mind. She went on:

*Nelly.* "I have seen you trying with letters not in Switzerland. I knew you before mother knew you. I have always known the people who were interested in these things. You know Eliza? Have you got Eliza? You got the letters and wrote French; you went like that" (as if writing), "and wrote French. You asked the lady's name that was coming to dinner. I was there."

*Mrs. V.* "Who else was there?"

*Nelly.* "No, I could not see."

It will be instructive to take in detail the three points on which I had spoken to Mrs. Thompson two months before these remarks were made by Nelly, and see what errors and what additions were made in the reproduction of them.

(1) The chicken-pox of my daughter appears, the fact of our being shut up together and my reading to her (a likely guess), and the divination with the book and the key. But the book has become a Bible, which I distinctly said it was not. The additions were as follows:

(a) That I had a pink blouse, and read to Helen when I had it on. I had a pink blouse, but did not wear it in Helen's room; I had two completely different dresses, worn one in the sick room and one in my own room, and the pink blouse belonged to my room;

(b) That there were stairs outside the house; later these are described as steps up which the milk woman used to go. The street outside our house, on to which the window of Helen's room looked, terminated immediately beyond our front door in a great



flight of some sixty stone steps, of the breadth of the carriage road, which did not extend beyond our house, and all the passers-by went up and down these steps ;

(c) That when I opened the window I had to stick in a pot hook, that the pot hook was troublesome, and that the reason was that the hole was full of rust, and made my finger dirty. The outside shutters in Helen's room fastened to the wooden upright which made the centre of the window frame by two pot hooks fitting into iron rings on the window frame. I was not able to push one of the hooks into its hole for the first few days and made temporary arrangements, but after a great storm of wind had destroyed my substitute, I had to investigate the cause of the obstruction, and found that the ring was choked up with rust. In clearing it, I tore the skin of my finger, and had to wash my hands with some care to get out the rust which had got into the wound ;

(d) That there was a curtain, which I screwed up and folded, so that I could read. There was no difficulty with the curtains in Helen's room, but each evening, before sitting down in my own room to read, I used to fold the curtain back by gathering it into my hand and tucking it behind the peg at the side ;

(e) That there were curtains to the window and the bed. This was the case in Helen's room ; it is, of course, very unusual to have curtains to the bed in a Swiss room, but in this case the curtains had been put as a protection to the eyes of the patient, and any one acquainted with the circumstances might probably have guessed that there would be curtains to the bed ;

(f) That there was not a comfortable chair in the room where I sat and read. This was true, there were only two hard, narrow upright chairs, extremely uncomfortable, and I often had to give up reading to Helen and go to rest in my own room after making many efforts by a change of position to make myself comfortable ;

(g) That the house top was squarified, like the top of the house in the willow-pattern plates, or a dinner napkin folded into four. This is true ; the house, unlike the majority of Zurich houses, stood in its own grounds ; it was a square house, and on the top of the roof was a flat space, considerably smaller than the area enclosed by the house walls, so that the angles of the lines of the roof ran inwards to a central platform very much as they do in a willow-pattern plate ;

(h) That it was a rickety place. This was not true ; the window shutters, etc., were particularly well made, and the iron and wood work good ;

(i) That a person in a cap, carrying milk, used to go up the outside steps. This is not true; plenty of women in short round skirts went up and down the steps, but I have no recollection of any milk carrier, nor do the women of Zurich wear caps;

(j) That there were stuffed birds in the room on the left side in this house. This is not true; the room on the left was a tiny office containing little furniture. At the next place, to which we went from Zurich, where my husband, usually called by Nelly "Mr. Willgar," joined us, there was the largest collection of stuffed birds I ever saw in one room, but the room was not on the left-hand side of anything. In this same hotel of the stuffed birds there was a shocking lavatory, the only bad one we found in our three months' absence. Is it possible that by this time Nelly had passed on to the next place? It will be seen that she put my husband with us, and seemed puzzled how to fit things in.

(2) The old story of my attempts with *Planchette* appears with the mistake of *Eliza* as the name written instead of *Elizabeth*, with the reference to the language, French, reproduced by the instrument, and with the unlikely addition that Nelly was present on the occasion. It will be noticed that Nelly was not able to say anything of the friend who joined me in making *Planchette* write.

(3) The story of my difficulty with the postmistress appears; the fact that I had a parcel to send to Paris, and the impossibility of getting from the woman any account of the time when it would be delivered. It is an error to imply that the language was French: it was German; that the parcel was round: it was flat; and that it was going to Professor *Richet*: I sent the MS. to Dr. *Janet*, who was to give it to Mr. *Myers* to read; as a fact it was not read, but an account of its contents was given at the Congress in Mrs. Thompson's presence by Professor *Richet*. The following additions to this account were made by Nelly:

(a) That the woman had a thing round her head, like a poker thing sticking up; that she had a flat look at the back of her head, and that the thing was all put on in a piece; perhaps she slept in it. The description is not very definite, and it is difficult to say how far it really represents what as a fact the woman wore, but part of it does represent my impression at the time. The postmistress wore a stiff black lace erection which stood out round her head, and which from a front view I had taken to be the frill of a cap. I distinctly remember the surprise with which I discovered when she turned round, that, instead of there being a knot of hair at the back, what I

had taken for the frill of a cap was the edge of a sort of plate, clapped on at the back of the head like a halo, with no knob of hair beyond it, as I had expected to see. The erection was flush with the actual back of the head, so that it almost seemed to be part of the head itself, and the question instantly rose in my mind as to what she could look like without it;

(b) That on my way to the Post Office I seemed to pass a verandah not belonging to the Post. This is true; on my first visit to the Post to send off my paper to Paris I missed the regular entrance and went on to what I thought was the house to which I had been directed. The people there told me that I had passed the Post, but could go back to it through a verandah which belonged to them; this I accordingly did.

I have dwelt at great length on these trivialities because the observations of Nelly seem to me to be worth studying in detail. I have no doubt that much of what she said in December was directly derived from what I had said in September to Mrs. Thompson; but it is interesting to note that, whether or not we are to allow Nelly's claim to have "seen" the additions, it seems clear that the personality that calls itself Nelly has the power of learning facts about the sitter that have not been communicated nor directly asked for; it would almost seem as if Nelly's knowledge were just that of a person who could see a little better than the rest of us, who had the faculty of going just outside the normal bounds of knowledge, when her attention had been directed to a particular point. This, if true, is very interesting to those, who, like myself, have made experiments in thought transference, or "clairvoyance," because in success in such cases the sensation to the guesser is exactly that of having on this occasion seen or heard a little better than usual. I refer of course to cases where it is not possible that the real explanation of the success is to be found in hyperæsthesia.<sup>1</sup>

To return to the point whence I started, it is clear that the trance personality does occasionally show knowledge of what is known to Mrs. Thompson; in some cases no reference is made in the trance to the normally acquired knowledge of Mrs. Thompson, but it often happens that the trance personality quotes Mrs. Thompson as the source of knowledge, for it claims the power of "reading Mrs. Thompson's mind."

But so far as long and careful observation enables me to judge,

<sup>1</sup> See article on "Some Experiments on the Supernormal Acquisition of Knowledge" in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. XI., p. 174.

the converse of this proposition is not true; never once have I found Mrs. Thompson in her normal state show possession of knowledge familiar to the trance personality. I have constantly tested this matter; I have spoken to Mrs. Thompson as if she knew something that I had discussed with Nelly, but I have never found in her any trace of such knowledge. If by accident or on purpose I have addressed the trance personality as though it were identical with Mrs. Thompson, I have invariably been corrected; in fact there can be no doubt to any one who has had frequent opportunities of observation that the separation between Mrs. Thompson and the trance personality is a very real thing to them both and goes very deep. For the purposes of the statistics at the beginning of this paper it has of course been assumed that all information given through the ordinary channels to Mrs. Thompson or any of the trance personalities is information normally obtained; but as a matter of fact it is my belief that abnormal or supernormal means of information, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, or other faculties, are quite as readily employed by the trance personalities as the more normal methods.

#### FAILURES, OMISSIONS, ETC.

So far I have written only of the positive side of the communications through Mrs. Thompson, but no account of the phenomena would be complete without some comment on what may be called the negative side,—the failures, the omissions, the apparent unimportance of the facts told, the lapses, the errors, the want of continuity and occasional incoherence of the narrative. The full list of errors in my earlier interviews, as far as I know them, is given in Appendix A. Probably to this list should be added some of the statements about persons long dead, or otherwise unverified, but the total number of actual misstatements is not in any case large (see p. 170).

The omissions and the incompleteness of statement are much more remarkable, and the apparent failure of Nelly to draw obvious inferences is one of the most marked and interesting features within my experience. In illustration of this the reader will observe that I was given many characteristic details descriptive of my mother-in-law,<sup>1</sup> who was said to be easier to get at through my child than through myself, and yet Nelly was obviously under the impression that the person described was my own mother. She never used any expression which definitely committed her to that view, but was constantly apologising for "Mrs. Willgar's" greater

<sup>1</sup>See App. D, Sitting 3, p. 228.



interest in my absent husband and child than in myself, the sitter, a fact of which the interpretation would have been obvious enough to any one who had realised the situation. Again, Nelly is often puzzled by such a common thing as the difference in name between mother and daughter when, as constantly happens, the name that she gets at is the mother's maiden name or the daughter's married name. She has several times said in speaking of my husband, whose two baptismal names, Arthur Woolgar, she hit upon almost correctly at a very early stage of my acquaintance with her, that she could not see that he was married, but he had a Margaret (my own name) and a Helen (our only child's name) belonging to him. Since Mrs. Thompson in the normal state, as well as Nelly, knows my name and my daughter's, the inference is obvious, but it has not been made. It was only some months after my acquaintance with Mrs. Thompson and during a visit in my house that Nelly said that "the Willgar gentleman" whom she had previously described lived in the house, and was the person whom Mrs. Thompson called Dr. Verrall. As Nelly herself calls me Mrs. Verrall, the inference again seems obvious, but again it has not been made. She talks to me freely of "the Willgar gentleman," or of "Arthur," and she recognises that he belongs to me, but she has never referred to him as my husband,<sup>1</sup> and continues occasionally to express a gentle wonder why he so often comes into her thoughts of my daughter Helen and me. To maintain this little device deliberately would seem to be playing not only a purposeless but an unnecessarily complicated game; it is only one of many similar instances where we can see no satisfactory explanation of the motives of the trance personality and must be content to register the facts.

It occasionally happens that the information given to a complete stranger is accurate and detailed, as I have myself seen, but more often in my experience does the knowledge of a person's surroundings gradually develop and define itself, so that Nelly's statements become more precise. If the increased knowledge thus shown were such as could be obtained by enquiry or other normal means, this increase of precision on acquaintance would be a very suspicious circumstance. But in the cases under my observation the facts stated have often been such as could not be ascertained.<sup>2</sup> The case

<sup>1</sup>In some of the later sittings Nelly has spoken of "your husband," but has never said that he is identical with "the Willgar gentleman."

<sup>2</sup>See the account on p. 179 of the defining by Mrs. Cartwright of the confused statements made on the previous day by Nelly.



of Theodore and the slippers, already quoted (see pp. 176, 227), is an instance of increased knowledge on the part of the trance personality where it was impossible that the medium could have learnt any further facts. At the second sitting, when I asked about the matter, Nelly added to her original statement the further facts that the slippers were worked by me, that they were on canvas, that I had put in the background, and that I had had much trouble over them. All these things were in complete agreement with my own recollections, strengthened by the memories of my father and sister, with whom I talked the matter over in April, 1899, at Brighton shortly after my first meeting with Mrs. Thompson. In the interval between April and July, 1899, no communication whatever took place between Mrs. Thompson and myself, and there never has been any communication between her and my family. I had not spoken on the subject to any one else, so that there was no other source whence she could possibly have derived information in any normal way. This is by no means an isolated case. It should be noted that the additional details given at the second sitting were known to the living, including the sitter, and certainly not to the dead, the limit of whose knowledge on the matter was probably reached in the statements of the sensitive at the first sitting. In this and similar cases I am therefore disposed to attribute the increase of knowledge on the part of the sensitive either to the increased attention, conscious or unconscious, given by the sitter after the subject has been introduced at a sitting—that is, to telepathy in some form—or to an increase in the power of the “control,” which comes with familiarity, why or how it is not yet possible to say.

Illustrations of increased knowledge of an ascertainable kind will be given later, when I come to treat of “suspicious circumstances” attending these phenomena, and I pass on to other points of interest of what I have called a negative sort. The incoherence of the statements made is sometimes very great; not only are the remarks themselves often fragmentary and hardly intelligible, but they are occasionally interpolated into the midst of irrelevant matter. When the person or circumstance thus introduced is distinctive there is no difficulty in assigning the remark to its proper place; but I have no doubt that a certain number of statements classed as incorrect or unverifiable are as a fact statements wholly irrelevant to their context and belonging to some other series of communications. This incoherence is more apt to occur in a bad sitting than in a good one; but it is to be remembered that occasionally statements remarkably

clear and correct are made during what is otherwise an unrepaying sitting. Indeed, one of the most interesting things<sup>1</sup> that occurred within my observation was let fall without any emphasis, and conveyed no impression of its importance to me at the time—another illustration, if illustration were needed, of the importance of recording everything that is said during a sitting, even when the statement appears wholly unintelligible.

The omissions on the part of the communicating personality are no less remarkable than the statements; but classification is here impossible and comment difficult. They may be roughly divided under two heads, according as the gaps represent facts or the connexion between facts. Under this second head comes the failure, already mentioned, to draw an obvious inference; under the former, the constant overlooking by the sensitive of things that seem to the sitter important, and that are at least as easy to ascertain by normal means as other facts given. For instance, the family of my husband consists of his father, two brothers, and two sisters. The two sisters, the father and one brother have been often spoken of; the profession of the father and brother has been correctly given, and some characteristic details concerning them, but no mention has been made of the other brother, though he is living in the same town as the rest of the family, and is quite as intimate with us as any of the others. A direct enquiry on the subject produced the answer that Nelly could only see one brother, and at no subsequent sitting has any reference been made to this second brother.<sup>2</sup> Instances of similar omissions could be multiplied; but the enumeration of them would do no more than prove, as does the extreme triviality of many of the statements made, that whatever is the cause that determines the selection of incidents, it is not the expectation or desire of the sitter.

The triviality of the incidents mentioned has received such frequent illustration throughout this paper that nothing further need be said on the subject. I think that my experience is perhaps exceptional in this respect, in that I have not myself received any communications

<sup>1</sup> This is the case 10 in the list of statements unknown to the sitter, which is of too private a nature to be related (see p. 177).

<sup>2</sup> The fact that my husband has two brothers and two sisters appears in the report of my sittings with Mrs. Piper, and the name of the second brother is there given. This is not the only case where Mrs. Thompson has showed ignorance of facts easily ascertainable by any one to whom my family circumstances were of any interest.

purporting to come from intimate friends whom I have lost, and therefore a much greater number of the statements made to me are due to the observations of Nelly than is the case with those who are supposed to be in direct communication with close friends of their own. At the same time, I have had opportunities as note-taker of witnessing what occurs in the case of others, and there is no doubt that the matters of deep import touched on by the sensitive are few and far between. Some there have been: allusions to deeply-rooted feelings, and to profound convictions of the dead, unmistakable, and, at least at the moment, convincing to the sitter. It is true that these references to the deeper and personal emotions are unlikely to be of great evidential value; it is true also that there seems to be a desire and an effort of the trance personality to respond to the demands of the sitter, be those demands uttered or unacknowledged; and it should be said that what I have looked for first and above all else throughout my sittings has been evidence of supernormal faculty. This I believe that I have had, and mainly through the very details whose triviality I am discussing. If it be true, as I suspect, that on what the sitter brings largely depends what the sitter gets, others will probably have had a larger share than I in the deeper and more stirring allusions to the past and the dead.

#### ASCERTAINABLE FACTS AND SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

Any attempt to enable those interested in the subject to form a judgment as to the value of the trance phenomena of Mrs. Thompson would be incomplete without a notice of what may be called the "suspicious circumstances" connected with those phenomena: in other words, the occurrences which suggest that normal means of information play their part in producing successful results. I have said already that I think it probable that the sources of knowledge of the sensitive are various, and I think it would be unreasonable to suppose that among these sources should not be reckoned Mrs. Thompson's own knowledge or guesses of the circumstances of her sitters. I might go further and say that it is possible that during the trance or the transition from trance to a normal condition she may have some faculty resembling the sharpened sense perceptions of a hypnotic subject, and so be able to read or recognise by the touch things that would be outside her ordinary range. Recurrent successes capable of such explanation would diminish the value of her success, even where the circumstances seemed unfavourable to any but supernormal methods of obtaining knowledge, as a considerable margin

must in any case be allowed for mal-observation or error on the part of the observer. Such successes, therefore, might fairly be said to be "suspicious," and in forming a general estimate of the value of the phenomena, it seems of the utmost importance to see what proportion of success is obtained under circumstances favouring the suggestion that normal means of information have been illegitimately employed.

It will here be necessary to revert to a group of statements that has been mentioned already in this paper (p. 172), but not described or analysed, namely, the statements which were correct but were ascertainable by normal means, for it is by an examination of these that we are likely to find evidence, if anywhere, that recourse has been had to normal means of investigation. In this class I have included all such statements about the sitter as might be supposed obtainable by a person desirous of obtaining them, and so I have here included names and details concerning sitters supposed to be unknown to the sensitive, if given at any but the first interview. The total number of such statements made to me during the period to which I have applied the test of statistics is 51; they may be subdivided into the following classes :

(a) Names connected with sitters whose identity is known to the sensitive, - - - - -	14
(b) Facts contained in letters given to the sensitive, - -	7
(c) Facts in the history of the sitter or of a close connexion of the sitter, - - - - -	23
(d) Facts probably known to Mrs. Thompson, - - -	3
(e) Facts that might have been guessed, - - - -	4
Total, - - - - -	51

I propose to treat of each of these heads in some detail, that the reader may be able to judge how far the information given seems to throw suspicion upon Mrs. Thompson's general methods. I take the classes above enumerated in inverse order :

Class (e).—The four following statements have been classed as things that might have been accidentally guessed, or as "lucky shots."

(1) A sitter, Miss E. (let us say), was told that a person of her name, E., was recently dead; the sitter's name had not been given to Mrs. Thompson, but this statement was made pretty late in the sitting after letters bearing the lady's name upon them had been handed to the sensitive. The fact was correct, but no further information was given



about the recently deceased Mr. E., about whom indeed the sitter herself knew very little.

(2) The same sitter was told that her mother was dead; but this would be a safe conjecture to make in the case of the majority of sitters of the lady's age. Some interesting and correct information about the mother followed upon this statement, but it is not necessary to attribute the opening remark that she was dead to supernormal information.

(3) The same sitter was said to have spent her summer holiday in the company of a dead friend of hers, about whom a great deal of interesting information had previously been given by the trance-personality. The sitter had more than once spent her summer holiday, or part of it, with the lady in question; but in view of the fact, which had appeared clearly in the course of the sittings, of the great intimacy between the ladies, this suggestion is well within the range of likely guesses.

(4) It was said that a hair cross given to the sensitive had been kept in a wooden box. This was the case; but the box was a Japanese one, and the wood has a peculiar odour, communicable in some instances to its contents, though not detectably communicated to the cross. But in any case such a statement would have a very good chance of being correct.

Class (*d*).—These four cases may be dismissed as having no light to throw on the subject of our enquiry, and we may go on to the class (*d*), of "Facts that were probably known to the sensitive." These are three in number:

(1) A letter (see App. D, p. 238) that had been given to the sensitive to read was at a subsequent sitting said to have been kept in three places: (1) a left-hand drawer; (2) the cupboard of a writing-table, a cupboard which was fastened by turning a key; and (3) an old-fashioned writing-desk. These three places had in fact served to keep the letter in question, and they were the only places that had been used for more than temporary purposes in the knowledge of the owner. It was impossible that the sensitive should have any normal knowledge on the subject of the first and last mentioned; but it was from out of the locked cupboard of the writing-table in my drawing-room, where Mrs. Thompson had sat during her stay in my house, that I took the letter, in her presence, for the trance-personality to read.

(2) and (3) Two statements were made to my daughter in a very short sitting during Mrs. Thompson's visit to us, in December, 1899, about a neighbour's child, a friend of my daughter's, namely, that she



had recently broken her leg, and that after the accident she had gone abroad. The accident had occurred a few days before Mrs. Thompson's visit to Cambridge in July, 1899, and during that visit my daughter had often seen her. My daughter used to visit the child whose leg had been broken, and it was a frequent subject of speculation with us all whether the leg would be well in time for the child to go abroad with the rest of her family. I have no proof that the subject was spoken of before Mrs. Thompson, but under the circumstances I should think it very improbable that it was not. I am disposed to regard her mention of the incident, five months later, as an instance of deferred memory, like those related on pages 187 foll.

The reader must judge whether any of these pieces of information seem to suggest that the sensitive was making good use of knowledge consciously possessed by her; my own impression is that these were genuine recollections of what the sensitive knew by normal means, interpolated among other matter that she did not and could not possibly have so known. It is noticeable that the description of the locked cupboard as the keeping-place for the letter was wedged in between the mention of two other places of which the sensitive had certainly no knowledge; it was not likely that her mention of it would be impressive, for even a forgetful sitter would be likely to remember the circumstances immediately preceding the production of a test letter, and, *ex hypothesi*, unless the sitter did remember that the letter had been in this cupboard, the mention of the fact by the trance personality would not help to create an impression of the accuracy of the sensitive's remarks. It seems to me much more probable that these three facts about where the letter had been were known to the sensitive, and that the difference between them is that in the one case the sitter knew how the sensitive was possessed of that knowledge, whereas in the other cases she did not. The two allusions to the accident to my daughter's friend would have been impressive had we forgotten that Mrs. Thompson had had opportunities of learning the facts in the ordinary way, and perhaps some readers will believe that the trance-personality took the risk of our having so forgotten. But the case is closely parallel with the one related at length earlier in this paper, and it is impossible for me to believe in that case that Mrs. Thompson, after our long acquaintanceship, thought so meanly of my memory or my common-sense as to suppose that I should be impressed by the not wholly accurate reproduction of what I had myself told her in the presence of a witness two months before.

Class (c).—The largest division is (c), facts in the history of a sitter

or of a close connexion of a sitter, mentioned after identification of the person described. There are 23 of these. Two of the statements refer to an incident which has been referred to in this paper, but not related in detail; Nelly had at a first interview with a sitter unknown to Mrs. Thompson made some remarkable and true statements about a friend of that sitter recently dead, whom I have called Mrs. B., but she had implied, though she had not actually said, that Mrs. B. was the sitter's sister, and that Mr. B. was still alive. At a later sitting when further details were given about Mrs. B., the trance personality corrected these two errors. These two corrections therefore have been counted as true, but as capable of normal acquisition, for there had been intervals between the sittings during which, if Mrs. Thompson had identified the lady called Mrs. B., and had made enquiries about her, she could have ascertained both the above facts; whether the correction was due to knowledge so obtained, or to telepathy from the sitter, or to some other cause, I have no means of determining.

Three of the statements in this class refer to a particular sitter, who at the time they were made had been identified by Mrs. Thompson and was known to her. Nelly spoke of Miss Jane Harrison in her presence to me as being connected with "monuments," and as associated with the British Museum and the Museum at Kensington; it was further stated what her age would be at her next birthday. This also was known to me after consideration, but not at the moment. These three facts are all easily ascertainable, and have no evidential or other value.

Four of the statements in this class refer to my own concerns; Nelly said that a piece of hair which I gave her when she was in my house was the hair of a very delicate baby, so delicate that it "makes mother's hand cold"; Mrs. Thompson's hand, which she gave to me, had suddenly become very cold.<sup>1</sup> It would have been easy for any one to have ascertained that some years ago I lost a very delicate child,<sup>2</sup> whose health had been a permanent anxiety to us since her birth. It would have been as easy to learn that the child was a girl, but this Nelly had not done; she spoke of the child on this occasion as Helen's

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that on another occasion, when speaking of a person who had died suddenly from an accident, in full vigour of health, Nelly drew my attention to the heat of Mrs. Thompson's hand, due, according to her, to the extreme vitality of the person in question.

<sup>2</sup> In the account of my sittings with Mrs. Piper (*Proceedings*, vol. VI., pp. 584-9 and 641) it is stated that I then had two children, both girls, and that the younger was delicate.

brother, and on an earlier occasion she had spoken of a dead boy belonging to me, saying, there was "a little boy at our house (*i.e.* dead), he would have been about 11; he's not got a name. Little Arthur, I call him that. Mrs. Cartwright says he's a little Arthur."<sup>1</sup>

I pass to the second statement referring to me. At a very early sitting the sensitive said that there had been an old Frenchman wanting to see me; she gave a description fairly resembling my French grandfather, who died before my birth, but she added that he was certainly no relation.<sup>2</sup> If she had guessed or known that I had Frenchmen among the dead "belonging to" me, it would seem gratuitous to insist that this one was no relation; the statistical result has been that these remarks appear as one incorrect statement (that the Frenchman described was not my grandfather) and one true ascertainable statement (that an old Frenchman belonged to me). By a little more skill it would have been easy to avoid the false statement without showing a suspicious knowledge of the facts, but this is not a solitary instance of Nelly's apparent lack of skill.

The two last statements about my affairs are as follows: After reading a letter from my mother under circumstances to be related hereafter (p. 204), she said that there was a French look about the writer's personality, and I was also told that I had known Mr. Edmund Gurney. Both these facts are true and accessible. No further comment seems necessary. I quote them here to make the list complete.

The greater number of ascertainable statements (14) concern my husband; all but two were made at a sitting on November 2nd, 1899, when I had taken one of my husband's gloves to the sensitive. I had done this because I had had through another sitter a few days before a message to the effect that Nelly saw "Arthur Willgar<sup>3</sup> walking on the

<sup>1</sup>The child in question was born in September, 1888, and would therefore have been just over 11 at the date of my sitting on October 4th, 1899. She died before learning to talk, but it is incorrect to say that she had no name. With regard to the words "little Arthur," it is interesting to note that an aunt of my husband's, to whom reference was made by Nelly during the same sitting, always spoke of her nephews' children by their father's names, as "little Arthurs," "little Toms," etc. This use of the phrase is suggested by the introduction of the indefinite article before the words at their second occurrence, "Little Arthur, I call him that. Mrs. Cartwright says he's a little Arthur."

<sup>2</sup>See App. D, Sitting 2, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup>My husband's baptismal names are Arthur Woollgar, the latter being his mother's maiden name.

old Chain Pier at Brighton shortly before it was blown away; I don't think he's married, but he's got a Helen belonging to him."

It would be wearisome to enumerate all the things that the sensitive said to me about the owner of the glove, whom she called Mr. Willgar, but though there was a vague association with him of a "Margaret" as well as of a "Helen," she did not speak of him as my husband. The statements made concerned his appearance, his occupation, his health, and his surroundings as a boy. But it is obvious that such facts as that he used to be at an "ungreen seaside, a housified place," which had developed within his recollection to a "nigger seaside," would be readily enough made by any one who knew that my husband's family have always lived at Brighton. This is not the place to relate either the true and not ascertainable things, or the false things that were given side by side with these. There were not many of either, the larger number of things said on this occasion being what any one knowing the facts could know.

Two classes, (*b*) and (*a*), remain for discussion, which I have separated from the rest, as they seem to call for special treatment—facts contained in letters and names connected with the sitter. I have kept these two classes to the end as I think that in them, if anywhere, are to be found the "suspicious circumstances" for which we are looking. Among the tabulated statements are seven referring to the contents of letters. On October 5th, 1899, I took to Mrs. Thompson's house two letters written to me about twenty years before by my mother. I had selected these two as containing distinctive matter, after reading some six or seven. The sitting was one of the most unsatisfactory I have had; Mrs. Thompson was in great anxiety about a friend who was on that day undergoing a severe operation. I gave her one of the two letters, not myself knowing which of the two it was. Mrs. Thompson held the letter in her right hand, with some of her fingers inside the envelope. This is the usual plan, as Nelly does not profess to be able to tell anything of the contents of letters unless her mother's fingers are on the writing. Mrs. Thompson was sitting in a chair close to me and facing me, so that there is no question of her having withdrawn the letter from the envelope, but as I took down in writing in my notebook sixteen words between my giving the letter and the first utterance of hers about it, it is possible that the sensitive may have had a chance to see something when my eyes were on my notebook. I was aware of the importance of watching and did what I could; the right hand holding the letter was hanging down at her side and in the frequent glances that I gave I saw no suspicious action. Nelly said



that the words "I am sure" occurred in the letter, that it was a lady's letter, that the writer was not very well,—not in good health when she wrote. The words quoted do occur in the letter on the fourth or outside page about a third of the way down, so that the letter having been folded in three, they were at the bottom of the envelope, not visible unless the letter was slipped out a little way. They could of course have been touched by the sensitive. The writer who was not in good health when she wrote, refers to the subject of her health in one short sentence on the third page, so that the reference could not have been seen unless the letter had been taken out, unfolded, and opened. It is certain then that this sentence was not read by any normal method, and if we are to suppose that the success, such as it was, with this letter was obtained by normal methods, we must, I think, count the remark about the health of the writer as a lucky shot. It is possible to say the same of the other words, but I have read through some twenty letters of this writer, and not found the words "I am sure" in any other letter. I have no experience as to the general possession of the faculty of reading words written in ink on paper by passing the fingers over them; I have made a few experiments, but have not found myself able to feel anything that can be interpreted, though I have occasionally been able, in the case of handwritings very familiar to me, to assign the letters to their writers. Probably the faculty of discerning by the touch varies with different people.

The second letter, which had not left my handbag, was brought home, put in an undirected envelope, and endorsed as having been taken to town but not shown to Mrs. Thompson. It was placed among a large number of other letters, awaiting periodical sorting and destruction, on a shelf over my writing table in my husband's study. There it was when Mrs. Thompson came to stay with me on December 4th of the same year. I had no intention of making any further use of the letter, but on December 6th, at luncheon, Mrs. Thompson told me that Mrs. Cartwright had said she would come, and as I had heard that Mrs. Cartwright made a speciality of reading letters, I thought that I would be provided with a letter in case she came. Accordingly, at three o'clock when I went into the drawing-room where the sitting was to be, I took with me the letter which I had brought back from London unshown, and a small trinket, and without any concealment put them both in the cupboard of my writing-table, turning the key as usual. I did not leave the room till after the sitting, so that the letter was certainly not read by Mrs. Thompson on the afternoon of the 6th.



The rooms used by Mrs. Thompson during her visit to me did not include the study, where my husband sat except in the morning when he was at College. Mrs. Thompson was not alone in the house at any time during her visit, except for about three-quarters of an hour in the morning of the 6th, when my husband, my daughter, and I were all out. It will be seen, then, that there was a time when Mrs. Thompson was alone with the servants in the house, and that the endorsement on the envelope would have drawn attention to the contents as a likely subject for experiment, had any one found the letter. I am not suggesting that Mrs. Thompson found the letter; I am explaining that I have not counted the accurate statements as to its contents among those supernormally acquired, since I regret to say that the conditions were not absolutely strict, as I had intended that they should be, and at the time believed them to be.

The letter was held by Mrs. Thompson in the usual way, and there was no question this time of the possibility of a glance while I was taking notes, for there was another sitter, Miss Harrison, in the room, who was at leisure to watch closely what was done, and saw no suspicious movements.

The statements made by Mrs. Cartwright were as follows. I quote the contemporary notes :

“My dear May,—I can't read every word ; the lady who writes it is troubled about 'my dear May's' overstudying ; there is a great talk about 'changing one's mind' (after a pause to me). 'It's to you the letter is ; I had so sensed the name Margaret to you ; that's strange. She either wants you to change your mind or . . . it's written by a loving mother' (after a pause, distinctly). 'I cannot help you to find the book.' [I did not understand what she meant, whether she was reading the letter or speaking of something else. I had no recollection of anything about a book, though the general drift of the letter I knew, so I asked :] 'Are you saying that?' (Mrs. Cartwright went on) : 'You want a book. It's a French book that is lost. I expect Rosa's<sup>1</sup> account of me makes you expect all to be correct. The difficulty lies in the time at which it was written, and in the placing and replacing of it in different envelopes. I get the idea that when it was written the lady was a little put out at something that had been done, but wished you not to gather that. Her thoughts are all of love, but she feels annoyance. 'Merrifield' (pronounced Merrifield with a strong accent on the second syllable, of which the 'i' was made long). This seems to be the name of a house more than of a person ; I can't get it as signature. I can't realise how it is, but I feel that I must go to look for a French book, and yet the letter was written long ago.' Mrs. Cartwright went at this point, and Nelly returned. She asked for the letter, and on having it

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Thompson.

said she could only see 'Lily, not Helen's Lillian.' The next day I told Nelly that the name given by her from the letter was right, to which she replied 'Oh yes, Edith.'

The statements as to facts in this letter appear to be six in all, namely, (1) the state of feeling of the writer; (2) the lost French book; (3) the relationship to me of the writer; (4) the name Merrifield; (5) the name Lily; (6) the name Edith. The facts are as follows: The letter was written to me by my mother under a misapprehension as to a proposed course of work for me; she thought I proposed to alter my work very considerably, taking on more than had been planned; she introduces her comments with the words "This gives me an opportunity to laugh at you a bit for your inconsistency." There is no sign of annoyance in the letter, which ends, after calling me "not-know-your-own-mind," with the phrase "your mother loves you," and the usual signature of initials only, M. A. M. A later letter, written after my mother had found that she had misunderstood my letter to her, shows that when she wrote the earlier letter she had been seriously disturbed, not to say vexed, at what she believed to be my change of plan. That later letter was the one which had been given to Mrs. Thompson in town; the remarks on this subject were on the second and third (inner) pages, and so had certainly not been seen by her in a normal manner. In the letter given to Mrs. Cartwright my mother mentions with regret that my sister had recently lost her French exercise book, that they had hoped to recover it, but had not done so. The names Lily and Edith do occur in the letter, the former twice. Four other Christian names occur, besides my sister's name, Flora, twice. It is noticeable that "Merrifield," though not the name of a house, is not in the signature; as uttered by Mrs. Cartwright it suggests to me a sort of "portmanteau" of my mother's name, which was Maria Merrifield. The trance personality had mentioned the name Merrifield some time before as belonging to me, and had then pronounced it rightly, and had shown the conception she had of the meaning and pronunciation of it by calling it, as an alternative, Happyfield, so that this curious mispronunciation seems to be wholly gratuitous on the assumption that the sensitive was normally acquainted with the contents of the letter, and was guessing that the final M. in the initials stood for the name she had already used.

As bearing on the question of how the sensitive obtained her knowledge of the contents of the letter, it is perhaps worth noting

that the account she gave is not quite what would be expected from a person who had recently read it and wished to reproduce its contents. The first thing mentioned in the letter, the actual *raison d'être* of the letter, was that a lamp, which was coming to me as a present from some friends, had been sent off. Of this no mention was made by Mrs. Cartwright, though it would seem a definite piece of information likely to be noted by any one reading the letter with a view to reproducing its contents. There is another small error which struck me at the time. The letter really begins—"My dearest May." This is represented in Mrs. Cartwright's version by the words, "My dear May," a sufficiently obvious guess, but wholly uncharacteristic of the writer. This particular form of opening was never, to the best of my belief, used by the writer; it certainly does not occur among the numerous letters which I have preserved. On the whole, however, the contents of the letter are very well and fully reproduced, and it is obvious that they must in some way have become known to Mrs. Thompson or to the trance personality. The reason why I have spoken of this as a possibly suspicious circumstance is that it is the only letter which has been read in detail within my knowledge with conspicuous success, and, unfortunately, owing to the circumstances above described, it is the only letter of which I am unable to say that it is impossible that the sensitive should have seen it.

It should be noted that I have myself only on one other occasion besides the above given Mrs. Thompson a letter to read. So far she has had no success; but as it is possible that something more may come of this letter later, I am unable to say any more on the subject here. Other letters have been given her in my presence. In one case she made incorrect statements about the writer; in another some correct and some incorrect; in the third case the giving of a letter resulted in a very striking and definite allusion to the death of a relative of the writer. (See page 214.)

I pass on to the last class (*a*) of true but discoverable facts—that of names connected with the sitter. Fourteen out of the total of fifty-one ascertainable statements were, as I have said, names given on various occasions in the course of the sittings. Three of these belong to my husband's surroundings, three to my own, and eight to Miss Harrison's. The three belonging to my husband are as follows:

(1) That "some one called Mary Elizabeth, is it Mary or Marian? They say Mary Elizabeth" knew him as a little boy. My husband's younger sister is called Marian Elizabeth. She was, as I have been

told, called after two aunts, Mary and Elizabeth, a modification of the former name being given to avoid confusion.

(2) Henry was said to be the name of his father. This is true.

(3) His own name was said to be Arthur Willgar: the latter name being also that of his mother. This is almost correct. His second name is Woollgar, which was his mother's maiden name.

Three of the names belong to me; they are as follows:

(4) Merrifield was said to be the name of a lady in my family. The name was given at first thus: "Merrifield, Merriman, Merrythought, Merrifield; there is an old lady named one of those who," etc. Later, Nelly said: "Mrs. Merrythought, that's not quite right; it's like the name of a garden," and after in vain trying to give me the name exactly, she said: "I will tell you how names come to us. It's like a picture: I see school children enjoying themselves. You can't say Merrymans, because that's not a name, nor Merrypeople." Nelly, later on, spoke of my mother as "Mrs. Happyfield," or "Mrs. Merrifield," with indifference.

(5) Nelly spoke of my sister by name, but said that her mother had seen the name in the *S.P.R. Journal* a day or two before.

(6) Nelly said that Vernon was a name belonging to me: it is the name of the Terrace where my father lives at Brighton.

In this collection of names there is nothing of any special interest, as the facts could have no doubt been ascertained by any one who wished to learn them, except perhaps in the introduction of Mary Elizabeth, with the suggestion of Marian. Neither is there anything the least suspicious in the way in which they were used, nor in the fact that they were used.

The names connected with Miss Harrison are eight. One of them was the name of a place where a dead friend had lived; but as it was not mentioned till after the identification of the friend, it has no evidential value, and is parallel to the introduction of the name Vernon in my case. The other seven were given in two instalments, three and four at a time, and it is the circumstances connected with them which may at first sight be called "suspicious."

The first interview between Mrs. Thompson and Miss Harrison<sup>1</sup> took place in my house on Dec. 6th, 1899, and I took notes. Much was said about her mother, and I, who knew that Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> At this interview, when Miss Harrison was introduced as a stranger (see p. 211), among many true things said to her came four names, correctly given. With these I am not now dealing, as they have been classed among the 90 true statements that could not have been ascertained by normal means (see p. 172).



Harrison's maiden name had been Elizabeth Nelson, was constantly looking for the name; but we did not get it. On Thursday, the 7th Dec., Mrs. Thompson left Cambridge, and on Dec. 8th I received from her, as told to her in trance, the following message: "Grandfather Nelson tried to speak, and caused a mixed influence. Elizabeth was dead; Ellen was alive. She gave Ellen's name, but not in full. She sends her love to Barker or Barker's son, and" —the rest was indistinct, Mrs. Thompson added. Mrs. Thompson's letter was dated Dec. 7th, 7.30 P.M.

This message, to be intelligible, needs a somewhat lengthy explanation. Miss Harrison's name, which is Jane Ellen Harrison, had been given as Jane Harrison at the sitting: not, therefore, in full. Elizabeth Nelson is her mother's name, and Ellen Nelson is the name of the mother's only sister, after whom Miss Harrison received her second name. This aunt long outlived the mother; but it seems that by Ellen in the message is meant rather Miss Harrison herself, since the name was said to have been given. Barkston Mansions is the name of a building where Miss Harrison had a flat for some years, but she had left it some two years before the sitting. The message is obscure enough for an oracle, and perhaps needs as much interpreting; but, leaving aside the doubtful Ellen, three points come out clearly: Grandfather Nelson, a dead Elizabeth, and Barker or Barker's son.<sup>1</sup> These three names were known to me at the time of the sitting, as well as to Miss Harrison herself. I have ascertained that both names and the address are to be found in earlier editions of *Who's Who?* though the latest editions give Miss Harrison's later London address, Chenies Street Chambers, and not Barkston Mansions.

But this does not finish the history of Miss Harrison's names. Just before Christmas, about a fortnight after the sitting, I consulted the last edition of *Who's Who?* to see what information it actually contained, and I thereby learnt the further facts that Miss Harrison's mother was described as Elizabeth Hawksley, daughter of Thomas Nelson, that her father's name was Charles, and that among her published works was mentioned a book on Greek vases, in which she had collaborated with Mr. D. S. Maccoll. On January 3rd, 1900, Miss Harrison and I sat again with Mrs. Thompson, and the first remark that Nelly made was that Miss Harrison's mother was

<sup>1</sup> The "she" referred to in the message is a new personality, who tried to communicate, and who certainly did know Miss Harrison while she lived at Barkston Mansions.



named Elizabeth, then that she was Elizabeth Hawksley or Hortsly; later on she said that Miss Harrison's father was called Charles, that the grandfather was Thomas Nelson, and that a Mr. Coll, Cawl, Maccole, gave Miss Harrison a lot of papers that were not cheques or bank-notes. The name Barkston was also uttered, and on my asking Nelly what it was, she said that it was the name of a house, Barkston Street, Place, Gardens.

Here, then, at this sitting were produced four new names, Hawksley, Charles, Thomas, and Maccoll, all to be found in *Who's Who?* and all recently suggested to me by the paragraph in *Who's Who?* The fact that seven names were given after the identification of the sitter, when there had been time for investigation of her history, is undoubtedly very suspicious, but no less curious is the division of these names into two groups of three and four names respectively, corresponding with the information possessed by me. It would have been more satisfactory if the first batch had been given at the first interview with the then unknown sitter, but if this knowledge was as a fact obtained by the sensitive through the book of reference in question, it is a most extraordinary coincidence that the names which were in the book, but which I did not then know—Hawksley, Thomas and Charles—should not have been given till after I did know them. In forming a judgment on these facts I think some attention also should be paid to the form in which the word Barkston appears in the first communication, a written one, from Mrs. Thompson, namely, as Barker or Barker's son. This does not look like the error of a copyist but of a hearer, and if we are to suppose that the sensitive obtained information from a normal source and endeavoured by the use of such information to impress the sitter, we are bound to admit that the method adopted was certainly not obvious, that it was, indeed, so ingenious that it might easily have failed of its purpose; for it is plain that the phrase "she sends her love to Barker or Barker's son" might very easily have been put down as sheer nonsense, when it is remembered that Barkston Gardens was not the actual present address of the sitter.<sup>1</sup> But it will be said by the sceptic, and it cannot be denied, that the ingenuity of the fraudulent medium is only equalled by that of the interpreter of oracles, and the question obviously admits of no certain answer. The reader must form his own judgment on the facts.

<sup>1</sup> It was, as I have said, the address familiar to the friend who is represented in Mrs. Thompson's message as sending the communication.

## FIRST INTERVIEWS.

The best way, as it seems to me, of throwing light on the question of how the sensitive obtains her information is to examine very carefully what facts she is able to give at a first interview with an unknown sitter.<sup>1</sup> I have myself only a limited experience of this, as I have only twice introduced new sitters. One of these two was Miss Harrison, and it will be instructive to note what facts were told her before the sensitive had any opportunity of consulting biographical dictionaries. The other new sitter came to a meeting which is not included in the sittings which have furnished my statistics, and with an account of what happened at these two "first sittings" I will conclude this already lengthy paper.

It was during Mrs. Thompson's visit to me in December, 1899, that I decided to introduce to her Miss Jane Harrison. I arranged with Miss Harrison, who was at the time in residence at Newnham College, to come to my house in the afternoon of December 6th, and to wait in my husband's study till I should send for her. I gave orders to the maid at three in the afternoon, after Mrs. Thompson was established in the drawing-room for the sitting, to show Miss Harrison into the study when she came, and not to announce her to me in the drawing-room. I then told my daughter that when the trance had begun I should send her from the drawing-room to bring in Miss Harrison from the study, and my daughter was not alone with Mrs. Thompson after hearing this. As no other persons besides those just mentioned knew of the arrangement between Miss Harrison and myself that she should have a sitting, and as Miss Harrison did not come to our house or otherwise see Mrs. Thompson during the two days preceding the sitting, when Mrs. Thompson was my guest, I think it may be taken as certain that Miss Harrison was, as I intended she should be, a wholly unknown stranger.

When the trance had well begun and I heard the bell ring, and so knew that the visitor was in the house, I sent my daughter away, and Miss Harrison came silently into the room and sat on a sofa at a little distance. Mrs. Thompson had been informed that a new visitor was to come, and that the visitor was a lady. She had expressed some anxiety lest it should be a lady whom she already knew and with whom she had not had a successful sitting, and I had

<sup>1</sup> For this purpose I do not count myself as an unknown sitter. Mrs. Thompson knew my name when I first met her, and it was then understood that I was to have a sitting some day.

reassured her, or rather Nelly, on this point. That was all that had been said on the subject. I give the report of the opening of the sitting from my notes taken at the time, read over to Miss Harrison and approved by her, and written out the next day :

*Nelly* (to J. E. H.). "Have you been pouring something out of one bottle into another, from a wide-necked one into another? I quite distinctly see it." (After a short pause.) "I will do that letter."

[Miss Harrison had brought three or four letters in a bag, but had not taken them out. At this Miss H. gave me one of them in a blank envelope and said :]

*Miss H.* "I don't know which letter I've given you."

*Nelly.* "It doesn't matter" (holding the letter in its envelope). "It seems like . . . not a happy feeling, Mrs. Verrall; put mother's fingers on the letter." (I inserted Mrs. Thompson's fingers into the letter.)

*Nelly.* "The lady is dead belonging to this letter; she's not Jimmy's relation. Jimmy, Jemmy, Jenny. The one that writes the letter has a strange influence. It's a man's influence in a woman's mind, there are echoes of a man's thoughts. I don't know whether a man wrote it."

Nelly then invited "Jimmy" to come nearer, which Miss Harrison did.

*Nelly.* "I can see you talking to Mrs. Sidgwick; you are one of the talkers at Mrs. Sidgwick's house. You have not got a mother. Your mother is at our house; she thought: 'Jimmy.' Your mother died and some one else in the same year."

*Miss H.* "It was a long time ago."

*Nelly.* "It makes me feel sad. After your mother died something cheery happened, a success, but too late for your mother to know. There's a Margaret associated with you, and Anna,<sup>1</sup> Anna belonged to a dead lady, not old, looks 45 now; has a smooth face. The lady (Miss Harrison's mother) had a crape shawl with silk fringe; I can see it on; you have a photograph of her with the shawl, a grand dress sticking out, with the shawl on cornerways. A lady belonging to you had a cancer; you heard about that with other sad things. You've got a ring belonging to some one, not your mother, that's dead."

*Miss H.* "I had, but I've lost it."

*Nelly.* "Did you leave it by the wash basin? It was lost not in Cambridge, but further away. Poor thing, she had her head aching, she lay down a long time, did not die quickly. She has been dead a long time. She's a bright lady, not a talking lady."

The sitting was a long one and cannot be printed without omissions, as it contains references to some private matters, and to some other matter which is incomplete at present and to which it would be premature to refer. But the above quotation will show the reader that definite statements were made to an unknown sitter without

<sup>1</sup> Not the real name.

any suggestion from either the sitter or the note-taker, and these definite statements are almost without exception correct. Thus, as regards the remark about the bottle from which Miss Harrison was said to have been pouring something, this conveyed no impression to me at the time, nor to Miss Harrison. Later on in the sitting, Nelly returned to the subject, saying, "I see a bottle department, this lady will think of me when she pours from one bottle to another, perhaps glycerine (this word was said with some hesitation); it's not a scientific department." Miss Harrison, who at the second reference to the bottles had wondered whether Nelly was thinking of a recent visit she had made to a newly-equipped laboratory at Newnham College, here asked whether Nelly could see the bottles, and Nelly answered, "They are glass bottles, one wider in the neck than the other." It was only on her way home after the sitting that Miss Harrison remembered that she had during the last two months been regularly making "sparklets," and so had constantly been engaged in filling a narrow-necked glass bottle from a wider mouthed one. It seems likely that the word glycerine was an attempt to give the characteristic word "gazogene," but even though this word was not given, there can be no doubt that Nelly's general account is appropriate, and aptly describes what Miss Harrison, unknown to me, had been constantly doing, and would soon do again.

The next statement concerned the letter given, which was one of two or three brought by Miss Harrison. As she said at the time, she was not sure which letter she had taken out. It was found after the sitting that the writer was a man and was alive. The first statement made by Nelly was therefore incorrect, and the later remarks are too vague to be valuable, though the form of the words suggests a gradual change of impression on the part of the speaker, and apparently a final inclination to think the writer a man. It is interesting to note that as neither of the persons present knew at the time which letter the sensitive was holding, the modification of her view can have been due neither to thought transference nor to fishing.

The use of the name "Jinny" is very interesting. It was a name used in Miss Harrison's childhood, and is still used by her family, but not by any of her Cambridge friends. Later on the name Jane was used when Nelly was speaking of a recently dead friend of Miss Harrison's who called her Jane, but Nelly did not at first seem to realise who Jane was; she had called the sitter Jinny, and suddenly said, after describing the dead friend, "who was Jane? She's associated with the lady (*i.e.* the dead lady), it's not her name; Jane was a sorry lady because this lady died." Again a few



minutes later she turned to me and asked me whether I called Miss Harrison Jinny, a name, she said, which was nicer than Jane.

The sensitive correctly stated that Miss Harrison's mother was dead, and there is in the possession of the eldest daughter a framed miniature showing Mrs. Harrison in a dress with crinoline and a fringed shawl worn "cornerwise." The two names, Margaret and Anna,<sup>1</sup> have associations for Miss Harrison, and the description of the lady to whom "Anna" belonged is accurate as far as it goes. The name of the lady was not given by Nelly in connexion with her, but almost immediately after the short description of this lady, whom I have called Mrs. B., Nelly mentioned the surname in a form very usual with her when she has a fact to communicate of which she does not apparently see the precise significance. She said, "What's B——?" No answer was made, and she went on to mention the Christian name and surname of the lady's husband, also dead, but dismissed them as those of the friend of a former sitter. This former sitter was well acquainted with Mrs. B. and with her husband, and had, in fact, received from Nelly some months earlier a message purporting to come from Mr. B., whose Christian and surname were mentioned by Nelly. There would have been no reason for Mrs. Thompson to think it likely that Miss Harrison and the former sitter would have acquaintance in common, even had she known Miss Harrison. As a fact Nelly spoke in Miss Harrison's sitting as though the husband were dead, and she did not give any name to the wife; but that in some inexplicable way the trance personality was aware of the name is, I think, shown by the otherwise motiveless introduction of the surname and husband's full name, though she dismissed them as inappropriate on this occasion. At this sitting, in close conjunction with a description of Mrs. B., came the mention of her husband's name, though it was not till a subsequent sitting that Nelly completed the identification and recognised that the Mr. B. of one of her sitters was the husband of the lady described to Miss Harrison at this first sitting with her.

It is true that the owner of the ring which had been lost died after a lingering illness, of which one of the most marked and distressing symptoms was constant severe headache.

The most striking incident in this sitting has been briefly referred to earlier in this paper. It also relates to Mrs. B. One of the letters brought by Miss Harrison (see page 212) was given to the sensitive, who instantly spoke of the loss sustained by some relatives of the writer, and went on to give a description of the dead lady and of the

<sup>1</sup> Not the real name.



circumstances of her death, which made the identification beyond dispute. The letter was not written by the dead lady herself, but by a relative, and this fact was apparently recognised by Nelly, for she said to me in reference to the letter contained in the envelope which she held in her hand, "Mrs. Verrall, a live person's letter won't get me on to a dead person."

Later in the same sitting it was correctly stated that Miss Harrison had come to my house from Newnham College, and an additional description was given, in order that we might not think Nelly was "only guessing," which correctly determined in which of the three Halls Miss Harrison was living.

The full name, Christian and surname, of a lady who had already been spoken of to me by name at an earlier sitting as a friend of mine, was mentioned by Nelly as one whom "this lady" (Miss Harrison) knew all about, and in the few words that followed Nelly seemed to us both to describe accurately the relations between the lady named and Miss Harrison. The lady was a College friend of us both, but more intimate with me.

In this first sitting, then, with Miss Harrison, a stranger, introduced under the conditions described above, names were given and incidents related, which warrant, in my opinion, the assertion that Mrs. Thompson showed herself possessed of knowledge not normally attainable. The same thing occurred in the case of the other sitter whom I introduced in December, 1900, also under conditions precluding the possibility of previous investigations by the sensitive into his antecedents.

I had arranged with Mrs. Thompson to bring a friend to a sitting on Monday, December 17, 1900. I was to meet Mrs. Thompson in town and go with her to the rooms of the Society in Buckingham Street, at 2.30 o'clock. The sitter was to come to the rooms not before three and knock at the door without entering, to inform me of his arrival, as I was anxious that he should not enter until the trance had begun. No one but the sitter, myself and my husband knew who it was that I proposed to introduce. The arrangements were carried out as planned. After Mrs. Thompson had become entranced, I brought the sitter into the room, where he took up a position behind a screen. It was impossible that Mrs. Thompson should have seen him. The early part of the sitting was fairly good; the sensitive correctly described the state of health of the visitor and his habitual occupations. I gave her in succession two objects which he handed to me, a pair of sleeve links and a gentleman's ring. She at once asked for the tie which belonged

to the ring, and added that the tie was black and that it belonged to the gentleman then sitting behind what she resentfully spoke of as "that umbrella." The ring had, as I found afterwards, been taken off the black tie worn by the sitter to give to the sensitive, but there was nothing to show that it had been so worn. I suppose it is possible that the movements made in thus removing it may have been audible to the sensitive, but I do not see how the colour of the tie could have been discovered even by hyperæsthesia.

There seemed throughout the interview a considerable confusion between the affairs of the sitter and my own. This was perhaps due to the perplexity introduced by the new condition,<sup>1</sup> as it has not occurred to anything like the same extent in other cases within my experience. Nelly seemed restless and anxious, and passed from topic to topic much more rapidly than is usual with her. It was difficult to analyse her somewhat discursive remarks, but undoubtedly things were said that were appropriate to the sitter's friends and other things that referred to mine. There was, however, a considerable amount of unidentifiable matter.

At the end of an hour, as we had arranged, the sitter came out from behind the screen, and from that moment things went much better. Nelly expressed regret, as the links were handed back, at not having been able to "get anything" about them. She added: "I should like something belonging to the links: there's a little hair chain belonging to them." The sitter replied that he had not got that, and could not find or bring it. Nelly went on to describe it in some detail: it had, she said, "little rounds on, round gold things, that used to move up and down." The sitter has since informed me that the hair chain, belonging to the owner of the links, had gold rings upon it at intervals, but that they were not moveable. Nelly further said that, in default of the chain, she would like the "pencil, with separate leads to be fitted in, not an ordinary pencil like that (taking up a wooden pencil from the table); you put the leads into it separately." She went on to say that there had been a difficulty about getting leads to fit the pencil. It is true that the sitter possesses a gold pencil case that had belonged to the owner of the links and the hair chain, and that he had had considerable difficulty in obtaining leads that would fit it. He writes to me that "after she had mentioned the chain, which I had up to that moment entirely forgotten, I was not surprised at her mentioning the pencil case, but was rather surprised at her reminding me of the difficulty

<sup>1</sup> The sitter has been visible to Nelly in all my other sittings.

that I had had in getting leads to fit it." Nelly further said that the same person "had a box with compasses in." This statement is also correct. She mentioned no other articles in connexion with the links.

Now, I think that any impartial reader will admit that the circumstances related above are very remarkable, and even if they stood alone, would go far to substantiate the claim of the sensitive to the possession of supernormal knowledge. A stranger gives to the sensitive a pair of gold sleeve links that had belonged to a friend who died out of England, and who had certainly never met Mrs. Thompson, no one but himself knowing what article he intended to bring; the sensitive tells him of three other articles belonging to the owner of the links, a hair chain with moveable gold rings, a pencil case to which there had been difficulty in fitting leads, and a box containing compasses,—all which articles did, as a fact, belong to the owner of the links; she makes no mention of articles which he did not possess; the description of the articles is definite, and with the exception of the moveability of the rings, entirely accurate. Without propounding any theory as to how Mrs. Thompson's trance personality obtained this information, I think that we are justified in attributing it to no method hitherto recognised as normal.

I have now presented all the facts and all the observations which I have so far been able to record concerning the phenomena occurring in the case of Mrs. Thompson. I have taken especial pains to draw attention to the failures and shortcomings, as well as to the successes, which I have personally observed. In particular, I have collected together for purposes of comparison a little group of circumstances, which, did they stand alone, might seem to suggest the illegitimate employment of normal means of acquiring information, though I wish here to repeat emphatically that throughout the whole course of my acquaintance with Mrs. Thompson, no single suspicious or even doubtful incident has come within my knowledge. This group of facts must be judged, not in isolation, but in its relation with other groups; indeed, the whole of the phenomena recorded by me must be regarded as merely part, and not a very large part, of the general evidence that has been collected.

It is not my intention in this paper to express any opinion on the general character of the phenomena presented by Mrs. Thompson. To do so would require a more intimate acquaintance than I have with the records of other observers of this sensitive,

and would need deep and wide knowledge of the results of similar experiments with other trance mediums; it would demand a training and experience, not to mention other qualities, to which I have no claim. All I have here attempted is to give a full account of the phenomena occurring under my personal observation. My attempt at classification is an endeavour to make the details easier to follow, and is made rather with the hope of enabling the reader to grasp these details than of suggesting any theory for their explanation. That Mrs. Thompson is possessed of knowledge not normally obtained I regard as established beyond a doubt; that the hypothesis of fraud, conscious or unconscious on her part, fails to explain the phenomena, seems to be equally certain; that to more causes than one is to be attributed the success which I have recorded seems to me likely. There is, I believe, some evidence to indicate that telepathy between the sitter and the trance personality is one of these contributory causes. But that telepathy from the living, even in an extended sense of the term, does not furnish a complete explanation of the occurrences observed by me, is, as readers of this paper will have noticed, my present belief. More than this I do not feel warranted in saying until further evidence has been obtained: it is to the records of other observers and to the accumulation of the experience of different sitters that we must look for the material to enable us to judge what further causes are at work.

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## APPENDIX A.

### LIST OF PREDICTIONS.

#### A (FULFILLED—TRUE).

- (1) That Nelly would be talking at twenty minutes to ten the next evening.

#### B (NOT FULFILLED—FALSE).

- (1) That A.<sup>1</sup> would have a cough in the winter of 1899-1900.
- (2) That B. would be told by a friend of a great scandal or misfortune at C.

<sup>1</sup>Many of these statements will be found in the reports of sittings quoted or printed in App. D, often with the names in full. For brevity the names are here, as well as in App. B, represented by consecutive letters of the alphabet.



- (3) That the weather would be fine during Mrs. Thompson's visit to Cambridge in December, 1899, and that she would bicycle while she was there.
- (4) That a short lady in spectacles would come to see Mrs. Thompson on a specified day.
- (5) That D. would have a journey to the North on a sad errand.
- (6) That Mrs. Verrall would go North before going abroad in the summer of 1900.
- (7) That there would be another "big dreadful event" in the war, worse than the disasters of December, 1899.
- (8) That E. would never recover completely after a certain illness.
- (9) That F. would suffer from a specified disease before a specified age.

C (UNFULFILLED—NEITHER TRUE NOR FALSE).

- (1) That three persons (named) would meet.
- (2) That H. would die "before very long."
- (3) That soon after the death of H. a specified event would occur.
- (4) That J. would reach above a specified standard in a specified examination.
- (5) That somebody connected with K. would be poisoned.
- (6) That L. would suffer from a specified failure of the senses as old age approached.

*Note on the above.*—Several of the above seem hardly to be predictions in the ordinary sense of the term, but as they refer to the future, I have had to classify them as such for the purpose of the statistics of this paper; my own impression is that when the trance personality has an undefined impression of something concerning the sitter, the expression of that feeling is apt to take the form of a vague statement. Sometimes this is negative in form, as "I don't mean such and such a thing," where the "such and such a thing," though apparently unintelligible to the speaker, has a perfectly definite and appropriate meaning to the sitter who knows the whole of the facts (see p. 214). Sometimes the form is interrogative; Nelly may say "Do you ever do so and so?" the fact being that the action described is appropriate to some one to whom the sensitive has been referring, but not to the sitter. Sometimes, as in those cases classed as predictions, the trance personality seems to use the prophetic form to convey information of which she has no clear knowledge. For instance, in case (B) (5) it was not likely, nor has it happened, that the lady "D." would go to the North



on any errand, sad or otherwise. But it was true, though unknown to Nelly, that her old home had for years been in the North, and, as might be expected, she had gone North more than once "on sad errands"; and so "going North on a sad errand" was a description, had it referred not to the future but to the past, which would have been applicable to the lady in question. In case (B) (8) Mrs. Thompson knew of "E.'s" illness, and it is possible that the remark that he would never completely get over it, might be only the expression of her feeling that his recovery was not proceeding rapidly; on several occasions I have found that the trance personality takes a depressed view when there is any question of illness. In case (B) (9), where it was stated that "F." would suffer from a specified disease before a specified age, two statements were in fact made, one that "F." would have a certain trouble with his health, and the other that he was not yet 50 years old. The sensitive had more than once referred to the health of "F.," saying, what was not correct, that he suffered from a particular weakness; she had also expressed her conviction that he would not believe that this was the case, and finally the remark was made, here classed as a prediction, "'F.' is not fifty yet, he will not laugh so much at the health trouble when he is fifty." "F." as a fact was not 49 when this was said; he is now past fifty, but has had no symptoms of the particular health trouble mentioned; thus this remark, if it is to be regarded as a prediction, is not fulfilled; but if it is only a circuitous way of mentioning "F.'s" age, it is a correct statement of an ascertainable fact, and has for purposes of these statistics been counted under that head. It is worth noting in this connexion that at the time these remarks were made by the sensitive, the sitter was suffering from an attack of pain<sup>due</sup>, as was subsequently determined by medical advice, to the particular health trouble wrongly ascribed by the sensitive to the sitter's friend, "F."

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#### APPENDIX B.

TABLE OF STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE PAST OR PRESENT  
WHICH ARE FALSE, CLASS F (see p. 169).

- (1) That A. was at the time poorly.
- (2) That B. had recently painted a head.
- (3) That C. had had a specified accident.
- (4) That D. used to wear a particular kind of cap.

- (5) That E. had suffered from a specified disease (see App. A., case (B.), (9) and note).
- (6) That F. was fond of boating.
- (7) That G. had lost a boy who would have been eleven years old when the statement was made.
- (8) That a certain coat contained an unused railway ticket.
- (9) That H. was associated with a specified town.
- (10) That in I.'s house a fair-haired servant was ill.
- (11) That J.'s mother had a living son.
- (12) That K. had gone abroad (true) by a specified route (false).
- (13) That a friend of L.'s had died of a specified disease.
- (14) That there was a person called L. M., a relative of Miss M. (Miss M. was known to the sensitive.)
- (15) That N. had a third child (she had two only).
- (16) That a certain brooch was connected with a specified name.
- (17) That O. was a great skater.
- (18) That a person called P., and described in detail, was intimate in a specified house.
- (19) That a given letter had been written by a person of such and such a character.
- (20) That a given book had belonged to the owner's mother.
- (21) That O. had a dead brother.
- (22) That a certain recipe contained a specified ingredient.
- (23) That R. had a specified trick of manner.
- (24) That S. was a sister of T.'s.
- (25) That U.'s name was V., or something like it.
- (26) That W. was dead.
- (27) That X. had at a definite date been on the point of visiting Y.
- (28) That a person of a specified type was at the sitter's house on the day of the sitting.
- (29) That Z. had no brother.
- (30) That an old man of a specified nationality was a friend and not the grandfather of the sitter.
- (31) That in a box already previously mentioned by the sensitive was a specified article.
- (32) That A<sup>1</sup>. had made a specified article for the sitter.
- (33) That a certain room had curtains of a specified colour.

*Note on the above.*—Of these 33 incorrect statements, 23 were known to the sitter at the time to be false, 10 were discovered to be so after

enquiry. Nos. 7, 21, 24, 26 were subsequently corrected without suggestion from the sitter; Nos. 7 and 21 refer to the same event, "G." being the mother of "O.," and appear consequently as two false, but (after correction) as one true statement. The child's age was correctly given. This incident is related in detail on page 201. No. 29 was indirectly corrected by the giving of a description of one of the two brothers of "Z." No. 24 was corrected directly at a later sitting; so were Nos. 15, 25, and 26, the right name being given in case 25. The first attempt at the name, which it was quite impossible for the sensitive to have known, was not wholly wrong; it was as if a name had been said to be Ernestine, when it was, as a fact, Emmeline. But as these corrections were not made until after the series of sittings which have furnished the statistics for this paper, they do not appear among the correct statements. No. 3 was in agreement with the suggestion of a doctor who had recently seen "C.," a suggestion known to "C.'s" wife, the sitter, but was not, so far as is known, true. In No. 16, the name was not very unlike, Vernon for Ventnor. As to No. 28, one of the inhabitants of the house expected a visitor answering to the description on the day in question, but the visitor did not come. The sitter knew nothing of this expectation. No. 30 is classed as a false statement. The sitter had no old friend of the specified nationality, but her grandfather, dead before her birth, was of the nationality in question, and answered generally to the personal description given. His influence was said to be "like that of a grandfather," but even when the sitter suggested that he probably was her grandfather, the trance personality refused to accept the suggestion.

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### APPENDIX C.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF UNIDENTIFIED OR UNVERIFIED STATEMENTS, CLASS G (see p. 169).

(1) Too vague to be enquired about, - - - - -	36
(2) Names conveying no meaning to sitter, - - - - -	11
(3) Definite statements about persons dead long ago, or otherwise unverifiable, - - - - -	9
(4) Definite statements as yet unverified, - - - - -	8
Total, - - - - -	64

## APPENDIX D.

CONTEMPORARY RECORDS OF SOME OF THE SITTINGS  
REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING PAPER, WITH  
EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS.

## SITTING 2. JULY 27TH, 1899.

At Cambridge ; present, Mrs. Thompson, Miss Johnson, and Mrs. Verrall. The notes were taken during the sitting by Miss Johnson.

(Mrs. Verrall comes in, and Nelly complains of her not coming sooner.)

(1)<sup>1</sup> *Nelly*. "Old Frenchman was waiting for you."

*Mrs. V.* "Shall be delighted to see him."

*Nelly*. "Had he a . . . he was like . . . not uncle, or mother, or any relation—old when you were little girl—he liked little girls, was friend of all people—influence on your family like that of a grandfather, but he was not a relation. Not like a Frenchman—was gray—no beard—his ears rather large, rather long."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, yes."

*Nelly*. "Forehead rather high."

*Mrs. V.* "I think he was a relation, wasn't he?"

*Nelly*. "No, you all made a fuss when he came, like for visitors."

*Mrs. V.* "I thought he was like relation I hadn't seen."

*Nelly*. "Was one of wise men, knew a lot of things, Marie belonging to him. What makes you. . . . You speak good French, Mr. Myers said so, but there seems a great Frenchness about you, Louise too, all French about."

(2) *Mrs. V.* "I have nothing belonging to French people here."

*Mrs. V.* here gave Nelly a little hair cross.

*Nelly*. "Where's the black velvet that this was on?"

*Mrs. V.* "I've never had it ; it used to be on black velvet, but I never had it."

*Nelly*. "This is feeling of long way off—not anybody died in Cambridge, but long way off."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, more difficult for you to find."

*Nelly*. "Feeling of lady with fair hair—parted—and clear face—not coloured face, but clear. Hair drawn round like this" (drawing her own hair round her ears to show what she meant).

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly*. "Had lot of Homerton lace and Maltese lace—rather prim about her lace—not so old as the old-fashionedness of her."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

<sup>1</sup>The record of the sitting has been divided into numbered sections for convenience of reference in the comment that follows.

*Nelly.* "She didn't care what people thought of her. Her writing slanting to right, upright and clear—great example to other people—don't get name with it. Feeling as if she had an operation—not cancer or any great thing, but something got into her, into her hand, some small thing, was opened and got out—somebody can find out. There's Christopher belonging to it—connected."

*Mrs. V.* "Not sure, but think there is."

*Nelly.* "One of the come-downs from this was Parliamentary—had some disappointment about Parliamentary. Don't let them work too hard at it. Don't let Helen work too hard at what she started—something new she's started—if she does, she'll have to stop—other things don't hurt her so much. Have you got something else belonging to the same?"

*Mrs. V.* "No."

*Nelly.* "This has been in wooden work box, not a jewel case with velvet."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly.* "In that box little ivory carved thing."

*Mrs. V.* "Two or three other things in box, not ivory."

*Nelly.* "Well, bone, or white, pearly something—I want to go out of box into house where the box is."

*Mrs. V.* "It's been a long time in that box."

(3) *Nelly.* "Adolphe, Adolphe, he was like Lebas," spelling it, "somebody years ago in France that was connections. Feeling of people is like that" (sitting very upright); "they never gave way to excitement; it was like primness personified. Don't know if it was widow, but had white frill in front, quilling. Although she was prim, she was delicate—afraid of cold—rather shrinking—liked hot water bottles and things to wear in bed and all those wrapping up things."

*Mrs. V.* "What about operation?"

*Nelly.* "Something that ran in—like crochet hook or needle—red-faced man—clean shaven—that took it out."

*Mrs. V.* "Quite likely,—the lady is closely connected with me."

*Nelly.* "Yes, but that won't help me."

(4) *Mrs. V.* "How about Theodore and slippers?"

*Nelly.* "You cobbled those slippers."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly.* "There were animals on canvas, and you filled it in."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, I talked it over with my sister after seeing you. . . ."

*Nelly.* "They'd got their heads on, and you filled in the bodies."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly.* "You did it all the wrong way first, and had to do it over again."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, I talked it over with my sister, and then we remembered all about it."

*Nelly.*—"And now you remember more than you did before."



(5) *Mrs. V.* “[It was] Needle, not crochet hook, that ran into the lady.”

*Nelly.* “Can see the doctor more than person. Only sort of cakes she had . . . was so fond of sponge cakes.”

*Mrs. V.* “Fingers?”

*Nelly.* “No, not fingers, like those sponge cakes you give to a child.”

Here there was a short interruption as a visitor entered the room.

*Nelly.* “Somebody belonging to you very brilliant musician—more than you—got a metz voice.”

*Mrs. V.* “Mezzo soprano?”

*Nelly.* “Yes. Can sing those low notes very nicely. That music gave this one great pleasure—happiness. Prim one used to sit and hear people talk; everybody liked her because she was such a good listener.

“That doctor that had the needle had an accident with his carriage—in connection with his carriage; he was not hurt. She remembers it. Linton, Linton—that doctor got somebody at Lynmouth or Linton—that lady knew about it.”

(Here Miss Johnson went away for a few minutes and the notes were taken by Mrs. V.)

(6) *Nelly.* “Dead boy in charge of the lady, hardly born, but did live. Hear about your mother, knew Helen, Helen hardly knew her.”

(Here Miss Johnson came back and took notes.)

*Nelly.* “Like an old English lady that liked to talk French—Frenchman that was her father. Dr. Arthur Myers knew this old lady.”

*Mrs. V.* “Which? My mother?”

*Nelly.* “Yes. Do you know where she is? Seems as if she knows George Eliot—in that group, and when I talk to Mrs. Sidgwick or you, Six Mile Bottom comes. Seems mother did take interest in boat race—liked to know Cambridge boat race people. She would sit in her prim way and like to know—not gossip, but liked to go and hear all news she couldn’t go and look for herself.

“Feeling with her of bad cough, but not asthmatical—sharper, not like bronchitis, but little shrill cough—not phthisis—had two great . . . funny how she does her mouth—like way of pulling mouth up (pulling her mouth in and together) as if listening—like prim way of putting her mouth. Very fond of pair of velvet boots.”

*Mrs. V.* “Yes, very.”

*Nelly.* “She’s just shown me them—red stuff—flannel—there—with velvet and with loop in elastic boots. She liked little silk apron—with black lace and silk—elastic and button at side; it belonged to some one else and given to her. You’ll excuse her wearing white stockings.”

*Mrs. V.* “This is prim lady, not my mother?”

*Nelly.* “Yes. Don’t mix them. Velvet boots not your mother, but the prim lady, and the silk apron.”

*Mrs. V.* “Oh, yes, I know the apron quite well.”

*Nelly.* "It's like a blackboard, and on blackboard comes pictures, and I tell you as they come. Sometimes people come and talk, but sometimes pictures."

*Comments on the above account of Sitting 2.*

(1) No old Frenchman visited at our house. My mother's father, who died before her marriage, was French. The description given answers fairly well to my knowledge of him derived from description and a portrait in my father's house at Brighton, where Mrs. Thompson had never been. He was "not like a Frenchman," being fair with blue eyes, he had "no beard," his forehead was "rather large," but I know of no peculiarity about his ears. He was not a "wise man," but was a "friend of all people." My mother was called "Marie," and the name "Louis," though not "Louise," occurs in her family. Mr. Myers and I had spoken in Mrs. Thompson's presence of the possibility of my reading a paper in French at the Paris Congress, so that Mrs. Thompson's normal personality knew that I spoke French. The fact that my mother's family was French has been mentioned in the report on Mrs. Piper's sittings (*Proceedings*, Vol. VI.), so that any one wishing to obtain facts about me would have had no difficulty in discovering that I had a French grandfather.

(2) The hair cross was taken by me from a small wooden Japanese box with drawers; the wood has a slight scent, but I could not myself detect any odour about the cross. I have never myself worn the cross except, years ago, on a watch chain, but it was worn by my mother, who gave it to me, on black velvet. I cannot identify the lady described; I was expecting a description of the lady who made the cross (my cousin and godmother), but none of Nelly's statements apply to her, except the possible connection with Christopher. When Nelly spoke of an operation, I remembered that my cousin had died of cancer, but had had no operation, and as I thought this, Nelly went on to say "not cancer." For the "small thing" which was "got out" of my mother's foot (not hand), see below (3) and (5).

The statement about the "Parliamentary come down" is wholly unintelligible to me. The remark about Helen's work seemed to reflect very vividly my own feeling at the time. I had come to the sitting straight from a talk with some one who was teaching my daughter a wholly new subject; we had been arranging for some work to be done during my daughter's holidays, and I was disturbed at this, and afraid that the subject was too hard and would take too much time from her proper work.

(3) Adolphe Lebas is unintelligible to me. The "quilling, and hot-water bottles," etc., suggested my own mother, so I put a question about the "operation." Owing to my carelessness as a very young child, a needle ran into my mother's foot. The incident made a great impression upon me. The needle broke, and part was extracted, some time later, by our doctor, a red-faced, clean-shaven man. For further details see below (5).

(4) This question referred to a remark of Nelly's at my first informal sitting in April 1899. The note made by me on returning home at 11 p.m., on April 5th, was as follows :

"Theodore—not very near—only feature is that the back of his head at the top is prominent—does not seem the same age as at first—died at the ordinary age—'old Theodore'—doesn't like to talk—reads a lot—sits always in the same place by the fire—on the right-hand side—opposite an old-fashioned horse-hair arm-chair—in a place with bars to the windows—and cows to be seen—was fond of fishing—wears woollen under his waistcoat, and carpet slippers with animals' heads worked on them."

Later, I added from recollection the words: "Wouldn't wear patent leather shoes for the Queen—slippers have foxes' heads, or at least some animals'."

The most recent death among my relatives was that of a cousin, Theodore, who went out to Australia as a young man, and died there at about seventy years old. The mention of Theodore recalled to me my personal recollection of him, which is very vivid, as a young man, but I immediately remembered that he was an old man when he died. On April 22nd I talked over with my sister our recollections of this cousin; she told me that he had been very melancholy during the last few months of his life, and very silent. We both remembered something about my having worked wool-work slippers for him when he went to Australia; my sister thought she remembered that there were foxes' heads on the slippers, several small heads, and my father, when asked, had a vague impression of foxes' heads on slippers as a piece of childish needlework. I also, on reflexion, recalled that I had bought the slippers with a pattern ready worked, and had with great labour and much unpicking, filled in the ground behind them. This was the condition of my memory when I saw Mrs. Thompson on July 27th, and in the interval between April 22nd and July 27th, I had not mentioned the subject to any one. Mrs. Thompson was not then, and is not now, acquainted with my father and sister.

It will be noted that on this occasion, without prompting from me, she added to her first vague connexion of Theodore with carpet slippers that they had been worked by me, with difficulty, and that I had filled in the canvas, the heads being already done.

(5) Miss Johnson's notes here have the words, "needle, not crochet hook, that ran into the lady," and it does not appear certain whether they were to be assigned to Mrs. Thompson, or to me. They were not bracketed, as my other remarks are, but on the other hand, she believes that I was the speaker. My own impression is that Nelly said, "It was a needle that ran into the lady," and that I, recognising this as an important correction of the previous statement (see above, 3) said to Miss Johnson, "needle, not crochet hook," in order to be sure that the alteration was noted.

I have a vague recollection of a carriage accident to the doctor and this is confirmed by my father, who thinks that the doctor broke his

leg. We know of no connexion between the doctor and Linton or Lynnsmouth.

The "cakes" and the "mezzo soprano" are not intelligible to me.

(6) Here there appears to be a transition on the part of Nelly from my mother to my mother-in-law, who is undoubtedly described later on. I did not detect this at the time, and as the statements made were for the most part not appropriate to my mother, I was, as will be seen from my remarks, vainly endeavouring to clear up the situation, till the vivid reproduction of a facial gesture and the description of the apron, etc., suggested to me that the old lady now being described was my mother-in-law, who is in no way connected with the hair cross, which was the only object held by the sensitive. I comment in detail on the various points:

My mother-in-law's first child, a boy, died at the age of six weeks; my mother never had a son.

My child Helen has only a faint recollection of my mother-in-law, but a perfectly clear one of my mother.

The remark about the Frenchman is indefinite, but perhaps refers to my mother.

Dr. Arthur Myers knew my mother very slightly, but my mother-in-law very fairly well. See below, notes on Sitting 3, No. 7.

Neither lady took any interest in the boat race, though if "Cambridge" were substituted for "boat race," the remarks would be true of my mother-in-law.

The description of the cough is appropriate to my mother-in-law, and the reproduction by the sensitive of a certain way of moving the lips was startlingly characteristic of her. The silk apron I have often seen her wear, and I know, from her, that it had belonged to her mother. It fastened with an elastic and button round the waist, and the movement of the sensitive's hands as she went through the action of taking off an apron and folding it was characteristic. So too was the voice and gesture as she spoke of the white stockings. My mother-in-law has more than once referred half apologetically to her preference for white stockings, which she wore long after they had ceased to be fashionable. I know of no velvet boots worn by my mother-in-law; the mention of them recalled my own mother. (See comment on Sitting 4, No. 9, Oct. 5, 1899.)

#### SITTING 3. JULY 28TH, 1899.

At Cambridge; present, Mrs. Thompson, Miss Johnson, and Mrs. Verrall. The notes were taken during the sitting by Miss Johnson.

(Mrs. Verrall had brought two objects with her, but did not give Mrs. Thompson anything till after she had made her first remark.)

(1) *Nelly*. "Helen's got a grandma's brooch."

*Mrs. V.* "Not brooch, but coral, that's it" (giving object).

*Nelly*. "Is that what made that lady ask for what Helen weared?"



Mrs. V. "She was very fond of Helen."

Nelly. "Yes, brooch."

(2) Nelly. "Seems to me lady belonging to this didn't like Helen having her frock low."

Mrs. V. "True."

Nelly. "It wanted stretching (more on her neck?)"

Mrs. V. "Yes."

Nelly. "Can see Helen like little baby—more distinct than her."

Mrs. V. "She was very fond of Helen."

Nelly. "Yes."

Mrs. V. agrees about frock being too low.

Nelly. "It was before she died—a long time."

Nelly. "Can see little baby had like little silk boots—not kid."

Mrs. V. "Yes."

Nelly. "They were coloured (*i.e.*, as she explained, not black) like white silk—not black—shiny as if made of silk."

Mrs. V. "Yes."

Nelly. "There was tall chair, round back to it, not square one—old lady made cushion to it—to chair that Helen had."

Mrs. V. "No."

Nelly. "She was very fond of working things—used to do that holey work—when you cut little holes and sew it round—with black leather—black one side and green the other."

(3) Nelly. "I want to say, not Mrs. Sidgwick, but Nora (*i.e.* the "Nora" does not refer to Mrs. Sidgwick)—Waura—Miss Johnson, like Laura."

Miss J. "Yes, Laura."

Nelly (to Mrs. V.) "Was a servant that was good to your mother, but she called her by her surname, not Laura. Had a gentleman she was very fond of talking French to, not your husband—he used to wear flat hat, like Professor Sidgwick would wear—crush hat. Town with very white roads, like Bath or Cheltenham."

Mrs. V. "Yes, very white roads, I know."

Nelly. "White roads like where Mrs. Myers,—Margaret—Margaret—Margaret—, What does Margaret say? Stupid, what was it?"

(4) Nelly. "Seen that some one painted this old lady, and when it was painted her hair was parted and worn down—got little lace collar and chain—not like chain that Helen has, but finer."

Mrs. V. "Yes, I can see it in picture if I look."

Nelly. "In picture dress isn't plain surface, but has pattern—wouldn't know that it was so if you didn't look close."

(5) Mrs. V. "Can you see room it's in?"

Nelly. "Can see bedroom, but can't see picture to fit it. Old lady belonged to bedroom—it had watered red curtains—alpaca like and flat gimp on—



had four legs to it, four high ones—little table beside her bed that fastened on, in connection with the bed. There was Louie, too, and Philip, not Louis Philippe, but Philip separate from Louie. They don't seem very responsive when I go out to meet them; rather—in fact, quite—a sort of religious sense (apparently meaning reserved, reticent). Rather straight."

Mrs. V. "Separate? Straight?"

Nelly. "She doesn't realise I'm telling you."

Mrs. V. "Doesn't she?"

Nelly. "Have to get at her through Helen, told her how Helen had grown up into a clever girl, and that seemed to get into her heart."

Mrs. V. "I see."

Nelly. "This old lady sewed little diaper pinafores—weren't very comfortable—like little apron pinafores—sewing them with great pride, like a string through—not pinafore that went round neck."

(6) Nelly. "That lady—the mother, you know—was active; when she came to be ill, it seemed to worry her. She never took life easily, was always on the alert—always seemed to arrange things—while people were thinking what they could do, she did it. Was far-seeing. Seemed to have clever children—one more musical than you, and one could do sketches in country—not artist like, but could do sketches—some in existence now, in exercise book with broken corner. In this house, one of those bureaux with brass handles and things that pull out at the side—old-fashioned thing. Globe in this house too, like soda-water globe—like what they make soda water with. It is an indistinct house, very. Old lady got fur cloak, circular fur cloak, not evening wrap, but useful sort of cloak."

(7) Nelly. "Old lady can't see you, can't believe that you are here."

Mrs. V. "We often used to talk about such things; she was very interested in it."

Nelly. "She was not in this town—like farther away—where was most stupid old parson—one of those *stupid* old parsons! Was a square church, not a spire. (Pause.) If I could get her to realise you were here, she would talk freely. I don't worry you, do I?"

Mrs. V. "Oh, no."

Nelly. "I only want that lady to say something. She had basket like a knitting basket, that was like shape of canoe—handle there and there—and coloured band round it."

Mrs. V. "Yes, I have a sort of recollection of it, I can find out."

Nelly. "She wore cuffs, like bead cuffs, with beads on; not stout hand, but had cuff on, and then it was very nice. Shall you go to mother's house on 14th September?"

Mrs. V. "Don't know."

Nelly. "Think you'll be somewhere where you'll be able to go."

Mrs. V. "Very likely."

Nelly. "See picture of mother with velvet collar on—like sailor collar—

mother has no dress with velvet collar on." (This seemed to refer to what Mrs. Thompson would be wearing on September 14 when Mrs. Verrall went to see her.) "Bur—Bur—Burfield. No, Bertie. What do you say? Wants to know who told my mother that she was dead. Doesn't understand that mother isn't dead; she'll get to know. Some of the people seem to realise it instantly, but she doesn't. She knows Dr. Arthur Myers; he seems to be trying to explain to her."

*Mrs. V.* "She did know him."

*Nelly.* "She may get it more distinctly now. Lady got plain spectacle case with red marks on, not plain like Miss Johnson's."

(8) *Nelly.* "Mrs. Verrall, this old lady says she *did* give Helen a brooch."

*Mrs. V.* "Don't remember, but daresay she did."

*Nelly.* "Mrs. Verrall, you are going somewhere north, a norther place, north of Birmingham; you'll go there when you don't expect it; there will be hesitation. It will be before you go to abroad country."

(9) *Nelly.* "Have you got somebody in your house with sandy hair? Not like Lilian."

*Mrs. V.* "I was just thinking if it was like Lilian."

*Nelly.* "More goldified—redified—than mother, but not Lilian."

*Mrs. V.* "Hair down or up?"

*Nelly.* "Up—not dark."

*Mrs. V.* "Is it servant—with cap?"

*Nelly.* "No, not cap—wide hat; her hands are freckled."

(10) *Nelly.* "Can't tell you more about old lady. Have you got anything else?" (meaning another object).

*Mrs. V.* "I've got ring—it belonged to a French relation of mine—has been worn by other people."

*Nelly.* "Haven't you got anything to do with prim lady?"

*Mrs. V.* "No. I'm not sure who prim lady is; she had not to do with hair cross." (See Sitting 2, July 27.)

*Nelly.* "There was first prim lady and her associations; then Mrs. V.'s mother; prim lady is not your mother. To-day your mother."

*Mrs. V.* "There is lady connected with gray hair, but not prim."

*Nelly.* "She has preciseness—not Puritan."

*Mrs. V.* "I won't try to make out—will wait for you to tell me."

*Nelly.* "Sad association with the lady of the necklace all the same. I'm positive she'll come and make friends with mother, and tell you things through crystal. Before September 14th mother will write to Mr. Myers and tell him; there'll be demonstration about old lady, and that'll be cause that will bring you. It puzzles her because she didn't know mother—that makes difficulty. If it was through Mrs. Sidgwick (*i.e.* with Mrs. Sidgwick acting as medium), she'd know the form. That's what she promised to do. Will you come if you can to mother's house?"

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, certainly."

*Comments on the above account of Sitting 3.*

(1) When I thought over the statements of July 27th I came to the conclusion that at least two definite allusions had been made, to my French connexion and to my mother-in-law, and so I decided to take with me to the next sitting on July 28th objects representing both these. Nothing had been said about my bringing any fresh objects on the morning of July 28th. Just before going out to see Mrs. Thompson, I asked my daughter for the coral negligé which was given to her by her grandmother during the latter's last illness, and I took this in a bag. I also wore a ring which had been given by my French grandfather to his wife. I had my mind fixed on the idea that if the information of the sensitive were in any way derived from my mother-in-law she would be sure to think of Helen and her gift, so that the first remark of Nelly certainly bore directly upon my own thoughts, though the object which she mentioned was not correctly named.

(2) The statements concerning my child's clothes are true. My mother-in-law did not like the low-necked frocks which the baby wore, and used to pull up the under vest to cover the baby's bare neck. She also often half-laughingly remonstrated with me for not letting the child wear the usual woollen "bootikins." Helen always wore silk shoes and stockings, sometimes blue, but more often white.

My child had the usual round-backed high chair, but I have no recollection of any special cushion. I have no remembrance of my mother-in-law doing embroidery, though no doubt she did, like all her generation.

(3) There was no servant called Laura, nor can the French gentleman be identified. The town in question, Brighton, has very white roads, a constant source of annoyance to me, and so very distinctive to me of the town.

(4) There is a portrait of my mother-in-law, at her house in Brighton, which Mrs. Thompson has never entered. The dress is black, but in alternate stripes of velvet and satin, producing the effect of a pattern if one looks close. There is a lace collar, and the hair is parted and worn down. There is no chain in the picture, but my mother-in-law constantly wore a long fine gold chain, and I thought at the time that this was shown in the portrait. Helen has a similar, but less fine, gold chain worn by my mother, and shown in a portrait of her which is in my father's house.

(5) The curtains in my mother-in-law's bedroom were buff. Philip is not a name in either family. The general description that follows seems appropriate to my mother-in-law, especially the reference to the pleasure that her grandchild's "cleverness" would give her. No diaper or other pinafore was made by my mother-in-law for my child, as far as we can remember, but she did once give the child a Holland pinafore which the nurse thought clumsy and uncomfortable, and which was only worn when the giver was likely to see it.

(6) The general description of the lady is correct ; my husband used to sketch years ago, but no "exercise book" can be found. There are two bureaux in the room where my mother-in-law's portrait stands, but no globe. A gazogene globe stood for many years immediately below the portrait of my mother. My mother had a circular fur cloak.

(7) Nothing is known of a "stupid parson"; there was no canoe-shaped knitting basket, nor plaid spectacle case.<sup>1</sup> I have seen my mother-in-law wearing woollen cuffs with beads worked into them.

The difficulty in getting her to understand the situation, and the necessity that she should understand before acting, struck me as characteristic. So did the intervention of Dr. Arthur Myers ; I have often heard him explaining to my mother-in-law the work and aims of the S.P.R. and the effect of certain experiments.

I was in the country on September 14th, and did not see Mrs. Thompson again till October 5th ; she then wore no velvet or sailor collar. She had a sailor collar to a dress she was wearing the next autumn, 1900, at the sitting of September 14th ; this sitting was arranged at very short notice. A suggestion had been made by Nelly in May, 1900, that Miss Harrison and I should sit on September 9th, Miss H.'s birthday. This day proved to be a Sunday, and so the appointment was made for the nearest day, September 8th. Miss Harrison, however, was not back in England by this date, and I had a sitting (No. 18) with another sitter. I did not hear till after the 8th that Miss Harrison was returning on the 13th, and at once arranged for the first possible day, the 14th.

(8) Helen never had a brooch given her by my mother-in-law. I did not go "North" before my next journey "abroad," which was in June, 1900, nor have I been since.

(9) When Nelly spoke of some one with "sandy hair," I at once thought of a friend of my daughter's called Lilian, whom she had seen, and she at once added, "not like Lilian."

There was no one with reddish hair in my house on July 28th. But the next day, when I told my daughter what Nelly had said, she stated that she had been expecting a visit from a friend who answers to the description ; having reddish, sandy hair, worn up, under a wide hat, and freckled hands. The girl did not come to the house.

(10) For the "message," see below (notes on No. 5).

<sup>1</sup>A relative of Miss Johnson's who had recently died had possessed such a basket as here described ; also bead cuffs and a plaid spectacle case.

SITTING 4. OCTOBER 5TH, 1899.<sup>1</sup>

At Hampstead ; present, Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Verrall alone.

The notes were taken in pencil during the sitting, revised in the evening, and written out the next day. The words in round brackets ( ) were added on writing out, those in square brackets represent explanations or comments added later. Longer comments will be found after the record of the sitting.

(1) *Nelly*, after greeting me, said : " What do I talk to you about ?"—after a pause—" Helen's brooch." (Mrs. V. said she had brought a brooch received since seeing Nelly, of which she knew nothing but that it was old.)

*Nelly*. " Will describe before seeing."

Mrs. V. got up, took out [from bag] brooch in envelope folded down, held it while Nelly spoke.

*Nelly*. " There is a stone let in,—it is like an earring,—in the shape of an earring ; it is connected with the old lady (by this meaning Helen's grandmother). Give me the brooch."

Mrs. V. took brooch out of envelope and gave it.

*Nelly*. " There's hair in it—the lady that gave the brooch has got a Margaret ; I thought Helen had it."

Mrs. V. " No, it has been given since I saw you, given to Helen by an aunt."

*Nelly*. " Mrs. Sidgwick seems rather poorly ; you've brought an influence of Mrs. Sidgwick not being quite well to-day,—not ill. [Not correct.] The lady that gave the brooch has got a sore throat, a bad cold, either now, just now or shortly (will have). The lady of the brooch made an apron for the old lady, I see her embroidering it. Has Helen been painting lately ?—painting a head—in the hot weather,—something is the matter with her paints in the hot weather." [Not correct.]

Mrs. V. " I have not heard of it."

*Nelly*. " Ask Helen, she'll remember."

(2) *Nelly*. " A lady belonging to you had her breast taken off,—not a relation,—it was the left breast, then there was something underneath her arm (some further trouble, I understood). You didn't come on 12th September." [See Sitting 2.]

Mrs. V. " On the 14th, it was to be, but I was only to come if it were convenient, not on purpose, and I was in the country with my husband for his holiday."

*Nelly*. " Your husband has headache at the back of his head," touching her own head.

Mrs. V. " No, I think not."

<sup>1</sup> This was the least good of all the sittings in which I have taken part, and must not be regarded as a normal specimen. Mrs. Thompson was in great anxiety about a friend who had undergone a serious operation on the day of the sitting.



*Nelly.* "Perhaps he is going to. There's a dead clergyman belonging to him, lived more North than London. [Not identified.] Why does Mr Edmund Gurney come?"

*Mrs. V.* "I knew him."

*Nelly.* "He's standing behind you,—he's got a message for you." . . . Then slowly—"He says your work is to help Mr. Myers in unravelling the tangled skein he will give you."

Here Nelly reverted to my husband, asked why she kept thinking of him. I said he was much interested and would be glad to have something said that I did not know,—that could not be learnt by telepathy from me.

*Nelly.* "There's an old gentleman that stuttered, that your husband knew, with a James in his name,—an acquaintance." [Not identified.]

(3) *Nelly.* "The brooch like an earring is the brooch I saw [meaning at former sitting, No. 3]. The lady belonging to it is not married, she lives in a house, a country house, not a rich house, back from the road, it's got red stuff round the bed (I've been there before). They call you May, Mrs. Myers calls you May (mother has heard her, but it's not the truth), it is Margaret."

*Mrs. V.* "Yes, my name is Margaret."

*Nelly.* "There's one dead person who called you Margaret to your mother. I see you and Mother talking, and Dr. Hodgson comes in and speaks to you. [Not fulfilled.] There's another brooch very similar to this one. The lady of the brooch is fuller in the bust than you; she wears a muff with a cord. (Many people do that but) she lately looked at her muff—this is the lady that's got a Margaret."

*Mrs. V.* "I don't know which lady you mean. Do you mean the old lady? Is she the same as the lady of the brooch?"

Nelly said it was confusing and she was not clear herself, but the old lady said (here she spoke louder)—"that's Margaret, not May."

(4) Nelly gave me back the brooch and asked for something else if I had brought (anything). [I told her I had some letters, and got up to fetch them, They were in a plain envelope inside my bag which was lying on the table within sight. I was about to take them out of their envelope, when she said] "No, give me one, only, in the envelope." (I took out one without choosing and gave her the other, folded inside the envelope. She held it in her right hand, with some of her fingers inside the envelope. She made no attempt to take it out, and I watched closely, but could detect no attempt to look at the contents.)

*Nelly.* "I wish I was—"

*Mrs. V.* "I don't understand."

*Nelly.* "'I am sure'—that's in the letter. It is a lady's letter, she's not very well, not in good health when she wrote. I associate her with the old lady who was troubled about Helen's low frocks (see former sitting, 3, No. 2). There are lots of people trying to talk—there's a stained glass window in connexion with the lady."

*Mrs. V.* "I know nothing about that."

*Nelly.* "Ask the younger lady. The lady is interested in what I am telling you, but she did not believe it,—she got explanations for things like this,—she wondered from the Bible."

(Here I think I looked puzzled.) *Nelly* (said) emphatically that she was not religious, but it was not the idea of her life to make it the truth.

*Nelly.* "Yorkshire I seem to go to,—not in connexion with the letter, but with you, you and your husband go to Yorkshire or Lancashire."

(5) *Nelly.* "The old lady was misunderstood. She was really sympathetic, but did not show her feelings, was self-contained and misunderstood. The mother of the lady of the letter lived to be very old,—she had great interest in you. She was shorter than the lady of the letter."

(6) *Nelly.* "Margaret's husband looks older than he is—he's only a stamping (or stapling) over 40, but he looks more. He's talking with a gentleman who has told him of an accident."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you describe either of them?"

*Nelly.* "One gentleman has a black beard. There's an upset at one of the colleges—a big one, every one will talk—a misfortune or a scandal—something is going to happen."

(7) *Nelly.* "I think of gas and a dentist, it's connected with the lady of the letter—she went with you or you with her (to a dentist). I see you waiting in a room looking into the street. The letter has been in a drawer on the left hand side." [Correct.]

(8) *Nelly.* "Tri-pos"—(this was said slowly in two divisions). "Do you know what that means?"

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly.* "It's something about Helen. She's going to have one."

*Mrs. V.* "Very likely, but not yet."

*Nelly.* "The old lady will be proud when she sees Helen with it. It's a kind of examination, same as you, but it's a bit larger and brighter than you."

*Mrs. V.* "Which old lady?"

*Nelly.* "Helen's Greeks or Greece—do you understand?"

*Mrs. V.* "Yes."

*Nelly.* "—must not be overdone. Helen's rather enthusiastic, because it's fresh. Helen's grandmother wants to see your husband alone. (Let him come but) don't let mother know it's Mr. Verrall."

(9) *Nelly.* "Mr. Gurney says that everything has to be arranged beforehand, and if Henry were to hear him talk, he would be convinced."

*Mrs. V.* "Who would be convinced and who is to talk?"

*Nelly.* "Henry would be convinced (if he heard the old lady talk) and that would convince your husband. The old lady could tell Henry better. You see the actual belonging is better than when it's married. Henry belongs"

[these two words] with great emphasis. "Don't laugh, but I think of apple dumplings with the lady of the letter."

*Mrs. V.* "Can you tell me who all these ladies are?"

*Nelly* (with great decision). "The lady of the letter is the lady of the velvet boots—quite distinct from the grandmother who did not like the low necks. The brooch belongs to Helen's grandmother, Henry belongs to her."

*Comment on above account of Sitting 4.*

(1) I took with me to this sitting a brooch that had recently been given to my daughter by an aunt, the daughter of the "grandmother" who had been said in Sitting 3 to have given a brooch. The brooch was of an old-fashioned design, and had, I knew, come from some other owner to the aunt, but neither my daughter nor I knew who that previous owner was. The brooch is in the shape of a gold knot and pendant locket, with blue enamel and pearl, and there is hair in the pendant. At the time of the sitting I knew that my daughter and a cousin had been given this brooch and a ring by their aunt, and that the cousin, being the elder, had chosen the ring.

It will be seen that Nelly gave a correct description of the brooch before she saw it, while I held it in a folded envelope; there is a stone set in, and the brooch is in the shape of an earring.

The "lady of the brooch" is too indefinite a phrase for identification; it might describe (1) the aunt who gave it, (2) the lady from whom she received it. This lady who, as I subsequently found, was not a relative, has been dead some years. The giver of the brooch had had no recent sore throat.

For further remarks about the brooch, see below on 3.

(2) A friend of mine, not a relative, had had the operation described in the summer of 1899. I did not at the time know which side had been operated on, but found on enquiry that it was the left. She had made a very fair recovery at the time of the sitting, but there has been further trouble since.<sup>1</sup>

(3) For the red stuff round the bed, see comment on Sitting 3.

My name is Margaret, and I always use Margaret in my signature, but no one calls me by that name. My grandmother (father's mother) used to call me "Margaret" to me and to my mother, as she thought the name "May" foolish.

When I told my daughter of Nelly's statement about the similar brooch she said that was so, and that the reason why the cousin chose the ring and not the brooch was that she already possessed a brooch in design precisely like the one in question, but with garnets for its decoration. The brooch has no connexion with any member of our family.

<sup>1</sup>For obvious reasons I am unable to give details here, but I may state that the subject was introduced again at the next sitting by Nelly, in connexion with the name of a lady who is a common friend of myself and the lady who had been ill, and that on this occasion Nelly repeated the suggestion of further suffering, and coupled it with a Christian name, closely resembling that of the invalid lady.

(4) The two letters which I had taken were from my mother to me, dated 20th and 23rd October, 1876. They were selected by me on the day before the sitting, from a packet of letters kept in a cardboard box in my husband's study. The particular parcel from which these letters came had been in the box only a few hours; since 1894 they had been in the left-hand drawer of my table in the study, and before that for many years they had been in an old-fashioned writing desk. I selected these two out of several of about the same date, written by my mother on her return to Brighton from Cambridge in October, 1876. She was not well at Cambridge, and was ill when she reached home. I did not know which of the two letters I had given to Mrs. Thompson.

Thus it is true that the lady who wrote was not in good health; the only allusion to the writer's health was in the inner pages, which Mrs. Thompson could not possibly have seen.

The words "I am sure" occur in the letter, on the outside sheet, at the bottom of the envelope, upside down. They must have been touched by Mrs. Thompson's fingers, but they could not have been seen unless the envelope had been partly opened. I saw no attempt to do this, and she certainly did not bring the envelope near her other hand.

The remarks about the "lady" are unintelligible, and I do not know to what lady they were supposed to apply.

My husband and I have not been to Yorkshire or Lancashire since 1896.

(5) My mother's mother was, I think, 87 when she died. She lived in the house with us as children and was very fond of us. She was less tall than my mother.

(6) My husband was 48. Nothing is known of the misfortune or scandal; my husband had no talk with any friend during the sitting.

(7) Naturally my mother accompanied me to a dentist more than once during my childhood.

(8) It was not true that Greek was fresh to my daughter. She was learning a new subject, but it was not Greek (see *Sitting 2, No. 2*).

(9) Henry is the name of my husband's father. There seems here a confusion between my mother and my mother-in-law. Nelly seemed to think that Henry was more closely connected with the lady than was my husband, but yet, on being asked to distinguish, she rightly separated the lady of the velvet boots (my mother) from the other grandmother who did not like the low frocks, to whom she assigned the brooch (see *Sittings 2 and 3*), and to whom Henry "belongs."

#### 5 AND 6. MESSAGES CONNECTED WITH SITTINGS.

(5) October 10, 1899.—Message heard by Mrs. Thompson when holding a shell to her ear, and sent by her to one of her sitters, who sent it on to me. The message was sent by Mrs. Thompson on October 10, 1899.



“Tell Mrs. Verrall the old lady who was cross about Helen’s low-necked frocks and sleeves tied up is just like Arthur Willgar—that means she cannot believe I am really telling through my mother things belonging to our house, but I am going to work very hard to make her understand, then Mr. Willgar will understand too—he does understand worse difficulties ; the old lady says she will try to know about it.”

(6) October 20, 1899.—Note of statement made by Nelly in a sitting on October 20 when I was not present, and sent to me by the siter on October 21, 1899.

Nelly says (not *à propos* of Mrs. Verrall):

“Arthur Willgar has a dark beard—not healthy looking—a bit livery under the eyes—I see him walking on the old Chain Pier at Brighton shortly before it was blown away. I don’t think he’s married, but he has a Helen belonging to him.”

*Comment on above account of Messages 5 and 6.*

The lady in question, my husband’s mother (see earlier sittings), had been a Miss Woollgar ; my husband’s baptismal names are Arthur Woollgar. The description given is correct. The old chain pier at Brighton is close to my father-in-law’s house, and my husband has often been on it : it is one of his most marked associations with Brighton.

This is the first appearance of my husband’s names, and of Brighton in connexion with him. The error in the second name (Willgar for Woollgar) is rather that of imperfect hearing than of imperfect vision ; it may be noted in this connexion that the message was said by Mrs. Thompson to have been heard in a shell. Nelly continued throughout to use the wrong pronunciation, Willgar.

SITTING 7. NOVEMBER 2ND, 1899.

At Hampstead ; present, Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Verrall alone. Notes as for Sitting 4.

*Nelly.* “Have you brought a letter ?”

*Mrs. V.* “No.”

(Mrs. V. gave a glove.)

(1) *Nelly.* “This belongs to a gentleman with a Mary Elizabeth. Mary Elizabeth knew him as a little boy. This gentleman is not so well the last week or two. He used to ride a bicycle when it was high, now he rides it when it is low. When on the high bicycle he had an accident to his shoulder.”

*Mrs. V.* “Which shoulder ?”

*Nelly.* “It was not broken ; it was, I think, the left shoulder. He fell on it. He wore a Tam o’ Shanter hat or a round cap, not a cap with a peak (on the high bicycle).

“Is it Mary or Marian ? They say Mary Elizabeth. The glove belongs



to a man who writes books more than he ought ; let his mind have a rest. He has a Henry,—not his son”—said as if puzzled—“but he says ‘My son Henry.’ I don’t know. Under his eyes he’s a bit ringy, this last week or two. He’s like as if a Greek man ; yet he seems English. If he were not English, he would be Greek. He seems not to preach, but like preaching ; he doesn’t preach, but he preaches too much ; he preaches in black but not in white”—mysteriously, “There’s something *wrong with his health*<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Cartwright said : I don’t like his health if his name is Willgar.”

Mrs. V. ‘How do you spell Willgar?’”

Nelly. “W-I-L-L-G-A-R. He has not had outdoor exercise enough lately ; his work is not bad for him, if he could take exercise. He will perhaps be deaf. Mrs. Cartwright sends all this, says every word ; she feels sure that he will be a little deaf, he will not lose his eyesight, but slight deafness, that failure will be his weakness. He used to be fond of boating. Not at Cambridge, but on rough water ; it was not a hobby. He writes not interesting books, books that they can’t do without, but not to give people at Christmas. He knows Mr. Edmund Gurney.”

Mrs. V. “Yes.”

Nelly. “He met him not at Cambridge, somewhere besides Cambridge. Mr. Willgar is at Cambridge now ; I see him in a room with wooden walls, not paper, with red dining-room chairs in it, in a big church place, with red chairs and oak in it.”

(2) Nelly. “Merrifield, Merriman, Merrythought, Merrifield ; there was an old lady named one of those, that did not believe any more than Mr. Willgar. She loves you, she is in your surroundings, but wants to convince Mr. Willgar. I can’t see that he’s married, but he’s got a Helen.”

(3) Nelly. “There’s a little boy at our house, he would have been about eleven, he’s a bit larger than Rosie, he never talked, he’s dead with you, but he’s not dead in our world. Little Arthur, he’s not got a name, I call him that. Mrs. Cartwright says : ‘He’s a little Arthur.’”

(4) Nelly. “Mr. Willgar has a very dark grey overcoat, I think there’s a ticket not given up in the pocket of the overcoat. You go and knock at his door and ask ; tell him you are a S.P.R. researcher and he’ll excuse it. There’s a Margaret belonging to him. Margaret has got a Henry, not a son, wait” . . .—after a pause—“Margaret belongs to a man that has got a Henry. Mr. Willgar’s name,—it is not Professor Barrett, but it seems as if it had the same sort of letters as Professor Barrett. There’s an old gentleman, an old lawyer gentleman, belongs to Mr. Willgar. He’s very old now.”

Mrs. V. “Is he in your house ?”

Nelly. “No [with great emphasis], quite alive. He’s not a lawyer that wraps up paper”—(here she went through the action of) rolling papers together—“and has a wig on. Have you brought something of Helen’s ?”

<sup>1</sup> A particular organ was mentioned as “wrong” ; this is not correct.

Mrs. V. "No, I have brought nothing but the glove."

Nelly. "I heard you tell mother she wasn't very well, I was not far off. Mr. Willgar has got somebody belonging to him who had an operation . . ." (Digression, omitted from report.) "Mr. Willgar's not going to be ill; there's a leather couch like a sofa in the room where he works, I am sure something will come to his *health*<sup>1</sup> if he does not lie down more. He will laugh when you tell him about his *health*.<sup>1</sup>"

Mrs. V. "Yes, I think he will."

Nelly. "He is not to laugh about it. He has dark whiskers and beard, his face is rather pale, a creamy colour, his hair is brushed up, like this."

(Here she pushed her hair back from her forehead, saying, "Back off the brow," by which I understood her to mean that the hair was not brushed erect.)

Nelly. "He's not a man with a large love for outside people; he's satisfied with his own people; not keen on relations, not a great man for looking up his relations, he would rather have a good strong book than people to talk."

Mrs. V. "Can you tell me about him when he was younger, or about his friends?"

Nelly. "He used to be at the seaside, this Mr. Willgar. It is funny for the seaside, it looks such a 'house-ified' place, it's an ungreen seaside. When he was there it was a fishing place, not like a nigger seaside; it seems to have developed. He was associated with Worthing when he was a very young boy, he had cause to go there. The ungreen seaside place is not Worthing. He used to see some one at Worthing. There's an old Mary belonging to him."

Mrs. V. "In your house or ours?"

Nelly. "In our house, a dead lady. She died at a seaside place. She had a thin neck, the lady was rather stout, she shows me her neck. She wore Honiton lace collars. Henry comes with everybody, he comes with this old lady. With that old lady I get Mary Gloucester. Mr. Willgar is not fifty yet, perhaps he will not laugh so much at the *health trouble*<sup>1</sup> when he is fifty."

(5) Mrs. V. "Have you anything to tell me about Helen's grandmother? She promised to communicate if she could."

Nelly. "I said you were coming at two, she would communicate if she could. I have not seen her. Mrs. Merrythought, that's not quite right, it's like the name of a garden."

Mrs. V. "I know the name you mean, but I won't tell you."

Nelly. "Think of it and see if I can find it."

(I fixed my attention on the name Merrifield; after a minute Nelly said:)

Nelly. "No, I am muddled. I will tell you how names come to us. It's like a picture, I see school children enjoying themselves; you can't say Merrymans, because that's not a name, nor Merry people. Mr. Willgar's got no brothers that I can see, he has a sister; she ought to be married, she's

<sup>1</sup> See previous Note.

quite large enough. But what would the poor old lawyer do? Have you come for nothing, all this way to Mother's house?"

Mrs. V. "No, everything that you have said is right."

Nelly. "I see Mr. Willgar in a big church preaching a service for men only. He's got a voice more powerful than his physique; his voice is very telling, it is heard quite at the back of the room. [Correct.] You invite Mr. Willgar to come (at my own house) [where Mrs. Thompson was coming to stay], old Mary might like to talk. There's rather a breathing,"—(she touched her side; I understood her to be) referring to "old Mary."

(6) Nelly. "Now this is not for Mr. Willgar, but for you. I see you doing something with a lot of papers, thinking it over, not correcting examination papers, it's something for yourself. It's a large bundle, you turned it over."

[Here followed some statements, which I here omit; the statements were in the main correct; some referred to the lady who had had an operation as described above, Sitting 4, No. 2].

(7) Nelly. "Mother said, Don't you tell Mrs. Verrall she's got a sister Flora, because it's in the book to-day; Mother saw it." [Digression on the subject of the death watch.]

Mrs. V. "Can you tell me something else about my sister, besides her name?"

Nelly. "She is not married; she lives in a country house—not in Cambridge, further from London than Cambridge is. I can't tell you any more. Put away the glove, don't let Mother see it. Flora gave you a bag for your birthday, it's greener than that one." (I had [brought the glove in] a leather bag.) "It's not green, it's a small bag, a little pocket outside, a little handkerchief bag. You had an uncle that died. It was not long after that. You have got a servant with fair hair [not correct]; she's not been well in her head, not mad, but lackadaisical, limp [not correct]. Oh! I am talking nonsense—I had better go."

*Comment on Sitting 7.*

(1) To this sitting I brought nothing but a glove of my husband's; I was anxious to see whether Nelly would be able (1) to give information about the owner, (2) to identify him as my husband, (3) to identify him as the "Arthur Willgar" of the above messages. My husband had two aunts called Mary and Elizabeth; his younger sister was called after them, but the name Marian was given instead of Mary, as there were other Marys in the family. This lady is a member of the S.P.R., and her initials M. E., but not her full name, appear in the list of members and associates.

It is true that my husband rode a high bicycle from about 1877 to 1883, very seldom after his marriage in 1882. He also rode a low bicycle from about 1894 to 1900. So far as he knows, he never had an accident to his shoulder when bicycling, but in July, 1899, 4 months before this sitting, a doctor treating him for rheumatism said that there had been an old strain

to one of his shoulders, probably due to an accident, perhaps a fall. My husband had mentioned this to me, but neither of us could recall any accident. I did not at the time of the sitting know which shoulder showed the old strain; my husband is not sure, but thinks it was the right.

Nothing is known of the cap described.

Henry is the name of my husband's father (see note on Sitting 4, No. 9). My husband lectures on classical subjects at Cambridge, and wears of course a black gown; he was suffering from rheumatism at the time of the sitting, and exercise was naturally a difficulty. He has never been fond of boating, he does write books, and he did know Mr. Gurney, not only at Cambridge; he used to see him at Brighton as well as at Cambridge, and stayed with him in Ireland at the house of a common friend.

The description of the room with wooden walls, etc., suggests the hall at Trinity, which is shown to visitors, and is likely to have been seen by Mrs. Thompson when she stayed in Cambridge in July, 1899.

(2) My unmarried name was Merrifield; my mother was not interested in the work of the S.P.R.

Helen is the name of our only child; it will be seen that the name of Willgar has been used of the owner of the glove, and that he is seen to be connected with my maiden name, unknown as far as I know to Mrs. Thompson, and with my child's Christian name, certainly known to Mrs. Thompson.

(3) My second child, a girl, was born in September, 1888, and would therefore have been eleven years old. She died before learning to speak. It may be of interest in this connexion to note that an aunt of my husband's—who seems to be referred to later in this sitting (see below, No. 4)—always spoke of the nephews' children by their father's name as "little Arthurs," "little Toms," etc.

(4) My husband had a dark gray overcoat, but there was no ticket in the pocket when I looked on my return to Cambridge.

These remarks seem to show a further step in the identification of "Mr. Willgar." My name is Margaret; and Verrall and Barrett are certainly names of analogous type. My husband's father Henry is a solicitor. He was 82 at the time of the sitting, and still holding the office of Clerk to the Magistrates.

The remark about my daughter's health had been made by me to Mrs. Thompson during lunch.

There is in my husband's study a couch, of leather stretched on a wooden framework, with stuffed cushions over it. Mrs. Thompson had never been in my house; she entered it for the first time on December 4th, 1899, when she came to stay with me.

The general description seems appropriate. Brighton has developed greatly within my husband's recollection. He has no associations with Worthing. An aunt, Mary, a stout lady, lived at Gloucester Place, Brighton, when he was a child. This lady is dead.

(5) My husband has two unmarried sisters living with his father. Here appears the definite recognition that the old lawyer Henry is "Mr. Willgar's" father.

(6) I had been occupied during two or three days before going to town for the sitting in correcting for press the proofs of a book.

(7) By the "book," Nelly meant the S.P.R. *Journal* for November, which contained an account by me of a hallucinatory ticking, in which my sister's name was mentioned.

My sister is unmarried, and lives in Brighton.

When Nelly spoke of a bag, I tried to remember what bags I had. The first suggested was a small yellowish or greenish cloth workbag, which was the last birthday present given me by my mother, and had been bought by my sister as my mother could not go out: the only other small bag is a little leather handbag left in my house by a cousin of mine and annexed by me. My uncle, this cousin's father, the only uncle I have known, died 15 or 16 years ago.



## SUPPLEMENT.

## REVIEWS.

*Nouvelles Observations sur un cas de Somnambulisme avec glossolalie.* By TH. FLOURNOY (Extrait des *Archives de Psychologie de la Suisse Romande*, Vol. I., No. 2, p. 101-255, Geneva, 1902.)

The readers of these *Proceedings* will remember the account which Mr. Myers gave in Part XXXVIII. (Vol. xv., pp. 395-415) of a remarkable case of "Pseudo-possession," to wit, the observations by Professor Flournoy on the mediumship of "Mlle. Helène Smith" in his book *Des Indes à la planète Mars*. The present article is the continuation of the observations there given, and indeed, as far as Professor Flournoy is concerned, probably its conclusion. For the great success of his book directed so much attention to "Mlle. Smith" that a wealthy American lady came to see her, was convinced of the spiritist interpretation of her phenomena, and endowed her so generously that she can now devote herself entirely to the cultivation of her psychic gifts. The example thus set is a notable one and may perhaps be found to indicate the right solution of the difficult problem of how to extend social support to the curious personalities, whom, for lack of a better name, we call "mediums" or "psychics." That in the abstract they deserve such support may be admitted. They are exceedingly rare, rarer probably than opera singers. And they are psychologically very interesting, more so perhaps than psychology professors, who at all events are common enough. If then we endow psychologists, why should we not endow "mediums" for them to study? That the current methods of paying them, practically "by results," are crude and unsatisfactory is admitted on all hands. They maximize the temptations to fraud and overwork, and minimize the opportunities for systematic study. Nor can any real advancement be hoped for from unpaid amateurs. For amateur work, though it may be good enough to start with, also puts obstacles of its own in the experimenter's way and is too capricious and inefficient to serve in the long run. Hence it will be interesting to watch the effect of the experiment made with "Mlle. Smith."

Not that too much must be expected of a first experiment. Indeed the auguries are not all favourable scientifically. For apparently one of the results of the improvement in "Mlle. Smith's" position has been a com-

plete rupture with Professor Flournoy. The publication of his book, he tells us, severely strained their relations, partly because "Mlle. Smith" then for the first time realized how completely the case for a spiritist interpretation of her phenomena was explained away by the professor, and partly because she conceived herself to be "insulted" by the ordinary ignorance and flippancy of the newspaper reviews. In view of the fact that only Professor Flournoy's strong testimony to her integrity rendered remarkable many of her performances which could easily have been simulated by fraud, the critics' insinuations should not, perhaps, have been regarded as unnatural. When, however, "Mlle. Smith" realized that these were only the drawbacks to fame, this phase of estrangement seems to have worn off. Then came her benefactress and carried her over wholly into the spiritist camp.

Now that personally a medium should prefer the spiritist interpretation is natural enough. It is ever so much more flattering to be regarded as communicating with the spirits of the departed than to be considered subject to fits of "sommambulism with glossolaly." And in "Mlle. Smith's" case the spiritist interpretation was unusually romantic. To reduce the ex-Ranee *Simandini* of Chandraghiri, the ex-Queen of France, the *protégée* of discarnate Cagliostro, the recipient of telepathic communications from trusty correspondents throughout the solar system, to a mere dreamer of dreams constructed by an ill-regulated sub-consciousness must be painful to the least sensitive vanity, and it is not in the least surprising that Professor Flournoy should have to confess (p. 115) that "Mlle. Smith" is now "profoundly irritated against science and the scientists and only desires to have nothing more to do with professors." Similar feelings are widely spread among spiritists and even among the general public, and their growth is not wholly unreasonable. But "Mlle. Smith" would nevertheless do well to remember that there are professors and professors, and that in M. Flournoy she has had to do with one of the most sincere and open-minded of the tribe. She should remember also that her own fame and importance in the world at large rest almost wholly upon his testimony, and that there is nothing to show that her present friends are willing or able to keep such a record of her performances as will have the slightest influence on the judgment of reasonable men.

At present, then, the case stands and falls with Professor Flournoy's account of it, even though it is professedly more imperfect as a record of her later developments than of her earlier exhibitions. Judging by the material which was accessible to him, Professor Flournoy decides that nothing substantially new has been produced, and (charitably) supposes that this may have been due to the influence of his own "suggestion" and that in different surroundings "Mlle. Smith's" mediumship may develop in new directions. Consequently his chapters on "Leopold" the "spirit-guide," on the "planetary" languages, on the Indian pre-existence, and on the "royal cycle" are composed of replies to criticisms and supplementary chronicles and explanations.

To take these remarks in order. In the chapter on "Leopold," Professor Flournoy relates several further instances of useful warnings, which he interprets as sub-conscious inferences, and so long as it is impossible to assign any limits to the powers of this subliminal consciousness, it is clear that nothing of this sort, however surprising, can be affirmed to lie beyond their scope.

Under the head of planetary wanderings, there seems at first more to mention. Professor Flournoy quotes extensively from the elaborate philological study of the "Martian" (pseudo-) language by Professor Victor Henry of Paris, which gives a (conjectural) derivation of almost the whole of its vocabulary. "Ultramartian," which had just begun to appear in *Des Indes*, has received a further development. Professor Flournoy gives specimens not only of the language (distinguished by the preponderance of K and P and T), but of the writing (composed of ideograms—in accordance with the backward condition of this ill-starred planet), and of the scenery. These latter illustrations appeal not only to the eye, but also to the sense of the ludicrous (especially the "Ultramartian" sheep (dog?) on p. 160), but on the whole these pictures are simply childish. In addition we are afforded a glimpse of "Uranian" (language and script), which is remarkable for its preference for A, O, L and T, and hear rumours of several "Lunar" languages—as to the authenticity of which Mr. H. G. Wells does not yet seem to have been consulted.

The new material with regard to the Hindu pre-existence of "Mlle. Smith" consists almost wholly of descriptions of visions, and adds nothing verifiable to the historical data previously given. On the other hand, the internal contradictions of the story, regarded as history, come into stronger relief. Thus the Sanscrit experts all agree that the trance-utterances are solely Sanscrit imperfectly reproduced, but without admixture of other tongues; that Indian women, neither at the time alleged (1401) nor at any other, spoke Sanscrit; that the language of the place alleged (Kanara) was, and is, Dravidian, and utterly different from Sanscrit; that it is incredible that a Mussulman Arab chief would marry his daughter to a Hindu prince practising suttee. And Professor Macdonell's acute remark that the phrases attributed to *Simandini* looked very like examples from a Sanscrit grammar, looks rather lurid in the light of the discovery (p. 212) that one of the spiritist friends of "Mlle. Smith," in whose study she often gave séances, had in this very room a Sanscrit grammar containing some of the most characteristic words used by "Mlle. Smith"! As against all this, the apparent authenticity of the Hindu song (*Des Indes*, p. 301-2) can hardly be said to weigh seriously.

Of the "Royal Cycle," Professor Flournoy is not able to give many additional rehearsals, although he has heard that when "Mlle. Smith" was taken to Paris, "reminiscences" of her life as Marie-Antoinette came upon her with great force. An episode which he does describe, with the "control" by Dr. Barthez, the physician of the Duc d'Orléans (*not* of Philippe-Egalité, however, but of his father), seems to suffer from serious

historical anachronisms, and there is no similarity between his authentic handwriting and that produced by "Mlle. Smith."

Some further remarks on the Burnier-Chaumontet signatures, which in their way seemed perhaps the most striking evidence in favour of a spiritist interpretation produced by "Mlle. Smith," tend considerably to diminish the difficulty of explaining them by latent memory, while there has been no multiplication of similar feats to tell on the other side.

On the whole, therefore, it is not surprising that Professor Flournoy should find that he has nothing to retract and little to add to his previously-expressed judgment on his subject, and that he continues to regard the case of "Mlle. Smith" as decidedly on a lower plane of scientific interest from those of Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Thompson (p. 252). Adherents of the S.P.R. will read with pleasure and approval his concluding remarks (p. 254) on the deplorable chasm which exists between the "orthodox" psychologists, who are devoid of interest in supernormal phenomena, and the enthusiasts who have the desire to know, but are devoid of all scientific method, and on the services of the S.P.R. in attempting to bridge this chasm.

## II.

I have so far aimed only at reproducing Professor Flournoy's conclusions concerning what all who are interested in Psychological Research must feel he has, by his care, lucidity and candour, made an epoch-making case. But for this very reason it seems appropriate to improve the occasion to discuss, by way of criticism, or perhaps in lieu thereof, some of the general issues he has raised.

(1) In the first place there is the question of whether he did well to reject the spiritist interpretation so decisively. It is not that I would dispute that on the evidence of this case he is fully entitled to do so. But the history of science is full of examples of incompatible theories, each of which, in the given state of knowledge, seemed to supply alternative explanations of the facts of nearly equal value. And though in his last chapter Professor Flournoy shows that he possesses the true logical doctrine with regard to the investigation of anomalous facts, one sometimes feels that somewhat less confidence in hazarding anti-spiritist explanations would not have been unbecoming. He sometimes seems almost to forget what a big hypothesis, what an *asylum ignorantiae*, the subliminal consciousness still is. I cannot feel that there is so much to choose between it and spiritism as Professor Flournoy supposes. He regards the latter as an explanation *ignoti per ignotius* (p. 130)—as indeed it has often been taken to be, not only by spiritists. But in reality the appeal to spirits, though it may be perverted into a pseudo-explanation, is intrinsically an appeal to personal beings with motives and minds acting analogously to our own and *pro tanto* knowable, and calculated, roughly, to render knowable the phenomena it deals with, while as soon as we sink below the level of clear consciousness, we enter a land of darkness where all analogies



fail us and where anything may happen. This has always been the secret reason why academic psychology has fought so shy of anything that savours of the "unconscious": and so, if I were an "orthodox" psychologist, I should find it hard to choose between two equally distasteful theories. But I am sure that a "subliminal self" capable of the astounding retentiveness and marvellous creativeness which Professor Flournoy demands for "Mlle. Smith's" would be quite as efficient in destroying my "dogmatic torpor" as the boldest extravagances of spiritism. But as I do not feel pledged to the glib application of a few trite psychological formulas as the *a priori* explanation of all the facts that await investigation, I prefer to preserve an open mind with regard to any explanation that may be propounded, and to leave myself free to hold that the truth will probably turn out to be far greater and more complicated than is as yet anticipated by the rival theorists. In other words, there does not seem to be any pressing need at present to come to a decision; we may hold any theory of these perplexing phenomena, if we do so in a tentative and methodological sense, and may use the rivalry of the conflicting theories with a view to sharpening our observation of the facts.

(2) And this brings me to my second point, viz., whether Professor Flournoy has done full justice to the methodological advantages of spiritism as a working theory. The present case seems to show that the triumph of the scientific explanation (allowing the subconscious self theory to be *more* scientific) can be overdone in practice. For it is evidently a mistake to alienate one's subject, and it is conceivable (though not perhaps very probable) that if Professor Flournoy had contented himself with a less complete "explanation" of "Mlle. Smith's" performances, he might still be permitted to observe her developments. But quite apart from such personal questions, it seems possible that the spiritist interpretation is *per se* more stimulating and encouraging, and therefore more likely to bring out the full powers of the "medium." It is naturally depressing to be told that you are an ill-balanced person, whose normal life is perturbed by irruptions of subliminal abnormality; it is inspiring to hold that you are a chosen channel of communication with other worlds. Whatever, therefore, the nature of the phenomena may ultimately turn out to be, it seems probable that the latter interpretation will make the most of them, and will actually produce more of them; and this would seem to be one of the elements of truth in the constant insistence on "faith" as a condition of success in such investigations.

Translated from the concrete into terms of abstract logic, the point indicated seems to be the possibility of a divergence between the methods of *proof* and of *discovery*. Proof consists in the progressive assimilation of the new truth by the old, in the establishment of their connexion and systematic coherence. But it does not follow that we shall also *discover* most by always insisting on this, and by never advancing beyond what can be strictly "proved." The discoverer, in other sciences as well as in geography, may have to be like an explorer of a *terra incognita*, who must push ahead by



whatever means are handy. In so doing, he doubtless must run risks and often cut himself adrift from his base in established principles. He has "faith," of course, that his communications can ultimately be restored, but his proximate aim is the discovery of novelty, and not its digestion. He should be more solicitous, therefore, not to let anything new escape him, than to secure his retreat into the cosmos which science has already set up. In this manner, then, it may be methodologically expedient to use hypotheses whose ultimate validity may appear very doubtful. Whether, on that account, "Mlle. Smith" will do better under exclusively spiritist auspices remains to be seen. For while the "faith" of her spiritist friends in the possibility of obtaining the sort of evidence they demand may render its production possible, by stimulating the medium, or in other as yet unknown ways, no amount of "faith" can by itself be a substitute for trustworthy recording and intelligent experimentation, and it seems too probable that the opportunities of obtaining further instruction from "Mlle. Smith" will be thrown away, unless she comes once more under the supervision of a sympathetic expert of the type, say, of Dr. Hodgson.

(3) The next issue to raise is perhaps that of whether, in point of fact, Professor Flournoy has *completely* explained "Mlle. Smith's" case on his theory. He appears to think that he has, and with two reservations I should agree with him. The first reservation, as I have already indicated, is that the facts are at present in such a condition that, like every growing science, *Psychical Research* admits of a good deal of indetermination, and a number of theories may apparently cover the facts, while nevertheless, they may all be wrong or very partially right. The second is that even though "Mlle. Smith's" performances are all built up out of her (subliminal) memories, yet the construction out of these of coherent "dreams" requires a principle of *selection*.<sup>1</sup> No doubt we are all *familiar* with the operation of such a principle in ordinary dreams; but then the psychology of dreams stands itself badly in need of an elucidation which it would, no doubt, long ago have received but for the psychologists' horror of what seemed abnormal and of no great practical importance. And it is further remarkable that this "selecting principle" should always mimic with such extraordinary closeness "proofs" of spiritism (and in this case of reincarnation). This one might be tempted to explain as due to the greater interest of the spiritist interpretation alluded to above, were it not that the phenomenon persistently occurs also in cases where the "medium" rejects that interpretation.<sup>2</sup> If I were concerned, therefore, to bolster up the spiritist view, I should suggest that the facts looked as though an intelligence were at work that was desirous of conveying the impression of coming from another world, but yet, as a rule, found itself unable to express anything but what had once passed

<sup>1</sup> Professor Flournoy just touches on this difficulty (top of p. 243).

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* in Mrs. Piper's case, and in a case of automatic writing in which my brother, Mr. F. N. Schiller, acted as "medium."—See *Proceedings*, vol. iv., p. 216.

through the medium's mind, and therefore was reduced to ransacking it for the most improbable and recondite memories, in order to simulate an extramundane origin. And such a procedure might perhaps even be made to seem pardonable and psychologically plausible in a "spirit" seeking to express its continued identity under the restrictions of an alien organism.

(4) And this again suggests the final reflection that very little has really been done in the spiritist camp in the way of psychological elaboration of their working principle. One cannot read Professor Flournoy's replies to the spiritist criticisms of his book without being greatly struck by the argumentative weakness of the latter.

The fact seems to be that spiritists as yet have hardly a notion of the resources which modern psychology and philosophy may yield them for the defence of their favourite thesis, and do not realize how hollow is the ground on which the "scientific" materialism of their opponents stands. Materialism has the support (broadly) of our existing academic *personnel*, of the customary ways of common-sense, and of the inertia which shrinks from translating speculation into experimentation. But all these things are capable of being altered, if a really strong and genuine desire to know can be aroused with regard to these subjects.

But when it is and when the spiritist theory is advocated by one who really knows where the land lies, it is safe to say that no one will be blind to the absurdity of taking "Mlle. Smith's" "planetary" excursions literally. For the notion of a relation between our world and an "other," which should take the form of one in physical space (*i.e.* in the space of *our* world), will then be seen to possess precisely the same crudeness as the ancients' fancy, that by descending the crater of Avernus one might go straight to the house of Hades, and that by sailing westwards beyond the Pillars of Hercules one might reach the Islands of the Blest.

From the very nature of the case, the relation between two worlds (*i.e.* modes of experience) must be of a psychological order. The alleged "other" world cannot lie north, east, west, or south of ours. It must be a state of consciousness, or a mode of experience, into which we pass from that constituting our "world," and from which we can, perhaps, re-pass. In comprehending its relation to ours, therefore, the guiding analogies must be psychological. In other words, the relation must be conceived as analogous to that of a "dream" world to a "real" world,—without, of course, pre-judging the question of which is to be regarded as the "reality" and which as the "dream." That question can only be decided by the comparison of the contents of the two "worlds," and (since we *ex hypothesi* start from our world) by the *value* of the revelations of the "other" world for our life. Judged by such canons, the grotesque and unmeaning childishness of "Mlle. Smith's" planetary dreams will at once settle their interpretation, and dispose of them without any superfluous censure of the poverty of scientific imagination and the obvious scientific ignorance which they display.

F. C. S. SCHILLER.

*Fact and Fable in Psychology.* BY JOSEPH JASTROW, Professor of Psychology in the University of Wisconsin. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston and New York, 1900.)

Professor Jastrow's book is a collection of popular essays upon a variety of psychological topics. Many of them were written a number of years ago, and are now reprinted from the various magazines in which they first saw the light.<sup>1</sup> Most of the essays, we are told, have been submitted to a critical revision, and brought as far as possible up to date. Two essays to which we will mainly devote our remarks,—“The Problems of Psychical Research” and “The Logic of Mental Telegraphy,”—bear only a general resemblance to their former appearance. In others we are glad to see that some errors of detail have been corrected. Thus, in the entertaining essay on the Psychology of Spiritualism, in which Prof. Jastrow, borrowing largely from the results of the Seybert Commission and of the S.P.R. investigations, acutely diagnoses Spiritualism as a social disease, there occurs the tale of the exposed medium who confessed that “the first séance I held after it became known to the Rochester people that I was a medium, a gentleman from Chicago recognised his daughter Lizzie in me, after I had covered my small moustache with a piece of flesh-coloured cloth and reduced the size of my face with a shawl I had purposely hung in the back of the cabinet.” The story is so good that it is sure to earn a mythical immortality. Prof. Jastrow does not give any references, and refrains from telling us whence he got the story and who was the medium. As a matter of fact the tale is told by D. D. Home in *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism* (p. 405). He “copied from an American newspaper the confession of a detected trickster, who had been caught in the act of imposture while giving séances at Rochester, N.Y.” In accordance with the rule observed by him throughout *Lights and Shadows*, Mr. Home did not print the name of this interesting penitent, which is represented only by its initial “J——.”<sup>2</sup> Curiously enough, Prof. Jastrow, in his *Popular Science Monthly* article (April, 1889), quoted the story as the confession of “an exposed medium, D. D. Home,” who was thus, for the first time, convicted of imposture and trickery in Prof. Jastrow's essay. We are glad to see that this singular error has not been repeated in the reprint before us. But he is as careful *not* to give any authority for the major part of his facts in the reprint of his essay as he was in the original article. That any one should let slip such a mistake who had, however cursorily, glanced through *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism*, is not easy to believe. To the student

<sup>1</sup> We transcribe from the preface their chronological order: The Dreams of the Blind (Jan., 1888), The Psychology of Deception (Dec., 1888), The Psychology of Spiritualism (April, 1889), The Problems of Psychical Research (June, 1889), The Natural History of Analogy (1891), A Study of Involuntary Movements (April and Sept., 1892), The Logic of Mental Telegraphy (October, 1895), Hypnotism and its Antecedents (February, 1896), Mental Prepossession and Inertia (April, 1897), The Mind's Eye (1899), The Modern Occult (1900).

<sup>2</sup> See *The Gift of D. D. Home*, by Madame D. D. Home, pp. 210, 211.

of the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., on the other hand, much of Mr. Jastrow's material has a familiar look. Why does he not take the trouble to acknowledge his indebtedness to the obvious sources? He admits, with a generosity which all his colleagues do not share, that the publications of the S.P.R. are not wholly devoid of value. Why does he not reveal the extent of the benefit he has derived from them? This plain duty was all the more incumbent upon him that he chooses what he finds convenient and leaves the rest. The result is wholly misleading. Such an attitude cannot be too severely condemned. Methods which custom allows an advocate to use would be morally reprehensible in a judge, and canons of evidence pass muster in a party pamphlet which have no place in a scientific memoir.

In what light then are we to view this book? "The present collection of essays is offered as a contribution towards the realisation of a sounder interest in, and a more important appreciation of, certain problems upon which psychology has an authoritative charge to make to the public jury. These essays take their stand distinctively upon one side of certain issues, and, as determinately as the situation seems to warrant, antagonise contrary positions; they aim to oppose certain tendencies and to support others; to show that the sound and profitable interest in mental life is in the usual and the normal. . . ." In other words, Prof. Jastrow claims the right and assumes the responsibility of making a number of *ex cathedra* statements upon a variety of subjects, some of which he conceives have dangerously engrossed the public interest to the detriment of others. He wishes to educate the interest of the public in psychological matters. He conceives that a science cannot prosper if the public take no interest in it, cannot thrive if it be misunderstood by the layman. It is difficult to see what the layman's opinion can possibly matter on a question of pure science, or why the layman should be allowed any voice whatever. To the public, science is revealed religion, and the *savant* its prophet. The layman believes on authority, that is his privilege. But in what sense can he be supposed to form part of a jury? On account of the public interest taken in the obscure and the unusual, said Prof. Jastrow in a presidential address to the American Psychological Association, the current conception of psychology is becoming distorted, and the true interests of psychology are jeopardised by the unfortunate confusion of psychology with what is termed psychical research. Not only then is the public to decide which of two trends of scientific opinion is the more likely to be fruitful of results, but science is conceived by Prof. Jastrow to freeze and shrivel up if the indiscreet curiosity of the uninformed public happens to follow the wrong track. And it is in order to avert this unfortunate catastrophe that Prof. Jastrow delivers his charge to the public jury. It is, he conceives, "particularly the obligation of the torch-bearers of science to illuminate the path of progress, and to transmit the light to their successors with undiminished power and brilliancy; the flame must burn both as a beacon-light to guide the wayfarer along the pathways of science, and as a warning against the will-o'-the-wisps that shine seductively in the by-ways."



These essays, then, would appear to subserve a double purpose. In the first place, they aim at uprooting certain pernicious beliefs widely disseminated among the magazine public. In the second place, we have a right to infer, from the sentence just quoted, that they are addressed to scientific men as well. But the two purposes are really one to Professor Jastrow's mind. The pure light of "the torch of science" runs a risk of flickering out, so long as the public gaze is fascinated by some more attractive "will-o'-the-wisp." Hence, to dispel popular superstitions is *ipso facto* to render a service to science. This attitude of the author explains the character of the book. In it Prof. Jastrow, representing a certain school of psychology, appears both as advocate and as judge, vindicating his own cause before a jury which is equally unable to grasp the principles underlying either of the opposing "Tendenzen." As an advocate, he permits himself the use of rhetorical devices, and as an authoritative psychologist speaking to a popular audience, he assumes the right of laying down general principles without pausing to justify them; this unfortunate ambiguity runs through the whole book, and makes the task of the critic a thankless one. In most of the essays, however, it cannot lead to serious misunderstanding. Those on the Modern Occult, on the Psychology of Spiritualism, on the Natural History of Analogy, on Hypnotism, on the Psychology of Deception, etc.—though they cannot be considered as contributions to science—will certainly answer the purpose they were intended to fulfil. The essay on Dreams of the Blind, on the other hand, we are very grateful to see rescued from the comparative obscurity of the *New Princeton Review*. Of the "Experimental Investigation of Automatic Movements" we shall have a word to say later on. But it was hardly to be expected that any useful purpose could be served by discussing the logical status of Psychical Research and of "Mental Telegraphy" in essays of so manifestly didactic, and so unfortunately popular a character. Had they been mere individual expressions of opinion, there would have been all the more justification for not noticing them. But we have heard them expressed before, we shall probably hear them again, and it may help to clear away misunderstandings if we examine and answer Prof. Jastrow's arguments one by one. The existence of the Society for Psychical Research, and the growth of its problems, give rise to the question, What attitude is to be taken to the outlying phenomena of mind? "Are they," asks Prof. Jastrow, "are they outcasts, to be treated in a spirit of charity and forbearance? Are they the true owners of the land, the unjustly deposed and rightful heirs, soon to be restored to their kingdom by a fairer and more searching examination of their title?" And by means of a series of similar metaphors, he conjures up before the startled psychologist a threatening mass of obscure phenomena struggling to dispossess the familiar facts of normal, waking life of their claim upon the scientist's attention.

Surely no way of stating the problem could possibly be more misleading. It appears to imply that there are on the one hand a certain number of respectable, conservative owners of the field, and on the other hand an



inimical crowd of revolutionary malcontents; it implies a party warfare within the republic of science, in which each party seeks its own good regardless of the good of the whole. Professor Jastrow appears to believe that psychology may be defined by means of an absolute disjunction; that it is the study of one category of phenomena to the exclusion of another category of phenomena. We have seen that he speaks of "the unfortunate confusion of psychology with what is termed *psychical research*," and that, according to him, "the spirit and attitude of *psychical research* towards psychology has been productive of harm to our profession [that of psychologist] and to the reputation which we cherish." Now what are, in his view, the essential characteristics of psychology, and what are those of *psychical research*? Professor Jastrow has himself put the question, and he finds that "the precise status of *psychical research*, and its relations to other departments of scientific inquiry, are far from obvious." Surely, he exclaims, the problems of *psychical research* ought to be able to find a nook in so commodious a home as Psychology, individual and comparative, normal and abnormal! But he soon finds an apparent differentiating characteristic: "Whereas Psychology studies the recognised and explicable phases of mental phenomena, *Psychical Research* is occupied with the disputed and mysterious." And such a differentiation is as unwarranted as it is clearly absurd. "The legitimate problems of *Psychical Research* are equally and necessarily genuine problems of Psychology, that require no special designation," Prof. Jastrow complains that *psychical research* "separates a group of problems from their natural habitat . . . violently transports a growth from its environment." And he vehemently protests against the notion "that while the psychologist may be listened to with respect and authority in one portion of his topic, the layman and the member of the S.P.R. are equally or more competent to pronounce judgments in a closely allied field." Surely this is once more the false disjunction noticed above! It is certain that any given psychologist, in so far as he has no knowledge of a special topic, is himself a layman with regard to that topic, and his opinion carries no sort of authority. But the assertion that psychology as such has no claim to meddle with *psychical research*, meets us for the first time in Prof. Jastrow's pages. Does he mean, on the other hand, to imply that the *psychical researcher* is ignorant of psychology? He is ready to admit that "a considerable portion of the influential contributors to *Psychical Research* are animated by as truly scientific motives as labourers in any other field of psychological endeavour." He quotes with approval Mr. Podmore; he borrows copiously from the inquiries of Dr. Hodgson, of Mrs. Sidgwick, of S. T. Davey. But there are some "who subscribe to pernicious and illogical conclusions, and indirectly encourage a most unfortunate attitude in others."

Discussing the actual interests which give vitality to *Psychical Research*, he ascribes the chief order of importance to the occult interest; he allows that there is also a psychological point of view; he quotes with approval Mr. Lang's "*comparative psychical research*." But the characteristic trait of the *psychical researcher*, the one which brands him as the pariah of science,

in Professor Jastrow's view, is that the psychical researcher always seeks to prove or to disprove something. "As soon as he succeeds in finding a consistent and commonplace explanation for a group of phenomena, his main curiosity is satisfied, and he takes to pastures new." Very different is the true psychological interest, we are told, in Madame Blavatsky's performances, *e.g.*, "The logical scientist was quite convinced that Madame Blavatsky had not discovered the means of carrying ponderables by unseen agencies from China to Peru"; just as apparently the logical scientist in Professor Jastrow's view does not require to study the Mrs. Piper records, still less experiment personally with Mrs. Piper, in order to give a theory of the phenomena; nor to wait for positive evidence before reaching the conviction that, however D. D. Home managed to do his tricks, he was at any rate and most certainly an impostor. The psychological problem in all these cases is a quite different one: "It takes up the inquiry as to how such marvellous pretensions came to be believed, by what influences conviction is formed and doctrines spread." Such is the fundamental difference of principle between psychologist and psychical researcher, according to our author—that while the psychologist knows there is "nothing in it," without the tedium of a special inquiry, the psychical researcher takes the trouble to collect evidence in order to have some special proof whether there is "anything in it" or not.

We protest, in the interests of psychology, against this caricature of psychological ideals, and in fairness to psychical research we protest no less strongly against the charge of occultism insinuated by Professor Jastrow's phrase "something in it." It is a mood which he thus characterises, not a definite logical position; it is a mood which we detest quite as much as he does; it is a mood which every scientist detests, because it denies the rationality of his pursuit. And we gladly abandon to any one's satire the idly curious layman who, by a kind of *Schadenfreude* rejoices whenever some outhouse of science collapses on the heads of the masons within. Such a mood has nothing, however, to do with logic. The scientific conservatism upheld by Professor Jastrow is no less a mood, and no less foreign to logic. Is psychology, then, so perfect a science that we need not trouble to investigate phenomena which at first sight seem difficult to explain by the theories current in any one year? Is the basis of our science, then, so secure that it is mere waste of time to study facts which at first sight do not harmonise as perfectly as we might wish with facts already investigated? Does not the very essence of research consist in finding out whether there be or be not "something in" a certain fact at present obscure; in finding out whether this fact makes for one theory or for another? We perfectly agree that some theories may be considered extra-scientific, and that the scientist could not without a logical crime consent to refute or even notice them. It is equally true that the question whether a theory be scientifically legitimate or not is one which requires careful discussion. But we never before supposed that it was possible to assert that: "There is no obligation resting upon the psychologist to make large sacrifices for the pursuit of ill-defined residual phenomena." When Professor Jastrow speaks of the

“psychologist,” we trust he means the “representative of psychological science”; for while it is certain that no one would reproach any given man with not attempting a task beyond his strength, or which he is by training or by nature unfit to cope with, this is a purely personal matter, which does not touch the logical question.

Moreover, so far as a science is unsatisfactory and incomplete, in so far must the interest of the investigator be directed towards the future rather than towards the past. A desire for novelty as such has nothing more logical in it than a wish to keep up with the changing fashions of dress. But we had always thought it was the main characteristic of a logical system, such as that of science, that so long as it was incomplete, no part of it could possibly be regarded as having reached a state of logical equilibrium. It follows that the interest in that which is already known, in so far as it is imperfectly known, is a relative interest: it is relative to the new discoveries which will further define the significance of the familiar. And the new discoveries have also a merely relative interest: it is relative to the already known phenomena which they further explain.

We are ashamed to write out these logical platitudes at length. We merely regret that Professor Jastrow's strictures should have made them necessary. He censures the S.P.R. for that attitude which is and must be precisely the attitude of a young science. It is quite as true of the other branches of experimental psychology as of psychical research that they are constantly seeking new fields; just in the same way that they do not and cannot study anything else than residual phenomena. But the sting of our author's censure lies perhaps in its tail. He may attach some quite special meaning to the term “residual phenomena.” He censures the S.P.R. indeed again and again on account of a supposed predilection for the mysterious. Perhaps he means to hint, by the use of the adjective “residual,” that the obscure phenomena which there is no obligation resting upon the psychologist to study are also mysterious. We should like a definition of this word; it is most unfortunate that the writers who use it most should take least pains to define it. Any fact or thing is mysterious, for instance, in so far as its properties or nature are insufficiently known; and whether a man be merely puzzled by appearances unfamiliar, or whether he be thrilled by a mystic emotion at their sight, the difference is entirely subjective. The sort of feelings aroused in a man by the solution of a logical problem does not alter in any degree the character of that problem. The word mystery, like the word supernatural, has no place in the dictionary of science. Either will be looked for in vain in the writings of our responsible leaders. Subjectively, there are those whom mystery attracts, and those whom it repels. Both categories of people are, in the end, animated by the same kind of superstition. Neither has a right to censure the other, because both stand equally outside the pale of logic. Professor Jastrow, like Professor Münsterberg, is one of those for whom the word mystery has a meaning; and both alike have a personal distaste for it. But what can that possibly matter to any one? Were a chemist to excuse himself from investigating

certain organic substances because he could not stand the smell, we should doubtless agree that it was not worth while his injuring his health. But what would be thought of him if he loudly proclaimed that the department he was unfit to investigate was not fit to be investigated at all? Candour requires him to recognise his own personal disability, but not even the most severe moralist could expect him to publish it abroad in a series of popular addresses!

It is then clear that to censure the S.P.R. for investigating "residual phenomena" is to make a meaningless criticism. Science cannot do anything else. To censure our leaders for their predominant interest in new fields of research is equally illogical. In no science, in so far as it is incomplete, can any body of facts have any other than a relative value. Least of all in the most backward of all sciences, psychology, is there any justification for a self-complacent looking backward upon regions already travelled over. Finally, the reproach that the objects of the S.P.R.'s studies are mysterious falls back upon those who utter it, and convicts them of that very disposition which they pretended to diagnose in our leaders.

It is easier still to explain away Prof. Jastrow's other difficulty. Why did the S.P.R. come into existence at all, and what relation do its problems bear to other psychological problems? He himself has supplied us with the logical answer; and he affects to ignore the historical reason, which was far more potent twenty years ago than it is now. Recognising at one point that some of the work of the S.P.R. has a certain value, he says that those problems of psychical research which are legitimate are problems of psychology. With this we heartily agree. But when he proceeds to imply that these problems ought never to have been separated from "their natural habitat," we can no longer follow his argument. Surely it is obvious that one and the same science can and must be—provisionally at any rate—separated up into a number of special departments which may be investigated each for its own sake. We might as well wonder that psychologists leave the study of, *e.g.*, cases of aphasia or of psychical blindness to the care of medical specialists, on the ground that these pathological problems are problems of psychology. As Prof. Jastrow himself says: "The division of the Sciences reflects the diversity of human interests. . . . It is obvious that the Sciences were shaped by human needs." It is obvious that the division of labour in science has a practical as well as a logical ground. No man can be equally competent in all branches of his favourite science: that is the practical cause of the division. He must seek to master a group of affiliated problems: that is the guiding principle of the division. No one who is familiar with the sort of work implied will doubt the practical justification of the growth of "psychical research." No one can possibly feign to ignore the historical reason of this growth. Had the Society for Psychical Research never been founded, no psychologist would ever have troubled to consider even the very most elementary of its problems.

Prof. Jastrow appears to question the logical justification of the S.P.R. programme, on the ground that its investigations are sometimes of a physical



sometimes of a physiological character. We might answer him by pointing to a number of mixed sciences—to chemical physiology, or to physical chemistry; which are but so many illustrations of the continuity of the sciences. But we prefer to critically examine the view of the functions and limits of psychology as it is implied (unfortunately not expressed) in some specially curious passages. The phenomena claimed to occur in the presence of spiritualistic mediums are by no means new. Their analogues exist in the folk-lore of almost every land, from China to Peru, and from the North Pole to the South. Anthropology has always considered it as its function to trace back a myth to its sources, to map out the course of the spreading belief. But it has never been able to go back to the *fons et origo*. Whether any phenomenon occurred which could reasonably have given rise to the myth; what relation there was between the fact and the belief about the fact—these are questions which the historical method could not possibly solve. It could only trace the transformations of belief, and the first term of its historical deduction could but be the subjective belief, not the objective fact. The only method by which this could be studied was the experimental method. We had always conceived it to be the great merit of the S.P.R. that it uncompromisingly adhered to the rules of scientific logic, and inaugurated the experimental investigation of the modern analogues of the old phenomena. If, then, it be allowed that the investigation of the growth of a myth or belief is not complete until *all* its conditions, objective and subjective, have been discovered, it is no objection to say that the investigation of spiritualism, for instance, is largely the business of physics, or of some science other than psychology or anthropology. The objection would only be cogent if it could be shown that the investigation was complete at any given point. In so far as anthropology erected hypotheses as to the relation between a given belief and the fact believed in, it cannot censure psychical research for having sought experimental verification of such hypotheses.

The same argument holds of psychology with regard, *e.g.*, to the problem of telepathy, in so far as psychology abandons the stand-point of absolute subjectivism. It is no doubt an instructive task to expound what used to be called the “laws of mind,” to trace the processes by which the various material of presentation gets woven into a complex whole. Some of Professor Jastrow’s expressions seem to imply that the psychologist’s interest begins and ends with the discovery of neat illustrations of the working of various mental tendencies. Thus he finds “interesting psychological points in such diverse occupations as the actor’s profession, in juggling, in tricks of skill, in advertising, in religious revivals, etc.” He speaks of the evidence in proof of telepathy as being “capable of psychological interpretation,” and containing “illustrations of obscure and subtle mental processes.” Does he mean that any endeavour to pass from the subjective to the objective is extra-psychological; that, for instance, a psychological theory of colour-vision has no right to take into account either physical conceptions of wave-motion or physio-chemical conceptions of nerve-processes; that the sphere of psychical objects—to use



Münsterberg's terminology—can and must be completely separated from the sphere of physical objects; that psychology, as a science of psychical elements and their laws of combination, has no right to, and no interest in, relating these psychical elements to anything outside them? Psychology, on such a conception, becomes individual and subjective with a vengeance. The conception is worth elaborating, and we readily confess that psychical research is not compatible with it. We could not but allow that, although psychical research offered the psychologist much interesting illustrative material, yet its main interest was extra-psychological. In the same way, did anthropology choose to adopt a standpoint of radical subjectivism, and to maintain it consistently, our arguments would have no force.

But Professor Jastrow shows no symptoms of such a consistency. The principle implied on the one page is denied on the next; and we find after all that the only reason for Professor Jastrow's statements is that "logical" science is perfectly cognisant of the objective significance of this or that order of phenomena (spiritualistic, telepathic, etc.), *i.e.* that the only feature of interest about them is just the subjective feature. This naturally is a matter of proof. The difference between the "psychical researcher" and the psychologist of Prof. Jastrow's type is just that the one seeks experimental evidence where the other is content with an analogical argument. The difference of attitude is total, but there is no essential difference between the two conceptions of psychology. It is only from the standpoint of radical subjectivism that any exception can be taken to psychical research on the ground that it calls in the aid of physics or physiology, or any other science. And if that point of view be abandoned, psychology must go the whole length of psychical research. Just as, on the ordinary view, any other but a psycho-physical theory of, say, colour-vision must be quite devoid of significance, so with regard to hallucinations, including the so-called telepathic hallucinations, we can rest satisfied with none but a psycho-physical theory. The ordinary rules of inductive logic will apply here as elsewhere; and the question whether two phenomena A and B, which are contiguous in time, are or are not connected as cause and effect, admits essentially of the same kind of solution, be the phenomena what they may. We cannot allow that Prof. Jastrow has shown the guiding principles of the founders of the S.P.R. to be in any way illogical. The existence of the Society can readily be justified on scientific, practical, and historical grounds. So long as its work has not been taken up by official laboratories, these grounds will retain their old cogency. It is no less easy to show that the problems with which it has dealt, and the methods with which it has treated them, are an inevitable development of old problems unsatisfactorily solved, and of antiquated methods logically incomplete. Between psychical research and psychology there can be no possible opposition; and the only real danger which the latter has to fear from the former is that the psychologist should misunderstand the aims and methods of the psychical researcher.

We need not examine Professor Jastrow's essay on "The Logic of Mental

Telegraphy" in detail. What is new in his criticisms we have already answered by implication. In the main he has repeated the arguments brought forward by Herr Parish some years ago, and so completely refuted by Mrs. Sidgwick. When Prof. Jastrow remarks that "it is only necessary to be interested in coincidences in order to discover them on all sides," we cannot find that he contributes anything to the debate. On the one hand, a leading interest is necessary to the discovery of coincidences, whatever they may be,—whether the botanist endeavours to find out the analogies of structure common to various plants, or the zoologist to classify an organism hitherto unknown to him. And it is equally clear that such an interest may to some extent create these very coincidences. Secondary resemblances may be magnified, primary differences overlooked, and so forth. The danger in this respect is common to all scientific research alike. But if Prof. Jastrow means that a person interested in so-called telepathic hallucinations will most likely notice a coincidence between a hallucination and some other event, this is a question which can only be solved one way or the other by positive evidence. It has been examined at length in the "Report on the Census of Hallucinations," and we see no reason to reject the solution therein reached.

Another kind of argument equally devoid of cogency is the following: all sorts of coincidences have a law-abiding character. There is a statistical regularity about the yearly number of births and deaths and marriages, or of unaddressed letters thrown into the post. "The experience of offering an article to an editor and receiving a reply to the effect that another article dealing with the same topic in a similar way was already awaiting the compositor is not unusual." It would be interesting, indeed, to know whether the number of death-coincidences had this kind of statistical regularity, or whether the number of right cases in experiments on thought-transference performed under identical conditions presented a law-abiding character. But this does not in the least alter the logical status of the question. If the number of right cases or the number of coincidental hallucinations were greater than the theory of probability allowed for, we should nevertheless be obliged to draw the conclusion that some cause other than chance was in operation.

When Prof. Jastrow goes on to consider whether the hypothesis of telepathy is scientifically legitimate or not, he forgets that the hypothesis has for the present the smallest possible positive content, that it makes no kind of assumption with regard to the manner of connection of the phenomena,—the coincidence which it affirms to be not due to chance alone. It affirms that a state of consciousness (*a*) of a subject A is connected with a state (*b*) of a subject B; but whether this connection be direct or indirect, or what is the precise relation between the two phenomena, these are questions which it cannot attempt seriously to answer. It asserts a causal relation, but does not explain the causal process. The "telepathy-hypothesis" should be considered, therefore, as nothing more and nothing less than the statement of a problem. That there is a problem we hold to have been sufficiently proved.

To ask whether the data of the problem are scientifically legitimate or not is simply devoid of meaning. The data simply *are*, and science has to consider them.

But we readily agree with Prof. Jastrow that the attitude "which insists upon a detailed and exact explanation of concrete personal experiences" is a deplorable and illogical attitude at the stage which the inquiry has reached; and the tendency to believe in the personal significance of events is no less to be regretted. If psychical research has been misunderstood by its adversaries, its friends must bear the greater part of the blame. It is only too probable that much of its popularity has been due to a love of the mysterious and to an interest in the peculiar on the part of the general public. It behoves the S.P.R. to make clear to its supporters what its leading principles really are, and to seriously consider Prof. Jastrow's words of warning: "Unless most wisely directed, Psychical Research is likely, by not letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing, to foster the undesirable propensities of human nature as rapidly as it antagonises them. Like indiscriminate almsgiving, it has possibilities of affording relief, and of making paupers at the same time."

Lack of space forbids more than a very cursory notice of the most important contribution to psychology contained in the volume,—“The Dreams of the Blind.” The general fact that “the mode of functioning of a brain-centre depends largely upon its initial education, but that, this education once completed, the centre can maintain its function, though deprived of sense-stimulation” was well worth illustrating by the comparative method. There appears to be a critical period, which both Heermann (1838) and Jastrow place between the fifth and seventh years. Persons who go blind before the fifth year have, as a rule, no visual dreams. Persons who go blind after their seventh year have usually visual dreams. If blindness occurs between the fifth and seventh years, the preservation of the visualising power depends upon the degree of development of the individual. We could have wished that the author had studied the precise relation between the imagery in waking life and in the dreams of the blind, and had mentioned those cases of so-called psychical blindness in which the patient still has visual dreams, although he has lost the power of visual recognition and visual reproduction in waking life.

The experimental study of involuntary movements has the great merit of being the first in time of a series of similar researches by other psychologists in America and elsewhere. A subject's hand, resting free upon a mobile recording plate, has, according to Prof. Jastrow, a tendency to move towards the object to which the subject is attending. The experiments are worth repeating with less primitive apparatus. Prof. Jastrow himself has noticed the tendency of the arm to move towards the body, yet he neglects to inform us in many cases whether the right hand or the left was resting on the recording-plate. We are not told how many different subjects he experimented with, nor under what conditions; whether they knew the purpose of the experiment, or were ignorant of it; what kind of a tracing was obtained

in each case when the subject's attention was not directed to anything in particular. This latter point is specially important, as no two subjects under these conditions appear to yield identical, or indeed closely similar tracings. The technical deficiencies of the apparatus and the small number of the published tracings prevent us from placing any confidence in the results.

F. N. HALES.

*La Suggestibilité*, par DR. ALFRED BINET (Paris, Schleicher frères, 1900. pp. 400).

Psycho-physiology progresses in the same way as physics and the other branches of natural science, though perhaps more slowly. Each contribution, however small, adds to the exactness of analysis, and to the solidity of the whole scientific structure. But there is another form of psychology, let us call it introspective or "individual" psychology, which does not advance in the same way. For instance, since the introduction of hypnotism and suggestion as subjects of scientific investigation, hundreds of books and pamphlets have appeared on these questions, of which only very few, perhaps ten or twenty, were really steps in advance. Most of them may be safely left unread by the student, unless they contain material for discussion,—well observed and reliable facts.

Dr. Binet's last book on suggestibility may be considered a step in advance. It is the first successful attempt to bring clearness into this loosely used and vaguely defined term. It describes methods of investigation, and defines the distinctions between suggestion and other conceptions, such as "hypnotism." The two terms, hypnotism and suggestion, are usually mixed up in a hopeless way, and not only by laymen. In Dr. Binet's book hypnotism is absolutely excluded from the field of observation. We have to do with suggestion and suggestibility pure and simple.

Suggestibility is treated here as a normal quality of the healthy human individual,—a quality which is never altogether lacking, but which varies in intensity between rather wide limits, while its excess merges into the pathological. According to Dr. Binet, it is possible to measure the degree of this quality, and to give in figures the co-efficient of suggestibility for each individual. The methods and experiments by which he attempts to show this are admirably ingenious, but his desire for exactness often leads him to numerical results of very doubtful value, because of the small number of experiments. What can be deduced from statistics in individual psychology derived from experiments with 46 persons?

But nevertheless, what is most valuable, the methods are indicated and a beginning is made. Dr. Binet will agree with us in expecting different results when not scores but thousands of individuals have been tested.

The book is extremely important on account of the wide scope of this same quality, "suggestibility," the study of which is necessary not only for the psychologist and the philosopher, but for the medical student, the student of law, and especially for the teacher.



Dr. Binet has studied methodically and defined scientifically facts and ideas which were not altogether unknown, which have even become rooted in the popular belief in the form of anecdotes and proverbs. But the teacher who by dint of his carefully guarded authority stamps on his young pupil any artificial belief or unnatural creed never to be eradicated, or the judge entrapping an innocent but suggestible person to his doom by subtle and persuasive questioning, are instances of the terrible meaning of the vaguely noted facts. Indeed, this book, if carefully read, will open more eyes to the extreme danger of authoritative teaching and bias on the part of the judicial enquirer than all the warnings of moralists. Any one of common sense will see after perusal of these simple experiments that it is absolutely necessary to change our general principles of education, to do away as much as possible with the influence of personal authority or prestige on the side of the teacher, and to teach our children independence of judgment, and the power of using their own eyes instead of those of the master. When we apply the lessons of this book to the great social, political, and religious movements of the masses—subjects wisely not touched upon by the author—their significance becomes enormous, and the necessity of a widespread study of them most evident.

The terms “automatism” and “suggestibility” are not so clearly distinguished as hypnotism and suggestion. Indeed, the experiments and speculations about “automatism” are the weakest parts of the book.

In Dr. P. Janet’s well-known book, *L’Automatisme Psychologique*, very different phenomena were gathered together under the name of automatism. In this book it was the facts rather than their classification which were dwelt upon, and it seems to me that Dr. Binet’s treatment increases the difficulty instead of solving it.

We apply the word “automaton” to a thing which can move by itself, without any impulse from without. The materialistic school of the last century considered the whole human organism an automaton, denying that it was moved by that force of superhuman origin which we call will, or soul. The present use of the word “automatism” for a part only of the organism seems to involve a tacit assumption that the whole is not purely automatic. And it is clear that unless the mystical or superhuman agent can act always and everywhere, automatism must play a part in the organism.

But the experiments of Dr. Binet taken alone might lead many readers to the conclusion—apparently shared by the author—that it is now proved that in the so-called automatic writing of mediums, no superhuman or extra-human agency is ever present. This conclusion, however, is by no means justified by the facts. In his experiments, Dr. Binet simply takes a few fragments of the complicated human organism, and makes them act spontaneously in an automatic way by patient and ingenious devices. Such procedure is no proof at all that the same disintegration cannot be performed by some other external influence, human or non-human. This fallacious conclusion is not indeed explicitly drawn, but it seems to be implied.

F. VAN EEDEN.



*Hypnotism and Suggestion in Therapeutics, Education, and Reform*, by R. OSGOOD MASON, A.M., M.D. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. London, 1901.)

Under the above title Dr. Osgood Mason has brought together in a small book of some 340 large type pages, a mass of speculation, observation, and criticism (together, I may add, with not a little rhetoric), touching almost all the phenomena, or alleged phenomena, which are usually considered subjects of psychical research, as well as a good deal else besides. Hypnotism and the ethics of it, the subconscious mind, life and the underlying reality, clairvoyance, telepathy, Reichenbach, oriental occultism, all pass under review. The result is a readable, discursive, and very miscellaneous book, of, it must be confessed, somewhat unequal value, but of very considerable interest where the author's own personal observation and practical experience are concerned. It would seem that in the transparent atmosphere of the continent across the Atlantic, just as distant physical objects are made to look closer than they really are, so there is a tendency to regard as very near at hand the solution of problems which to European enquirers still appear but dimly apprehended. And I venture to think that in his anxiety to construct a theory which will harmonize and co-ordinate all the various subjects with which he deals, Dr. Mason has shown himself somewhat influenced by this tendency and has perhaps allowed himself to assume a greater degree of familiarity with their nature than is altogether warranted by the general state of knowledge concerning them. The hypnotic state which, in at least one European school, and probably by the public at large almost universally, has been considered to be a more or less pathological and exceptional condition, is here, implicitly at least, treated as the manifestation of a universal psychic force, its scope only limited by our experience, and its invocation for a given purpose, ethically considered, as indifferent as that of electricity or any other similar force in nature.

Many instances of its successful therapeutic application are given, and one cannot help thinking that Dr. Mason has perhaps been exceptionally fortunate in his subjects, or, as one would prefer to believe, exceptionally skilful in his treatment of them. For although, in other annals, examples of the reformation of inebriates and of the morally perverted are often quoted, which are as remarkable as certain cases in Dr. Mason's own experience, the general results of hypnotic treatment of such patients do not on the whole seem to fulfil the expectations of some of the more enthusiastic experimenters of a few years back; and though it is true, as Dr. Mason says, that undue conservatism has altogether prevented its adoption in some quarters, it is none the less true that a more extended experience in other quarters of the uncertainty of its results has led to a considerable limitation of its employment. Dr. Mason indeed calls attention to the fact that the general feeling of the medical profession is that the therapeutic usefulness of hypnotism is very limited. It may be presumed that if this feeling still persists after all these years of systematic investigation of the

capabilities of suggestive treatment, it cannot be entirely traceable to prejudice or ignorance. While in words Dr. Mason disavows any wish to claim for it either miraculous results or general applicability to the majority of persons, the impression left on the mind of a reader of his book is that in fact he is far more optimistic regarding its ultimate universal value than certain of his phrases would suggest. A chapter is devoted to the educational use of hypnotism and some remarkable instances of successful treatment of cases difficult to deal with by other methods are given. I may select the following for citation: "A generally intelligent, but uneducated woman, 35 years of age, although a good reader, experienced the greatest difficulty in spelling; she never wrote a letter without being obliged to consult a dictionary for the majority of words. . . . She was an excellent hypnotic subject. . . . One day, now a year ago, she asked me if I could not do something by suggestion for her troublesome inability to spell. I replied that I would make the trial if she desired. Accordingly, I suggested as follows: 'You can read; the correct form of every word you wish to write is already in your mind; now when you are in doubt you will not try to *think* how the word is spelled; you will become passive and at once an impression of the correct spelling of the word will come to you, and you will write it without doubting or looking in the dictionary to see if it is right.' The effect was immediate, and after two or three treatments, in order to show the improvement, and express her gratitude, she wrote me a four page letter, without consulting the dictionary, and in which were only two or three errors in spelling. Her language was most markedly that of an uneducated person. She constantly omitted her final g's—said 'says I,' and was entirely regardless of singular and plural in the use of nominatives and verbs. Half a dozen suggestions removed these errors in an astonishing manner, so that her language is now that of a fairly educated woman—not faultless, but good."

The following is one of Dr. Mason's most interesting examples of his success in the reformation of character. "A little boy, seven years of age, was a most unhappy coward—afraid of the slightest pain, and a coward and cry-baby among his playmates. He had some slight disease of the scalp which it was necessary to treat, but he would cry and run away the moment I entered the room. After one or two unhappy and only partially successful attempts at treatment, I decided to try suggestion. Placing him in a chair opposite me, I took his face and head firmly between my hands, and putting my face near his, I commanded him to look steadily in my eyes. It was very difficult to secure his attention, but having succeeded, I soothed him with passes and light touches, until his eyelids drooped; he was perfectly quiet, subjective and sleepy, but not asleep. I then suggested that he would no longer be a crying, whimpering coward, but a strong, brave boy; that he would take his treatment without fear, and that he would stand up sturdily for his rights among his fellows. This was repeated over and over, gently, but firmly; he all the while remaining passive and sleepy, and apparently taking no notice whatever of my suggestions. The next time I called he was shy, but not

troublesome, and with two or three repetitions of the suggestions he came promptly and bravely to his treatment.

“I was also informed that the change in his manner among his playmates was equally marked ; certainly all cringing and cowardly manner had disappeared, and he seemed self-reliant and happy.”

These are interesting examples of an application of hypnotism in which Dr. Mason expects to see great developments in the next half-century, whereby it will be placed “among the most highly prized agents for good in use among intelligent well-wishers of humanity.”

To the objection so often urged against the justifiability of hypnotic treatment on the ground of its being an interference with free will, Dr. Mason devotes a good deal of space. He quotes a father who said he would rather his son should go wrong of his own free will, than right by having that free will interfered with by hypnotism. Yet what, he asks in effect, is education itself but the interference with the free will of the child by the presentation of motives for action in the right direction so continued as to be, in the long run, irresistible? Your son offends, and you seek to lead him from his offending by exhortation, by instruction, by the constant presentation of higher ideals, by punishments. If you succeed, you will have influenced his will. If you fail, what is the conclusion? Either that the motives for a change of conduct have been of insufficient strength, or that the boy's mind has not been sufficiently impressionable, by reason of other distracting causes, to appreciate them. If through hypnotism you are able to eliminate this distraction, to increase the impressionability of his mind, to present the motives for improvement in such a form that they will be acted upon, where is the harm? In what way is his individuality more tampered with than by the other and unsuccessful method of dealing with him?

If the question went no further than this, I take it that there could be but one reasonable answer, and that favourable to Dr. Mason's contention. But the problem is somewhat wider. We must ask ourselves how far, quite apart from the particular victory over the particular fault, we have upset the normal balance between the conscious and the sub-conscious planes ; how far the temporary emergence of the latter into consciousness may not result in a tendency to intrude there increasingly in the future ; and to what extent the habit of reliance on external suggestions may result in a restriction of spontaneous effort. We still know little of the true nature of hypnotism ; little of what actually takes place when we probe into the hidden depths beneath consciousness, and of the possible lesions, unperceived and perhaps unperceivable, that may result from our intrusion among the secret fibres of being. The bulk of trustworthy evidence does indeed, so far as I am justified in attempting to weigh it, appear to show that in the hands of a cautious operator the use of hypnotic suggestion is unattended by any general harmful results. But the habitual therapeutic use of hypnotism is still confined to a comparatively small number of specialists, and it seems still somewhat premature to lay down its complete and invariable innocuity almost as an axiom, as Dr. Mason appears to do, and to inculcate such

widespread application of its influence as from his book he evidently contemplates.

E. FEILDING.

*Madame Piper et la Société Anglo-Américaine pour les Recherches Psychiques*, by M. SAGE, with a Preface by CAMILLE FLAMMARION (Paris, 1902).

The name of Mrs. Piper is well known to all who have any interest in the observation of trance-mediums, but definite and accurate knowledge of the phenomena of her trance is not easily accessible to those outside the small circle of genuine students who are prepared to read the volumes of detailed reports and criticism that have appeared in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research. This little book, consisting of some twenty chapters, has been produced by Monsieur Sage in the interests of French readers; but it is to be recommended to all who wish for a clear and accurate general statement of the case of Mrs. Piper, as an introduction to the detailed study of the first-hand reports essential to the serious student of such phenomena.

Monsieur Sage gives an account of the origin of the trance, and of the various phases of its development during the fifteen years that Mrs. Piper has been under the close observation of the Society for Psychical Research, and, in particular, of the Secretary of the American Branch, Dr. Richard Hodgson. He treats in a thoroughly impartial spirit the many and complicated questions suggested by an examination of the evidence; he allows no personal bias to interfere with his statement of the various hypotheses that have been put forward in explanation of the facts, nor to determine his selection of the incidents to be narrated. His condensed accounts of the general character of the sittings described at length in the Society's *Proceedings* are vivid and correct, and the reviewer has detected no inaccuracies of statement where cases are quoted in illustration of particular points. It is true that in some instances the racy vernacular of "Dr. Phinuit" has not been wholly intelligible to the foreigner; to "swop hats," for instance, is represented by "jeter à terre les chapeaux des passants"; but careful comparison with the first-hand reports—a task much facilitated by Monsieur Sage's chronological treatment of his subject and his constant references to the original publications—has not revealed more than two or three such slips, and in no case has the error had any effect upon the evidential value of the incident related.

The author expressly disclaims originality; he has himself no first-hand knowledge of the phenomena described; his aim is to embody in a popular and readable form the results of long and careful investigations by others. This he has successfully accomplished; the reader closes his little volume with a considerable knowledge of the facts observed, and a clear idea of the various theories that have been held or discussed by the actual observers. It contains a very good summary of the results of the laborious investigations of Professor Hyslop,—the latest contribution to our knowledge of the Piper phenomena,—and has been brought up to date by the inclusion of the sensational article in the *New York Herald* of October last, and Mrs. Piper's



denial of the statements and intentions therein attributed to her. The book is brightly and pleasantly written, and one is tempted to regret, in the interest of the reader unacquainted with French, that there is no similar work in English.

M. DE G. VERRALL.

*Magic and Religion*, by ANDREW LANG. (Longmans, Green and Co. 8vo. pp. 316. London, 1901.)

This volume is, for the most part, a continuous criticism of Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Mr. Lang and Mr. Frazer disagree almost *in toto* as to the facts which are held to explain the origin of religions. The former tends in the direction of a "primitive illumination" which has been gradually lowered in tone side by side with the progress of mankind in other respects, the steady decline of religion keeping pace, oddly enough, with the steady improvement of social feelings and current morality. Mr. Frazer on the other hand seeks for the *fons et origo* of the most exalted creeds in the rites and practices of primitive magic, and, as is well known, does not hesitate in the added chapters of his recent edition to offer on these lines an explanation of the great tragedy of Calvary itself.

With the main contents of *Magic and Religion* the psychological researcher has little to do, despite the deep interest possessed by Mr. Lang's delightful pages for the student of anthropology and folklore. Even the final chapter—dealing with the "Fire Walk"—which possesses a more direct interest for the psychological investigator, has to a large extent already appeared in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. But a quantity of fresh evidence has been added by Mr. Lang, and in view of this he has withdrawn the "psychical" explanation which he formerly offered in "Modern Mythology," and now leaves the question open with the implied conviction that it is one for the physician and physiologist alone. Nevertheless it is not easy to see why this change of front should be derived from the cases, cited by Mr. Lang, where Europeans have taken part in the fire-walk, and from Dr. Hocken's examination of the natives of Fiji in 1898. In the former of these two cases—that reported by Col. Gudgeon—the reporter expressly states that the priest said to Mr. Goodwin: "I hand my *mana* (power) over to you, lead your friends across," that they then "stepped boldly" across the fiery surface and three of the four Europeans got across unscathed, while one was badly burnt who, like Lot's wife, "looked behind him," *i.e.* probably, lost courage and began to think of bolting. The Colonel adds: "A man must have *mana* to do it; if he has not, it will be too late when he is on the hot stone of Tama-ahi-roa." In the second case Dr. Hocken mentions "intense faith" as a possible explanation, though he thinks it highly improbable, for he finds it "difficult to see how any mental state can prevent the action of physical law." Difficult indeed! Nevertheless it may be that the Neoplatonic philosopher is not wholly wrong when he speaks of *ὁ ἐνδον θεός* as the real explanation of the phenomenon: "they walk on fire unharmed, for the god within them does not



let fire harm them." If on the positive side auto-suggestion can produce "stigmata," or suggestion *ab extra* can cause the touch of a cold ruler on a bare arm to elicit a cry of pain, or (Cp. *Proceedings*, vol. vii. p. 204, pp. 337-345), actually raise a blister, can it be that on the negative side a similar condition, call it "full assurance," "faith," "mana"—what you will—may even avail to avert for a time the heat of the glowing stones from the skin of a fire-walker? How came it that Home's red-hot cinder felt cool in one person's hand, while it raised a painful blister on that of another? Was the poor clergyman whose hand was permanently scarred by the cinder utterly lacking in the essential *mana*, or had he forgotten to put on Mr. Podmore's asbestos glove?

So much as to the explanation of the phenomenon, when the available evidence appears to show conclusively that the heat of the material trodden upon was so intense as to char and destroy the skin of a human being coming in contact with it under normal conditions. The interesting paper, however, contributed by Professor Langley (see *Journal S.P.R.*, October, 1901) has proved clearly that the upper layer of stones in an exhibition of fire-walking which he witnessed in Tahiti was not nearly so hot as it appeared to be. The basaltic stones in question were such poor conductors of heat that even when the lower portion had become red hot, it was possible to step rapidly over the upper surface without much inconvenience. There can be no doubt that Mr. Langley in dealing with the fire-walk before him has proved his point, that "it was not a miracle"; for the misprint about the specific gravity of the stone does not really invalidate his conclusions. Indeed, at first sight, the reader of Mr. Langley's paper feels inclined to believe that he has before him the true explanation of every recorded instance of the "fire-walk." The intense heat underneath, the spurts of flame shooting up from the interstices of the stones, the comparative coolness of the surface presented to the feet of a cautious walker—all these factors seem to show how a man can step across the furnace with safety, while a handkerchief falling into it is charred, a timid performer, losing his head, blunders between the stones and is badly burnt, or a boy slipping down is actually killed by the flames.

But despite the *prima facie* appearance of comprehensiveness attached to Mr. Langley's evidence, and the irrelevancy of Mr. Lang's criticism that the fire-walker in the case cited was a "travelling performer," there yet remains a considerable mass of testimony which does not appear to be overthrown by Mr. Langley's experiments and observations. Even setting aside all cases in which stones are employed for the oven, how are we to account for the immunity from injury enjoyed by the Nistinares of Bulgaria or the fire-walkers of Mauritius and Japan? In these instances there is good evidence to show that the performers tread with naked feet upon glowing embers. Colonel Haggard relates that at Tokio in 1899 "people of all ages walked through *red-hot charcoal*." Mrs. Schwabe, an eye-witness of a fire-walk in Mauritius (see *Journal S.P.R.*, December, 1901), speaks of "masses of red-hot embers to the depth of several inches

. . . the radiant heat of which was almost unbearable . . . several yards from the trench." A number of large logs carefully arranged might, of course, be red-hot underneath and fairly cool on the upper surface; but this is not the impression conveyed by the above testimony, which seems to imply the existence of a glowing mass of embers after the logs and brushwood had been disintegrated by the preliminary blaze.

Some very interesting matter is covered by the appendices to Mr. Lang's volume. The strange story of St. Dasius' martyrdom is brought forward by the author of the *Golden Bough* to show that, as late as the reign of Diocletian, a yearly feast to Kronos (*i.e.* the Saturnalia) was celebrated in which a man selected by lot was "clad in royal raiment and allowed thirty days of revelry, after which he was to sacrifice himself at the altar of Kronos." The tale itself is amplified in one MS. with a mass of that ecclesiastical padding so familiar to readers of the *Vitae Sanctorum*, but it is doubtful if Mr. Lang has really succeeded in undermining the conclusion drawn by Mr. Frazer,—that the slaying of a victim at the Saturnalia was still known of and occasionally practised as late as the close of the third century. Such a practice was, no doubt, at the time exceedingly rare, but unless the narrator of the martyrdom was aware of its existence, it is difficult to understand why he introduced it into his narrative at all. All that is stated is that, at the obscure frontier town of Dorostolum, such a yearly festival was held and the garrison fell in with the local observances, as was frequently the case (*cp.* inscriptions upon altars found along the Roman wall and elsewhere *passim*), and selected one of their own number, Dasius, as the victim. Whether he was a Christian or a pagan, whether or not he was insolent to the *legatus*, is irrelevant to the main point—that, unless the narrator contradicts himself egregiously, the young soldier was selected as a victim of the Saturnalia.

As to the third appendix, which deals with the momentous question whether the events of the Crucifixion week can be identified with certain alleged customs in vogue at the Feast of Purim, Mr. Lang has ably demonstrated the one great weakness of Mr. Frazer's theory, *viz.*, the difference of date between Purim and Holy week. The question is altogether too large for treatment within the limits of this review; but it is perhaps worth while to call attention to a small textual point which is not noticed by either Mr. Lang or Mr. Frazer. Origen, as well as Jerome, was undoubtedly cognizant of the MS. reading Ἰησοῦν [τὸν] Βαραββᾶν ἢ Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν. Despite the absence of much extrinsic evidence for the authenticity of this strange text, the intrinsic evidence is very great; there would be every reason for altering the text in question, none whatever for inventing it. If then the sentence originally ran, "Shall I liberate unto you Jesus [the] Barabbas or Jesus called Christ?" how much colour might be lent to Mr. Frazer's theory! Of the two prisoners named Jesus, one had been selected to play the part of "Barabbas"—the "Son of the Father"—who was to be crowned, scourged, and ultimately slain; the other was to be set free. But Pilate's humane purpose was

frustrated by the cries of the populace, hounded on by the priests to clamour for the blood of an innocent man. And so it came to pass that the original arrangement made by the governor was upset, the criminal Jesus was liberated, the sinless Jesus became the "Barabbas."

E. N. BENNETT.

*Dreams and their Meanings*, by HORACE G. HUTCHINSON. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901. 8vo, pp. 320; price, 9s. 6d. net.)

This is a book which seems to have made itself to a considerable extent. It has grown out of an article published by the author in *Longmans' Magazine* on "Common Dreams." This caused a deluge of letters to descend on Mr. Hutchinson's head, and about one-third of the present work is based on these letters. The last two chapters, which make up rather more than another third, are from the hand of a collaborator whose fervent faith was held to mark him out as a fit and proper person to deal with telepathic and premonitory dreams. The remaining eighty pages, from the hand of Mr. Hutchinson, deal in a somewhat less than exhaustive manner with what science has to say about dreams, with the bearing of dreams on the question of the origin of religion, with divination, and with interpretations of dreams—a collection of facts that would have been better placed in the chapter on divination.

The book does not pretend to be more than a popular work, and it would be unfair to judge it by scientific standards. Even in a popular work, however, we might have expected to find some reference to the subliminal consciousness. There does not seem to be a mention of it in the first part of the book, however. A little research in the publications of the S.P.R. would have enabled the author to produce a book that would have been at once more interesting to the general reader and more useful. By directing attention to such questions as automatic waking at a specified hour, he might have induced his readers to bring together a large amount of useful material.

With the work of the collaborator—a member of the S.P.R., who prefers to be nameless—it is unnecessary to deal at great length. The materials are taken mainly from the *Proceedings*, but are used in an uncritical spirit, which gives the unpsychical reviewer only too much occasion to lift up the finger of scorn. He suggests, for example, that the finding of lost articles through dreams can only be explained on the theory that "our spirit is conducted by so-called occult means to the place where the lost article is reposing." In the chapter on premonitory dreams we see evidence of the same fault. Two of the dreams classed as premonitory (pp. 273, 293) seem to be merely telepathic; the case on p. 291 does not of necessity involve any more occult source of information than the subliminal consciousness; and the same may, perhaps be said of the cases on pp. 287 and 289. Beyond a vague statement that the details of the dream on p. 280 were the same as those of the subsequent accident, there is nothing to show that the dream had any connection with

the accident : even if it could be shown that the details were in substantial agreement, they are such as might apply to many collisions at sea. But perhaps the most staggering point about the whole chapter is the statement, quoted from the Report on the Census of Hallucinations, where it refers to telepathic cases, that premonitory dreams are proved. But so far from this being the view of the Committee, they expressly say on p. 331 that the cases with which they deal afford no adequate justification for taking this view, which introduces vast difficulties. There can be no excuse for a misstatement of this kind. It is clear that the statistical inquiry which was necessary to demonstrate the existence of spontaneous telepathy is far more necessary in the case of premonitory dreams ; the chance coincidences will in the latter case, apart from the complications introduced by the greater complexity of dreams, be more numerous in proportion as dreams are more numerous than waking hallucinations. At present belief in premonitions is only a superstition.

N. W. THOMAS.

*Elemente der Empirische Teleologie*, von Paul Nicolaus Cossmann (Stuttgart, A. Zimmer's Verlag, 1899).

I wish to draw attention to this book as one of the most important that has appeared during the last few years. It was published in 1899, but I think it will come to be considered as one of the first signs of dawn of the new scientific spirit of our present century.

In fact, in its modest appearance and dry form, it seems to me of no less importance for us than the essay of Mayer on the conservation of energy was for the 19th century. It does what every work of high merit has done,—it formulates what has been in the scientific mind for a long time in a vague indefinite fashion. It is the scientific revival of teleology after a long nightmare of determinism—not, however, the old-fashioned teleology, but teleology in a new and deeper sense.

It contains nothing new, nothing of which a philosopher would not say : indeed, we knew this long ago. And yet it is entirely new in its thoroughly scientific method of treatment.

Henceforth no man of science who wishes to escape the name of amateur will be able to proclaim determinism as the principle of natural science, and to discard teleology as purely metaphysical and mystical. Teleology will be henceforth a *scientific* principle unavoidably required ; no researcher will be able to do without it. And this is the result of Cossmann's work.

Besides causal relations, nature shows teleological relations of facts. In a causal relation, two co-operating causes  $a$  and  $b$  form the result  $c$ ,  $a$  and  $b$  being constant,  $c$  being exclusively determined by  $a$  and  $b$ . In a teleological relation  $a$  and  $c$  are constant, and determine the secondary cause  $b$ .

These two forms of relation do not exclude each other, but exist together. The causal relation is always there, but it is not alone. The teleological relation does not exist without causality, yet it is not causality.

To give an instance : The protective colour of a butterfly is a link in a



teleological relation, yet it could not exist if the chemical matter which forms the colour was not present in the animal, as a causal factor.

And I consider it a stroke of genius in Cossmann's work to draw a definite distinction between what we call living and non-living nature with regard to the teleological relationship. In this way the old contention about vitalism is finally settled, a simple, clear and scientific definition being given, which cannot be mistaken nor lead to error; to the effect, namely, that in natural sciences we distinguish two series of observable facts—one series (non-living nature) which is without a teleological relation, the other series (living nature) which is invariably related teleologically as well as causally.

F. VAN EEDEN.

*Fact and Fancy in Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Psychical Research*, by G. C. HUBBELL. (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke Co., 1901. 8vo, pp. vi. + 9-208.)

This work is the outcome of a series of lectures delivered by the author before the Ohio Liberal Society of Cincinnati. The four lectures which compose it were not originally destined for publication, as the author informs us, and have apparently undergone little or no revision, with the natural result that there is a certain lack of continuity and an occasional want of firmness of treatment. This does not, however, detract seriously from the interest of the book, which is not intended to be more than a popular exposition of the subject. It will be found eminently readable by amateurs, who will not only appreciate the easy style in which it is written, but may also profit by the sane view taken by Mr. Hubbell.

The first three chapters deal with Madame Blavatsky, and with the bearing of the results hitherto attained in Psychical Research on the questions of belief in a future life and on the materialistic theory; in a final chapter, based to some extent on personal experience, the author gives some account of the frauds of Spiritualism, but at the same time suggests that there is an element which neither fraud nor hallucination can explain. In some of his remarks on Spiritualism Mr. Hubbell hardly seems to appreciate the extent to which our standards of evidence have risen during the past twenty-five years. He quotes the experiments of De Gasparin and the Dialectical Society, together with those of Sir W. Crookes, in proof of his assertion that "the movement of ponderable objects without physical contact, such movement displaying intelligence, . . . is established beyond all question." In view of our increased knowledge of the possibilities of fraud and of the fallibility of human testimony, even if we make allowance for the fact that the experiments took place under specially favourable conditions and that Home was never detected in trickery, this expression is too strong. It may be that Home was exceptional in his gifts, and that we can for this reason hardly hope for speedy confirmation of the observations of Sir W. Crookes; but that confirmation is needed the experimenter himself would probably be the first to admit.

In the chapter on Psychical Research and a Future Life, the author,



after dealing with the Piper case, goes on to explain the bearing of the theory of telepathy on the belief in a future state of existence, but his argument hardly carries conviction. On p. 99 he states that the fundamental contention of materialism—that body and mind are so connected and related that the action of the mind is entirely confined to the body, and dies with the body—is shaken, if not overthrown (presumably by the fact of telepathy). But even if it is not true, as the author expressly states on p. 129, that telepathy can in all probability be explained in terms of matter and motion, *i.e.* on a materialistic hypothesis,—it is clear that we have in telepathy from the living no basis for arguing that the soul will survive death. Perhaps the passage in question is intended to apply rather to the Piper case, but if this is so, the choice of words is unfortunate. The argument should clearly be based, not on the telepathic, but on the spiritistic theory. It may be that both the telepathic and the spiritistic hypotheses involve telepathy; but the important fact, from Mr. Hubbell's point of view, is in this case not telepathy, but the source from which the telepathic impulse comes. The question is naturally one which will appeal to many of Mr. Hubbell's readers, and it is a pity that he should not have made his point quite clear.

N. W. THOMAS.



# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research.

PART XLV.

FEBRUARY, 1903.

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### PROCEEDINGS OF GENERAL MEETINGS.

THE 117th General Meeting of the Society was held in the Hall at 20 Hanover Square, London, W., on Friday, May 30th, 1902, at 8.30 p.m.; MR. F. PODMORE in the chair.

A paper by MR. W. W. SKEAT, entitled "Malay Spiritualism," was read by MR. N. W. THOMAS. This paper is printed below.

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The 118th General Meeting was held in the same place on Friday, November 14th, 1902; MR. A. F. SHAND in the chair.

MR. F. C. S. SCHILLER read a paper on "Human Sentiment with regard to a Future Life," which, it is hoped, will appear in a future Part of the *Proceedings*.

The 119th General Meeting was held in the same place on Friday, January 30th, 1903, at 8.30 p.m.; the PRESIDENT, SIR OLIVER LODGE, in the chair.

The PRESIDENT delivered an Address, which will appear in the next Part of the *Proceedings*.

## I.

## SOME EXPERIMENTS IN HYPNOTISM.

BY "EDWARD GREENWOOD."

[IT must be explained that the author of the following paper—a gentleman well known to the Editor and to the Council of the Society—has adopted the pseudonym of "Edward Greenwood" in order not to risk betraying the identity of his friend "M.," the subject, by disclosing his own. It is for this reason that the Council has sanctioned the appearance of the paper under a pseudonym.—EDITOR.]

I offer the following notes of a series of experiments in hypnotism with my friend M. with some diffidence, aware that they contain no such circumstances of exceptional importance as would perhaps alone justify their being brought forward now that the general phenomena have been so completely examined and described. The results achieved in this series do not transcend those which may usually be expected with a fairly susceptible subject. The fact, however, that the experiments were conducted with an educated subject, himself greatly interested in the development of phenomena with which he had previously been unacquainted, and to the examination of which he was able to bring an acute and discriminating intelligence, and an unusual power of self-analysis, lends them a certain interest. It is, in my experience, so rare that an operator finds himself assisted in this way by a subject, at once thoroughly trustworthy and normal, while possessing a high degree of hypnotic susceptibility, that I am encouraged to think the results may not be unworthy of description.

My friend M. is a young man aged 22, quick and alert in mind, and of an enthusiastic and decidedly nervous temperament, highly idealistic and with considerable literary gifts. At present engaged in teaching, he has much influence with boys, in his treatment of whom he shows both initiative and judgment. He is interested in



athletic pursuits and takes as much part in them as constitutional weakness of the lungs will allow. Formerly afflicted with consumption, this disease, which was taken in time and is no longer active, has left him physically delicate and incapacitated for much bodily effort. It also, no doubt, left his nervous system in a somewhat hypersensitive condition. I wish, however, to emphasise the fact that he is essentially normal and responsible, of robust character and of decided intellectual ability.

Having witnessed one or two simple hypnotic experiments, M. evinced much interest in the subject, but at first expressed disinclination to submit to any himself. On the question subsequently recurring in conversation, however, I asked to be allowed to test his susceptibility, engaging at the same time to refrain from any experiment. He consented, and after a very short procedure, I succeeded in closing his eyes. As soon as I had demonstrated his inability to open them, I immediately restored him to his normal state, but, interested by this small experience, he appeared to lose his former distaste, and thereupon invited me to test systematically the extent of the influence. This, then, was the genesis of the series of experiments, some 20 or 30 in number; which I now have it in hand to describe.

The actual process of hypnotisation has always been of the most simple and rapid description. Almost from the first, it has only been necessary, after he has composed himself for the experiment, to say the word "sleep," and he immediately passes into the hypnotic state. The trance is not a deep one; he retains full consciousness of himself, and his mental powers undergo no change, except in so far as he is amenable to suggestions given by myself. His memory, after awakening, is practically continuous, and while he is, during the trance, otherwise completely susceptible to post-hypnotic suggestion, I am wholly unable, by this means, to produce any lasting break between his hypnotic and his normal consciousness. In the course of the experiments, the character of the trance underwent several changes to which I shall later refer. His degree of susceptibility has, however, not varied; certain limitations to my power of suggestion presented themselves in the first experiments, and have not since been modified.

It is not my purpose to describe in detail the experiments in which we engaged, except in so far as may be necessary in order to give M.'s own description of his sensations while undergoing them. The experiments were of the ordinary character: all attempts to produce

any of the higher class of alleged phenomena, such as thought-transference, clairvoyance, or even augmentation of the faculties of sense, being complete failures.

I now proceed to give a general account of M.'s condition.

The injunction to sleep immediately places him in a state of suggestibility. In the latter experiments he passed directly into this state without any apparent external change whatever taking place; though in the earlier experiments, the change was marked by the involuntary closing of the eyes, which he immediately asked, and obtained, permission to open again. Beyond a slight alteration in his manner, imperceptible to a third person who was not forewarned, and frequently difficult even for myself to appreciate, there is, ever since the first few experiments, no external difference between his trance and his normal condition. During the former, however, he is physically completely under my control, any movement being either inhibited by the merest gesture on my part, or performed in obedience to an expressed wish. M. tells me that he experiences no sense of compulsion by me:—an inhibited movement seeming to be inhibited at its source in his will. Thus, if I tell him that he cannot do a certain thing, he agrees. If I then desire him to try to do it, he explains that he could make the movement if he wished, but that he does not wish. If I then desire him to wish it, he declines. Similarly, an action which I tell him to perform is performed apparently as a free exercise of his own will, and because he prefers to perform it, and the full consciousness that it is a suggestion from myself makes no difference to the sensation of free choice. I have, however, been able to show him that a suggestion to perform some indifferent action such as to sit in a particular chair, or to reveal the position of a hidden coin, which he had previously, while in his normal state, at my instance deliberately made up his mind he would not perform, and which he still objected to perform in his trance state, could nevertheless *not* be resisted if sufficiently often reiterated.

His sensuous suggestibility is strictly limited to certain only of the senses. Taking in order the various senses, I found that I could affect them as follows:

(1.) The sense of sight proved quite insusceptible. I could neither suggest a visual hallucination, nor produce any hallucinated variations of colour or form, nor render invisible a present object.

(2.) The sense of hearing was also refractory. I could neither produce a hallucinated sound, nor render real sounds inaudible.

(3.) Smell and taste were under my control, and I could either

produce a feeling of nausea by suggesting an abominable odour, or vary the taste of things that he might eat or drink. A glass of water took on, according to my direction, the taste of spirits or of wine, followed, if so suggested, by appearances of complete intoxication. A piece of soap which I informed him was of rarest quality, and tasted like chocolate, he ate with much relish till I suddenly woke him up. This experiment was proposed by himself, and he retained throughout the full consciousness that, in point of fact, the soap was soap, and not chocolate.

(4.) As regards the sense of feeling, I was able to produce, but not abolish, the sensation of pain. Thus, while I failed to produce anæsthesia, even to the slightest degree, a suggestion that his chair was hot, or that he had a toothache, would succeed. He would explain during its continuance, that he knew the suggestion was false, and that the pain was not genuinely felt, that the symptoms of discomfort which he exhibited seemed to proceed direct from the suggestion, and the actual discomfort to be deduced from the symptoms. Thus a suggestion that there was a pin in his chair caused him to move uneasily, and to be unable to stop doing so. He said that nevertheless he did not actually feel the physical sensation of pricking, but merely a kind of localized moral discomfort consequent upon his inability to cease showing the uneasiness due to the suggestion of a physical one. A curious result was obtained by giving a suggestion affecting senses respectively subject, and refractory to, my influence. Thus a declaration that he was on the bank of a river and required to cross to the other side, to be fully successful, would involve a visual hallucination—which, as before explained, I was unable to produce—and a tactile hallucination (which was within my power). While seeing nothing before him but the carpet, therefore, he nevertheless felt, on stepping on it, the coldness of the water, and while perfectly conscious that there was no visible river, he found it necessary, when told to cross, spontaneously to take off his shoes and stockings, and roll up his trousers in order to avoid the irresistible suggestion of getting wet. He protested at the same time against the absurdity of his doing so, but explained that he found the precaution followed inevitably from the fear of the sensation of wet.

Suggested impersonations were also fully executed, unless they trenched too blatantly upon the absurd. Thus a suggestion that M. was myself, and that I was he, succeeded; and in his reversed capacity he continued a course of experiments upon myself, devising several original and ingenious varieties to which I, for the sake of the game,

acquiesced in subjecting myself. He also behaved with considerable dignity and *verve* as King Edward VII., until I threw a match at his head, a proceeding which appeared to conflict so strongly with dramatic verisimilitude that he lapsed back into his ordinary hypnotic condition, nor could I reintroduce the impersonation. On the other hand, statements that he was the Empress of China, and that he was a nurse and I a baby, failed to carry any conviction, being either received with a passive assent, or rejected with scorn. In his waking state he explained that he was only conscious that in point of fact he was not the characters that he was bidden to assume, and that if asked he would have said as much, but that he was irresistibly impelled to act as though he were.

I have stated that M. is highly susceptible to post-hypnotic suggestions. The execution of such suggestions is somewhat curious. Since I am unable to affect the continuity of his memory, he is aware, when awaked, of the fact that a suggestion is impending; he is also aware while executing it of the fact that it is a suggestion, though it may be that if there is a considerable interval of time before the suggestion is due the memory of it will fade from his mind, to revive when the time has come. The following instance is of some interest. I told him on one occasion that next day I would ask him to walk with me in the garden, and that when there I would offer him a book, and ask him to read me a passage out of it, but that he would only find himself able to read every alternate word. The following morning, when we went forth, he had a copy of *Punch* in his hand. I asked him if it contained anything good, and, if so, to read it to me. He forthwith, and something to my disappointment, read me a set of verses without a flaw. I then produced my own book, directed his attention to a passage, and asked him to read it aloud. He started doing so, reading, however, only every alternate word, and presently stopped, saying he could not understand what it was all about.

I asked him if he was aware that he was executing a post-hypnotic suggestion. He said that he had forgotten about it, but that he now remembered it clearly. I then asked him to try whether, with the full consciousness that he was the victim of a mere suggestion, he would still be forced to submit to it. The result showed the influence to be unaltered. He said that he was aware that there was something in between the words which he read, but that they conveyed no meaning to his mind; so that while reading aloud he failed to grasp the meaning of the passage; but that if he read it



to himself he understood it without difficulty. As an instance of the accuracy with which the suggestion had operated, it appeared that if he selected a passage himself he was able to read it correctly, whereas if I selected it, though it might be the same passage, he could make nothing of it.

As a contribution to the question as to whether, during the execution of a post-hypnotic suggestion a subject lapses back into the hypnotic state, I may here mention that on my way into the garden I bent over a rhododendron and declared that it smelt of vanilla. He expressed surprise that it should do so, tested it himself, and agreed. On our way back, after the close of the reading experiment, he again paused at this rhododendron to smell it, but found it had lost its scent. He then immediately realized that its first perception of it was due to a suggestion. But this suggestibility did not extend to orders which were more obviously suggestions, except during the actual execution of the post-hypnotic command. Thus I found that, while he was actually engaged in trying to read a selected passage, I could inhibit any movement by a sudden direction to that effect, but that when he ceased reading I was unable to continue the inhibition. If the post-hypnotic suggestion is to be executed shortly after it was given, so that the memory of it does not escape him, the mode of execution is something as follows: I tell him that three minutes after waking he will get up and sit on my knee. Then I wake him.

“Oh, so I’m to sit on your knee, am I?”

“Yes, do you feel as if you were going to?”

“Not in the least; I never felt less inclined to do anything in my life.”

Then we talk of other things. Presently he says:

“Do you know, I do begin to feel as if I should like to sit on your knee. But I won’t.”

Then a little later:

“I say, I really feel a most extraordinary wish to sit on your knee. I know I sha’n’t be happy till I do. You mustn’t mind. I really think I’d better.” . . .

And he does.

I should here state that owing to M.’s ready susceptibility I began to fear I might acquire an influence which would be inconvenient both to him and to me, and so enjoined that thenceforth, whether he wished it or no, I should be unable to hypnotise him unless he previously recited a formula asking me to do so, in a



particular form of words. After several failures I eventually succeeded in impressing this so strongly upon him that it became absolutely effective, and the formula proved requisite before I could, even with the utmost co-operation on his part, influence him in the least. One night, however, after retiring to bed, I was surprised by his entering the room with the request that I should awaken him. I expressed astonishment, and asked whether he was really asleep. He assured me that he was, and explained that while we had been conversing in the drawing-room after dinner, other persons being present, he had experimentally recited the formula, *sotto voce*, and had immediately, unperceived by myself or the others in the room, gone off into the hypnotic state, and could not get out of it again. I protested that this was an extremely unfair trick both on himself and on me, and to guard against its recurrence I enjoined that in future a mere repetition of the formula should not suffice, but that it must be formally written down, signed, and handed to me. This has hitherto proved completely effective, and in the absence of the document no efforts on the part of either of us, however much prolonged, have any result whatever.

I will now describe what appears to me the most interesting feature in M.'s development, viz. the variations that have taken place in his demeanour in the hypnotic state. During the first two or three hypnotizations, his secondary condition was very markedly different from his normal state. His sight seemed dim, and his eyes wore a vague and distant look. His demeanour was heavy, his movements slow, and his manner of speech low, restrained, and quite devoid of its usual vivacity. He exhibited extreme nervousness; the slightest sound caused him to start, and on one occasion, at the sight of a beetle (I was never able to determine whether this animal was real or the creature of self-hallucination), fled across the room in a paroxysm of terror, from which I had some ado to recall him to calmness. Towards myself he exhibited much repugnance, disliking that I should touch or even approach him. I appeared to him in a mist, and as wearing a horrible aspect, with diabolic eyes; nor could any suggestion restore me to favour in his sight. Further, his range of vision was considerably diminished. Whereas his normal reading distance is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ft., he found himself unable to read a book at a greater distance than 6 ins.

After the third experiment many of these symptoms changed. He completely lost his fear of myself, his general nervousness vanished,

his condition was no longer comatose and languid, but resembled very closely his normal state. His speech was indeed somewhat slower, his manner more restrained than was usual in his normal state, but a casual observer would scarcely have recognized anything abnormal. One evening, some time after the establishment of this as his ordinary hypnotic condition, he surprised me by suddenly behaving in quite a different manner. He became extremely hilarious and absurd, jested in an easy way, displayed a tendency for practical jokes upon myself, kicked my clothes about the room, and was generally obstreperous and fantastic, both in his speech and behaviour. I met him in the same spirit till in a moment, without warning, he reverted to his former habit—quiet, speculative, and restrained. Later on, in the same evening, a further relapse into his jocose vein took place. The complete difference between the two conditions, the absolute contrast of the whole manner of the man as presented in each respectively, the alteration in his expression, conduct, and mode of speech, the sudden and unexpected way in which the change took place, sometimes in the middle of a sentence, involving frequently a break in his thought, and a cessation and repudiation of what he had just been saying, brought me tentatively to regard these variations as a kind of embryonic specimen of multiple personality.

In course of time further variants developed, quite spontaneously, each differing markedly from any other. These moods, if I may so call them, do not attain to the dignity of the personalities in the classic cases of Léonie or of Louis V., for example, and indeed M. disclaims for them anything in the nature of distinct personalities. He is conscious of complete continuity between them, a continuity far more perfect than that between his waking and hypnotic conditions. Their appearance is beyond his control, and independent of my suggestion, though I have found I can produce one or other of them at will. It is, he explains, as though he were a magic-lantern, with many-coloured slides passing in sequence before his eyes, so that he looks out upon the world, and thinks and feels regarding it, through a constantly changing medium. For it is not only in externalities that these moods vary from one another: they carry with them each a different set of emotions, tastes, and a different mental attitude. For reference, they may be christened as follows:

(A) the "nervous" mood, *i.e.* the one in which appeared during the first three hypnotizations. (I may perhaps be wrong in classifying this as a distinct mood. He has never since lapsed back into it, and I have not attempted to reproduce it by suggestion.)

(B) the "ordinary" or "quiet" mood, which during a considerable portion of the series was the only one that appeared.

(C) the "malicious" mood, of which I shall speak later.

(D) the "gay" mood, almost identical with (C), except that there appears no aggressive wish to do injury.

(E) the "depressed" mood, in which he expresses himself as utterly and beyond bounds miserable, and ready for no reason to burst into tears. The following are some instances of the complete change that these varying moods involve: While in his normal state he is a man of gentle nature, in his "malicious" mood he expresses a strong wish to inflict pain, and frequently asks me to allow him to stab me in order to give him the satisfaction of seeing the blood flow. Indeed, I have often detected him surreptitiously extracting a penknife from his pocket, with a view to gratifying this peculiar and alarming inclination. He confesses to a wish to vivisect, or, failing that, to strangle. I gave him permission on one occasion to do his worst, and he made so determined an attempt on me with a towel round my throat that I was forced to bid him forego the remainder of the experiment. Again, while in his normal waking state a person of well-bred and courteous demeanour, and a religious and idealistic temperament, in his "gay" mood he displays an astounding lack of the ordinary conventions or proprieties, professes a complete contempt for either religion or morality, and a disregard for any responsibility in his actions, becomes, in his own phrase, a child of nature, non-moral, though not vicious. If I offer a suggestion not in consonance with the particular mood he may be in, I may insist upon its execution quite vainly so long as he continues in that mood. If, however, I procure a change in the mood itself—a change which it is beyond his power to resist—he is immediately ready to fall in with the suggestion. Thus, if he is in his "ordinary" or "quiet" mood, and I suggest something of which he disapproves, no amount of insistence on my part will avail to get him to perform it. I then say: "Very well, I will put you into your 'gay' mood, and then you will not object." He may protest against the change, but vainly. I say: "When I count 5 you will pass into the 'gay' mood. 1—2—3—4—5!" Immediately a change passes over his face; he generally rises from his chair, rollicks about the room, and professes himself ready to execute even the most preposterous suggestions of which he had scouted the very idea only the moment before.

M.'s waking memory of what passes in his hypnotic state, while always continuous, was, as I have elsewhere indicated, subject in the

earlier experiments to occasional intermissions. Towards the close of the series, however, the continuity became perfect, and he is therefore able to pass in review, during his waking state, the various "moods" in which he has undergone his hypnotic adventures. Though he may feel surprise, from his waking standpoint, at his having expressed such and such a sentiment, or done such and such an action while in one of these moods, his memory is perfect, not only of the sentiment or action itself, but also of the emotions and points of view accompanying them. We soon began to discuss, in his waking state, the probable limits of his acquiescence to distasteful suggestions, as it began to seem likely that, granting that they were given while he was in an appropriate mood, there might be no limits at all. And at first we both came to the conclusion that this was probably the case.

I obtained his permission to test this more systematically, and we arranged to try the effect of certain suggestions, certain of which were proposed by himself, and to which he agreed that in his waking state he would feel the strongest objections. I found at first that if I gave such a suggestion in his "ordinary" or "quiet" mood he would flatly refuse to execute it, and be rather indignant at my insistence. Nor could any power cause him to yield. If I then put him into his "gay" mood, he at once expressed surprise at his former objection and explained it on the ground that he had been in his "quiet" mood, for the prejudices of which, he declared, there was no accounting, and for which, in his "gay" mood, he appears to entertain the same kind of contempt that a music-hall manager would for the London County Council. Short of the obvious limitations that must be imposed on experimentation of this kind, even the most repugnant suggestions have, by this device, gained acceptance. It is impossible, in practice, to prove how far this kind of thing really will go, or to put to the test an actually criminal or immoral action. Nor have I been sufficiently heroic to test whether, in point of fact, M. would really vivisect me, if permitted, or stab me in the jugular or strangle me, though I am inclined, from certain indications of the fundamental change of instinct that takes place, to believe his assurance that he would do it with the greatest delight.

Admitting the weakness of any evidence short of such experimentation, I cannot but express my own belief that when M. assured me that, no matter how repugnant an action might be to him in his waking state, it would cease to be so if suggested, or permitted, while he was in an appropriate mood, he was probably correct in his statement. It is true that later experiments caused us both to



modify our conclusion as to the absolute irresistibility of these suggestions, and on the last occasion on which any such were tried he opposed to my most artful endeavours a completely successful resistance. And this, notwithstanding the fact that the particular suggestion was one to which on a former occasion I had easily gained his acquiescence, and which, in his waking state, he had just consented to my trying to repeat. I think, however, that this fortification of his power of resistance may be traced to my frequent references to the matter in his waking state, and to my repeated requests that he should resolve to try and resist to the uttermost.

It is the first occasion in my own experience that I have observed the phenomena presented in these so-called "moods" to which M. is subject, and I am not aware of a similar condition having previously been described elsewhere. It is therefore impossible to argue from this particular case to the general. It is accordingly to this particular case that I must limit my conclusion, which is, repugnant and unexpected as I confess it to be, that, in the hands of an unscrupulous operator, there was at one period of the experiment possibly no limit to the acquiescence that might, by artful procedure, have been induced to suggestions which, in his normal state, would be highly distasteful to the subject; and that the moral prepossessions which are usually considered to be ample safeguards against a misuse of the power of suggestion would have been, in this case at all events, an insufficient protection. And I am of opinion that even now it is by no means improbable that suggestions which, though repugnant to him in his waking state, are spontaneously consonant to him, say in his "malicious" mood,—such, for example, as a suggestion to stab or to strangle,—might not most blithe-heartedly be acted upon.



## II.

## MALAY SPIRITUALISM.

BY WALTER SKEAT.

[THE following is part of a paper which appeared under the above title in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XIII., No. 2, June, 1902, and is here reprinted by the kind permission of the Council of the Folk-Lore Society. The paper was read at the General Meeting of the Society for Psychological Research on May 30th, 1902.—EDITOR.]

When I recently had the honour of being invited by the Council to read a paper before this Society,<sup>1</sup> I had nothing ready which seemed suitable for the purpose. It appeared to me, however, that it would be a useful piece of work to bring together in one paper the main facts concerning the spiritualistic beliefs of the Peninsular Malays, with special reference to motor automatisms of the type of the Divining-Rod, where the motions of an inert object in contact with a human being may be regarded as externalisations of subconscious knowledge. Out of this idea the present paper has grown.<sup>2</sup> I shall therefore now endeavour in the first place to put the details of the Malay performances before you as clearly as possible. I shall then proceed to state the problem, in so far as it concerns ethnology, and shall only refer incidentally to the few, and, I fear, somewhat negative results which may be of general psychical interest. Speaking generally, most forms of spiritualism known to us in Europe are most likely known in some form or other to Malay magicians, even though they may not all have been yet recorded. Devil-dancing is practised, and apparitions and what may be called Pelting Spirits (*Poltergeister*) are certainly most strongly believed in. Houses are left uninhabited on account of phenomena of the classes referred to, and I myself once lived for many

<sup>1</sup> The Folk-Lore Society.

<sup>2</sup> For many of the notes, and for much valuable assistance in the compiling of this paper, I am indebted to Mr. N. W. Thomas.

months in a Malay house which, according to the Malays, was unmistakably haunted.

Of spirit-writing and levitation, no purely Malay accounts are yet to hand. It would be unsafe to assume the absence of the first till we know for certain if there is any really automatic form of *planchette* practised in China, beside the case described by Professor Giles as long ago as 1879, in which a poem was composed for the writers. As to the second, there are many references in Malay literature to the flying performances of Malayan heroes, whilst to this day it is alleged in Selangor that people possessed by the Pontianak<sup>1</sup> (one of the tremendous birth-demons of Malay tradition), acquire supernatural powers, enabling them to climb trees of immense height and to walk in safety along branches which are no thicker than a man's thumb, a manifest impossibility under normal conditions. A similar power is also claimed for the young girls who perform what the Malays call the Monkey-dance, in which, however, they are possessed by the Monkey-spirit.

The burning of incense and recital of a charm called *Péruang* enables Malay magicians to walk upon water without sinking in it beyond the ankles. A similar charm in the case of the Malay form of ordeal by diving enables the innocent party to remain under water for an incredible period, which, according to the Malays, sometimes extended to "almost" three-quarters of an hour, in fact in some cases (it was declared) he would remain under water until the spectators lost patience and dragged him out, whereas the guilty party begins to choke immediately. A magician from Perak informed me once that he had used the power of causing a sandbank to rise at sea between his own boat and that of his pursuers. I at once made him a sporting offer of twenty dollars if he would give me an exhibition of it, but he informed me that it could only be done when he was really in danger, and not for "swagger." The same man, moreover, claimed to possess

<sup>1</sup>In the Malay Peninsula the Pontianak (or Mati-anak) is usually distinguished as the ghost of a *child* who has died at birth, the ghost of a *woman* who has died in child-birth being called "langsuir," and credited with all the attributes which elsewhere belong to the Pontianak. Cf. Col. J. Low on Siamese customs in *J. A. I.*, vol. i., p. 361, which I had not seen when I wrote to the above effect in *Malay Magic*, pp. 318 and 327. There is no doubt that the two are often confused, but the belief in the langsuir, as distinguished from the Pontianak, is certainly the usual explanation in the Peninsula. [Cf. Kruijt in *Med. Ned. Zend.*, xxxix., p. 17, and xlii., p. 433; also Riedel, 57, 58, 81, 184, 239, 267 (and in several other passages), though in none of these is the langsuir once mentioned. N. W. T.]

the power of clairvoyance, but failed in an easy test which he himself proposed.

The first class of spiritualistic ceremonies, which happens to be the one to which I specially wish to direct your attention to-night, consists of a simple form of automatism, as represented by the movements of inert objects. No form of table-turning is of course practised by the Malays, who pass their lives for the most part in scattered communities, either in the jungle or at sea, and who do not therefore make any appreciable use of such luxuries as tables and chairs. Nevertheless a fairly close parallel to our own table-turning exhibitions may be found in the dance-ritual of inanimate objects which the Malay magicians exhibit, though we do not as yet possess any clue as to the real purpose of such performances.

A second class of automatisms, allied in form to these dances, includes a large number of ways of divining by means of the apparently intelligent movements of inanimate objects *in contact* with the magician.

A third class, which requires to be distinguished to some extent from automatic phenomena, consists mainly of ceremonies by which certain demons, animals, or even inert objects are made to act upon persons at a distance. This kind of ceremony corresponds to what is usually known as a "sending."

The fourth and last class of ceremonies to which I shall refer includes such rites as are intended to induce possession either for divinatory purposes or for that of exorcism. These four classes will now be taken in the order in which I have mentioned them.

I. In the first class of motor automatisms I place those ceremonies of which the purpose does not lie on the surface, and can only be inferred by the European observer.

The *Palm-blossom Dance* is a very curious exhibition, which I once saw performed in the Langat district of Selangor. Two freshly-gathered sprays of areca-blossom, each about four feet in length, were deposited upon a new mat near a tray containing a censer and three special kinds of sacrificial rice. No particular season was specified. The magician ("Che Ganti" by name) commenced the performance by playing a prelude on his violin, and a few minutes later Che Ganti's wife (an aged Selangor woman) took some of the sacrificial rice in her hand and began to chaunt a weird sort of invocation, addressed to the seven sister spirits, probably the souls of the palm. She was almost immediately joined in the chaunt by a younger woman. The invocation consists of four separate sets of seven stanzas, each stanza con-

taining four short lines, which rhyme alternately. The first set begins as follows :

“ Thus I brace up, I brace up the palm-blossom,  
 And summon the elder sister to descend by herself.  
 Thus I brace up, I brace up the palm-blossom,  
 And summon the second sister to descend with the first.”

The same words are repeated *mutatis mutandis* until all seven sisters have been summoned to descend, the witch then covers the two sprays of palm-blossom with a Malay plaid skirt or wrapper and five cubits of white cloth, folded double and fumigated. The chaunt now changes abruptly into the second set of seven stanzas :

“ Borrow a hammer, borrow an anvil to forge the neckbones  
 of this our sting-ray (*i.e.* the sheaf of blossom).  
 Borrow an orchard, borrow a courtyard,  
 To bring down upon earth the fairy sisters.”

Six stanzas follow, in which the names of six other parts of the sting-ray, *i.e.* the head, wings, tail, gills, etc., are successively substituted. At this point rice is thrown over one of the two sprays, its sheath is opened, and the contents fumigated. Then the old woman takes the newly-fumigated spray between her hands, holding it upright at the base with her hands just resting on the ground, and the third set of stanzas commences with the words :

“ Dig up, O dig up the wild ginger-plant,  
 Dig till you get a finger's breadth or two of it.  
 Seek for, O seek for a magnificent domain  
 Into which to bring down the fairy sisters.”

The remaining six stanzas of this set are similar to the first, with variations appropriate to each one of the six remaining spirits. During the chaunting of this third set, the erect spray of Palm-blossom, held between the witch's hands, commenced swaying, at first almost imperceptibly, to the tune of the music, its motion becoming more and more accentuated as the chaunt proceeded.

The last set of stanzas proceeded with the words :

“ Bear on high the betel-rack, bear on high the betel-dish,  
 Bear them on high in the midst of the pleasure garden.  
 Come hither, my love, come hither, my life,  
 Come hither and seat yourself in the courtyard centre.”

The last six stanzas vary only in the invitations addressed to the spirits, which are requested to ascend the house-ladder and wash their feet, to take their seat upon the mats that are spread for them, and to enjoy to the full the good things (*e.g.* betel-leaf, etc.) which their

hosts have provided for their refreshment. The invitation concludes with an appeal to the spirits not to be too rough, but to be mild and gentle, and as its wailing notes die away, it is believed that the seven spirits descend and "pereh" like birds upon the palm-blossom. At this point the fiddle stopped and tambourines were substituted, the spray of blossom forthwith proceeding to jump about on its base, as if it were indeed possessed, until it eventually dashed itself violently down upon the mat-covered floor of the dwelling.<sup>1</sup>

After one or two repetitions of this performance, with Che Ganti's wife as the medium, other persons present (myself amongst them) were invited to try their luck with it, and did so with varying success, which depended, I was told, upon the impressionability of their souls, as the palm-blossom spray would not dance for any one whose soul was not impressionable. I myself must unfortunately have been one of these people, as I never experienced the slightest tremor, and the palm-blossom remained motionless until I got tired of waiting, and moved it myself, when my doing so was of course hailed as the manifest work of the spirit.

When the first blossom-sheaf had been destroyed by the rough treatment which it had to undergo (as each time at the conclusion of the dance it was dashed upon the ground), the second was duly fumigated and introduced to the company, and finally the performance was brought to a close by chaunting a set of stanzas in which the spirits are requested to return to their own place. These latter commenced as follows :

" I slip the palm-blossom, I slip it,  
I slip it into the white bowl,  
Escort the fairies, escort them,  
Escort them unto the white heaven."

The remaining stanzas are precisely similar, with the exception of the colours assigned to the bowl and the heavens, which are described successively as black, green, blue, red, purple, and yellow. The two sheaves were then carried out of the house and deposited on the ground underneath a banana-tree. I was told that if this closing part of the performance were not carried out with scrupulous care the spirits would not leave the house, and its inmates would be strange in their head for days, even if, indeed, none of them went mad.

The *Dancing Fish-trap* is a spiritualistic performance in which a fish-

<sup>1</sup> If I remember rightly Che Ganti's wife retained her hold of the spray until it had dashed itself upon the ground two or three times, when she dropped it and let it lie.



trap (*lukah*) is employed instead of the spray of palm-blossom, and a different invocation is used. The fish-trap, moreover, is dressed up much in the same way as one of our own "scare-crows," so as to present a rude sort of resemblance to the human figure. Its "dress" consists of a woman's jacket and plaid skirt (*sarong*), both of which should (if possible) have been worn previously. A stick is then run through the upper part of the trap to take the arms of the jacket and a cocoanut-shell (preferably a *sterile* one) is clapped on the top to serve as the fish-trap's head. The trap, when fully dressed, is held a few inches above the ground by two or three people, each of whom applies both his hands to the bottom of the Fish-trap, in a manner similar to that employed in our own table-turning performances, and the invocation is forthwith chaunted in the same manner and to the same accompaniment as that used in the palm-blossom performance. At the close of the invocation the magician whispers, so to speak, into the fish-trap's ear, bidding it not to disgrace him, but rise up and dance; and presently the fish-trap begins to rock to and fro, and to leap about in a manner which, of course, proves it to be possessed by the spirits.

Of the *Dancing-Spoon* of the Malays we are told in *Primitive Culture*, ii., 152: "Mr. Darwin saw two Malay women on Keeling Island, who held a wooden spoon, dressed in clothes like a doll; this spoon had been carried to the grave of a dead man, and becoming inspired at full moon, in fact lunatic, it danced about convulsively, like a table or a hat at a modern spirit séance." This is of course an automatism, not a case of movement without contact.

II. In the next class I place those motor automatisms in which a definite purpose, easily discernible by the uninitiated, is consciously pursued. In this case also the objects are put in motion by the unconscious muscular action of those in contact with them.

*The Divining Lemon.*—For divinatory purposes the Penang Malay takes a "rough-coated" lemon, a hen's egg, a wax taper, four bananas, four cigarettes, four rolled-up quids of betel-leaf, several handfuls of sacrificial rice, one of the prickles of a thorn-back mudfish, a needle with a torn eye (selected from a packet containing a score of needles, out of which, however it must be the only one so damaged), and a couple of small birches made of the leaf-ribs of palms—one with seven twigs and the other with twelve. From among the foregoing articles, with the exception of the lemon, the fish-prickle, and the needle, two equal portions are made up, one portion, together with the birch of

seven twigs, being deposited under a tree outside the house. When deposited, the egg must be cracked, and the cigarettes and the taper be lighted. The taper is then taken up between the outspread fingers of the joined hands, and "waved" slowly towards the right, centre, and left. It is then deposited on the ground, and the taper presently commences to burn blue, this being regarded as an "acknowledgment" on the part of the spirit. The fish-prickle and the needle are now thrust horizontally through the lower part of the lemon, at right angles to each other, and left so that their four ends are slightly projecting. A silken cord of seven different-coloured strands is then slipped round these ends, and serves as a means of suspending the lemon over the brazier of incense, the upper end of the cord being held in the left hand and the birch in the right. Everything being prepared, the magician, after the customary scattering of rice and fumigation of the birch and the lemon, recites the appropriate charm, and presently commences to put questions to the lemon, which the spirit is now supposed to have entered, rebuking and threatening it with the birch whenever it fails to answer directly and to the point. The spirit's conversational powers were, however, extremely limited, being confined to two signs expressing "Yes" and "No." The affirmative was indicated by a pendulum-like swing of the lemon, which rocked to and fro with more or less vehemence according to the emphasis with which the reply was supposed to be delivered. The negative, on the other hand, was indicated by a complete cessation of motion on the part of the lemon. When the lemon is required to discover the name of a thief, the names of all those who are at all likely to have committed the theft are written on scraps of paper and arranged in a circle round the brazier, when the lemon will at once swing in the direction of the name of the guilty party. The most propitious night for the performance of this ceremony is believed to be a Tuesday.

*The Cup and Ring Ordeal.*—Another and perhaps a commoner form of the foregoing ordeal is described by Maxwell, as follows: "Supposing that a theft has taken place in a house, all the inmates are assembled, and their names are written on the edge of a white cup, on which some sentences of the Koran are also inscribed. A ring is then suspended by a maiden's hair and held right over the middle of the cup. It is then swung round gently, and the name which it first strikes is the name of the thief."

In a slightly different form of the divination, the instrument is a bowl, which is filled with water and covered over with a white cloth, on which the scraps of paper with the names are successively deposited.

The bowl is supported by two men on their knuckles, and a passage from the Koran is read. When the scrap of paper containing the name of the thief is laid on the cloth covering, the bowl twists itself off the men's knuckles, and falls to the ground with a crash.

*The Sieve Ordeal.*—In some cases a sieve (*nyiru*) is similarly used. Mystic sentences are written upon it with turmeric, and when all the household is assembled a man grasps the sieve by the edge and holds it out horizontally. Presently it is seen to commence oscillating up and down, and pulls away from the man who is holding it, the latter following its lead until it reaches and touches the thief.

*The Divining-rod.*—The last object of this class is the Malay divining-rod, which is similarly gifted with the power of making supernatural movements. This is a rod or birch of *rotan sega* (the best marketable variety of cane), which may consist either of a single stem, or of any odd number of stems up to nine. The handle of the rod or rods is bound with a hank of "Javanese" yarn, which may or may not be stained yellow. The sorcerer who wishes to use it grasps the butt-end of the rod in his right fist, and after burning incense and scattering sacrificial rice, repeats the appropriate charm, which commences with a summons to the spirit to descend from the mountains and enter into his embodiment. If the invocation is properly performed, the spirit descends, and entering the sorcerer's head by way of the fontanel, proceeds down his arm and into the rod itself. The result is that the tip of the rod commences to rotate with rapidly increasing velocity, until the sorcerer loses consciousness, in which case the rod will point in the direction of any sort of lost or hidden treasure, which it may be the object of the operators to discover. Even underground water could, I was assured, be thus discovered.

III. We now come to the third class—that of demons, animals, and even inert objects, which are made to act on persons at a distance—a class which as I have already said includes *sendings* of every description.<sup>1</sup>

*Sendings.*—One form of sending is described as follows: "When one individual has animosity against another, he constructs a dagger upon magic principles, and recites a prayer over it. Then, if his adversary lives at a distance, the sorcerer, seizing the dagger by the

<sup>1</sup> [The magician is regarded (sometimes at any rate) as sending his magic bone or stone *in propria persona* into the body of his enemy. Cf. Nys, *Chez les Abarambos*, p. 117. N.W.T.] Among the Malays, however, these ceremonies are called not *sendings* but *pointings*, and I am not at all sure how far this view applies.

handle, stabs with the point in the direction of his enemy, whereupon the latter immediately falls sick. Blood gathers on the point of the dagger, and this the man *sucks*<sup>1</sup> exclaiming: 'Now I am satisfied,' whilst his adversary becomes speechless and expires."

Another form of *Tuju*, in which the bow appears to have been employed as the instrument, was related to me by a Malay magician as follows: If you wish to abduct another person's soul, you must go out of the house either at daybreak or "when the newly-risen moon looks red," and standing with the big toe of the right foot resting upon the big toe of the left, make a trumpet by putting your right hand before your mouth, and recite through it the charm, which runs as follows:

"Om, I loose my shaft, I loose it, and the moon clouds over,  
I loose it and the sun is extinguished,  
I loose it and the stars burn dim.  
Yet I shoot not at sun, moon, or stars,  
But at the heart-strings of a child of the human race, so-and-so.

Cluck, cluck! soul of so-and-so.  
Come and walk with me,  
Come and sit with me,  
Come and sleep, and share my pillow."

The text of this charm would, I think, be conclusive proof, even if there were no other, that the form of magic called arrow-sending, or rather arrow-pointing, was formerly in vogue among Malay magicians.

The next three *sendings* are taken from an old but valuable authority on the Peninsula named Begbie. One form of sending it is called the *Tuju Jantong*, or the "heart-sending"; *jantong* being the Malay name both for the human heart and also for the cordiform top of the newly-opened bunch of bananas. The person who employs this form of witchcraft has to search for one of these cordiform tops and perform a magic rite under it. He next has to tie the banana-top, and having recited a prayer over it, burns the point which communicates with the heart of his adversary, inflicting excruciating agony. When he is tired of tormenting him he cuts the *jantong*, and the man's heart simultaneously drops from its proper situation, blood issuing from the mouth of the expiring sufferer.

In the remaining instances, the sendings apparently consisted of insects.<sup>2</sup> The *Tuju Jindang* is a kind of sending in which the sorcerer

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *Les Missions Catholiques*, 1893, p. 345. N.W.T.]

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. Martius, *Zur. Eth. Brasiliens*, p. 78; *Les Missions Catholiques*, 1889, p. 377; Torrend, *South African Bantu Languages*, p. 292, etc. N.W.T.]



employs an evil spirit in form of a caterpillar, which is carefully reared in a new vessel and fed upon roasted padi. It partakes of the appearance of the silkworm. Its keeper directs it to attack the enemy, saying: "Go and devour the heart and entrails of so-and-so," or words to that effect, whereupon it departs and flies against the ill-fated individual, entering generally either at the back of the hand or between the shoulders. At the moment of contact a sensation is produced as if a bird had flown against one's body, but it is invisible, and the only sign of its presence is the livid hue of the spot where it has entered. On entering, it forthwith performs its mission, inflicting intolerable torment. The body gradually becomes blue, and the victim expires.

One of the spirits most dreaded by the Malays is the *Polong*, whose shape is described as resembling nothing in the animal world, but whose head is formed very much like the handle of a *kris*; the eyes being situated at either end of the cross-guard, and the upper part of the blade representing the neck, from the extremity of which branch out two spinous leg-like processes, running nearly parallel with its spiral filiform body, widening out at the insertion, and gradually approximating at the extremities; at least such is the form of the *Polong* which a Malay physician and dealer in the black art will rudely sketch if requested to do so. It is difficult to believe, although we are so assured, that this demon with whose figure the Malays are so well acquainted, is nevertheless always invisible. It is death by the Malayan code to keep one, but it is nevertheless asserted that several females are in the habit of doing so, as the possession of a *Polong* imparts exquisite beauty to its owner, even though she be naturally ugly. The men seldom keep one of these spirits unless they have some revenge to gratify, though occasionally they keep them for hire by others. The *Polong* is kept in a small earthen bottle, whose neck is sufficiently wide to permit the introduction of a finger. As it feeds upon human blood, its keeper cuts his finger once or twice a week, either on Friday or Monday night, and inserts it in the bottle for the *Polong* to suck. Should this be neglected the demon issues from his confinement and sucks the whole body until it becomes black and blue. Directly any one is attacked by a *Polong*, he either screams out, and falls down in a swoon, or becomes deathlike and speechless. Sometimes possession is shown by incoherent raving, and in other cases by acts of violence on the bystanders. Occasionally, even death itself ensues. The *Polong* is under strict management, being obliged to inflict the punishment in that kind and degree which his master directs. The Malays say that this form of possession (like that of



werwolfism<sup>1</sup>) is infectious, at least in some cases, as people who have been so incautious as to ask the sufferer the simple question, "What is the matter? Have you got a *Polong*?" are instantly affected in a similar manner. Mr. Thompson (of Singapore) saw a man who positively assured him that he had seen no less than twenty individuals thus seized at the same time.

The soothsayer or physician is called in to the patient in order to exorcise the spirit. He draws a representation of it in a white basin, and pouring water on to it, desires the patient to drink the same. He then holds the ends of the possessed person's thumbs, in order to prevent the escape of the *Polong* (that being the door by which it makes its exits and entrances), and questions it as to its motives for tormenting the individual. Having received its replies through the mouth of the possessed, he proceeds to search all over the body for the lurking place of the spirit, which, notwithstanding its invisibility, is supposed to be perfectly tangible, and to be lodged between the skin and the flesh.<sup>2</sup> As soon as the magician has discovered the spot in which the *Polong* is concealed, he exacts an oath of it to the effect that its previous replies were true, and that it will never re-enter the body of the person from whom it is about to be expelled. The sorcerer sometimes, indeed, exerts so great a power over the *Polong*, as to compel it to enter into and destroy its own master.

According to Malay accounts, the proper way to secure a *Polong* is to deposit the blood of a murdered man in a small bottle or flask, and recite sundry conjurations over it for a period of seven or fourteen days, when a noise will be heard in the bottle resembling the chirping of young birds. The operator then cuts his finger and inserts it into the bottle, when the *Polong* sucks it. This is repeated daily, and the person who thus supports the *Polong* is called its father, if a man, or its mother, if she happens to be a woman.<sup>3</sup>

The *Polong* is, I was assured, invariably preceded by its pet or plaything, the *Pelesit*,<sup>4</sup> which appears to be usually identified with a species of house-cricket, of which I was once shown a specimen by a Malay in a small glass bottle or phial. Whenever the *Polong* is commissioned by its adopted parents to attack a new victim, it sends

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *Tijdschrift*, xli., 458. N.W.T.]

<sup>2</sup> [Something analogous appears to be the Japanese belief in possession by foxes, which enter the body under the finger-nails. N.W.T.]

<sup>3</sup> Another Malay superstition is that the blood of murdered men turns into fireflies; cf. *Malay Magic*, 329.

<sup>4</sup> [Cf. *Journal Indian Archipelago*, 307; *J. A. I.*, xxiv., 288. N.W.T.]

the *Pelesit* on before it, and as soon as the latter, flying along in a headlong fashion, usually tail foremost, enters its victim's body and begins to chirrup, the *Polong* follows.

The *Pelesit* appears to be occasionally kept either as a substitute for, or as actually identical with, the *Polong*, and I was told that it was, like the *Polong*, occasionally caught and kept in a bottle, and fed either with parched rice or with rice stained yellow with turmeric, or with blood drawn from the tip of the fourth finger, and that when its owner desired to get rid of it, it was buried in the ground. One of the most widely recognised ways of securing a *Pelesit*, which is regarded in some parts of the Peninsula as a valuable species of property, consists in exhuming the body of a child and carrying it at full moon to an ant-hill, where it is reanimated and presently lolls out its tongue; when this happens the tongue must be bitten off and buried in a place where three roads meet, when it will eventually develop into a *Pelesit*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Polong* is also sometimes identified or confused with a familiar spirit called *Bajang* in Kedah, which appears, however, to have originally been regarded as an entirely distinct conception, since its usual embodiment is stated to have been a polecat or rather civet cat.

We have, then, in the list of Malay familiar spirits, the *Polong* (or *Bajang*) and its plaything or messenger the *Pelesit*, the latter of which occasionally appears to be actually regarded in some cases as the *Polong's* embodiment, although it is more usually considered as distinct from the *Polong*. During the Cambridge Expedition of 1899 we came more than once on the track of these peenliar demons. At a village near Trengganu I succeeded, by some strategy, in obtaining a snapshot of a woman who kept a familiar spirit, but most probably she guessed that something was up, for next morning my Malay friend who had helped to arrange the matter came and told me she had just been to see him, and had complained that she had dreamed that a great white magician from over the sea had stolen away her soul. I sent her a present of a little gold dust which I had recently purchased, but even then she was only pacified with difficulty, as she complained I had not sent her quite enough of it.

It is interesting to note the symptoms displayed by the supposed victims of the demons I have just been describing. In various Malay accounts we are told that a person possessed by a *Polong*, whether a virgin or a married woman, either falls into a death-like swoon, or cries out and loses consciousness of what he (or she) is doing, and tears and

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. Crooke, *Introduction*, p. 360. For magic properties of tongue, cf. *Report Bur. Eth.*, 1881-2, p. 111 ff. N.W.T.]

throws off his or her clothing, biting and striking bystanders, and blind and deaf to everything. A certain sign that one of these fits is coming on is for the sick person to rave about cats. When the *Polong* has been exorcised, the sick person at once recovers consciousness, but is left weak and feeble; but if the means adopted for exorcising it are unsuccessful, the person who is attacked yells and shrieks in anger, and after a day or two dies. After death blood comes bubbling forth from the mouth, and the whole body is blue with bruises.

At a place on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula I came across a different belief, viz., that in a particular species of vampire. At Patani, one of the members of the expedition (Mr. Gwynne-Vaughan) informed me that he was walking down the main street of the town when he was stopped and asked if he wished to see some skulls. He had the presence of mind to reply in the affirmative, and was taken outside the town and there shown two skulls which had been feeding, it was alleged, upon the soul of a Malay woman. I myself then went to see them, and bought the two skulls for a couple of dollars, and brought them home.

Those who are familiar with T. Lockwood Kipling's fine work on *Man and Beast in India* will doubtless remember the beautiful specimens which he gives of the caligraphic pictures of which oriental penmen are so fond. Pictures of this kind are occasionally employed by Malay magicians for various objects, and form one of the methods adopted for guarding a house against the entry of the familiar spirits of which I have been speaking. They consist, as in India, of the names of God and of various prophets, and prayers cleverly woven into a design, which is believed to furnish a complete protection against the spirits referred to.

IV. Of the ceremonies of the fourth class, viz. Possession and Devil-dancing, I have seen, perhaps, altogether about half a dozen performances, though I need scarcely remark that it is a most difficult task for a European to obtain permission to attend such ceremonies at all, and it can only be done by possessing a strong friend (so to speak) at court.

At these performances the magician and a large number of his friends and relations being assembled in the sick man's house, the magician seats himself on the ground facing an attendant who chaunts the invocation, accompanying himself upon the Malay three-stringed viol. After much burning of benzoin and scattering of sacrificial rice the spirit descends, entering the magician's body through the fontanel. The magician is at once seized with convulsive twitchings which seem

to spread all over his body, and these are accompanied by a rapid rotatory motion of the head, which he makes revolve from right to left at a tremendous pace,<sup>1</sup> shaking at the same time his shoulders and thighs, and getting more and more violent until the whole body is quaking like a jelly, thus producing an almost painfully vivid imitation of an epileptic fit. Soon, however, he falls down in a state of what is doubtless real exhaustion, and after an interval rises again and commences to dance. The entire process is repeated several times; and a quiet interval then follows, during which the magician, sitting on the ground, replies in a high, squeaky, unnatural voice to any questions that may be put to him, not merely as regards the welfare of his patient, but even as regards private and personal matters, which are of interest only to the patient's friends and relations. In the course of this catechism the magician expounds the cause and nature of the sick man's illness, as well as the remedies which should be adopted for his recovery.

Among the oracles thus delivered at a performance attended by Mr. F. F. Laidlaw and myself in Kelantan, there was one which is perhaps well worth recording. We had arranged next day to attend a Malay bull-fight, to which we had been invited by His Highness the Raja Muda. These bull-fights are not fought on the unequal lines of the spectacles called by that name in civilised Europe, but consist of a fight on equal terms between two powerful and carefully trained bulls, which seldom do each other or any one else much injury, and which as exhibitions of strength are exciting to watch. During the catechising of the magician to which I have alluded, he was asked to give what I believe is called the "straight tip" as to the probable winner of next day's contest, and gave as his selection a bull named Awang Ranggong. On the following afternoon Mr. Laidlaw and I were sitting on the dais next to His Highness, and when the bulls were brought on the field His Highness asked me which bull I thought looked most likely to win. Remembering the sorecerer's tip, I replied "Awang Ranggong," though I did not know one bull from the other, and in the result "Awang Ranggong" certainly won hands down, breaking his opponent's horn in a few rounds and driving him off the field in most ignominious fashion. The sorecerer's reputation as a good "judge of cattle" naturally went up, though I must confess that it would take a great deal more proof than was actually forthcoming to make me believe that there could have been anything supernatural about the sorecerer's tip. The sorecerer appeared to remember what he had said when we talked with him

<sup>1</sup>[Cf. Wetterstrand, *Hypnotism*, p. 33. N.W.T.]

afterwards, and I am inclined to look upon the performance as a very clever piece of acting, the voluntary or "conscious" element being often probably far greater than is imagined.

[In the remainder of the paper Mr. Skeat discusses the question of the interpretation of the ceremonies, the purposes which they are supposed to subserve, and the indications they afford as to the beliefs and habits of thought of the Malays. This part is here omitted, as bearing less directly on the subject of psychical research.—EDITOR.]



## III.

## THE POLTERGEIST, HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

BY ANDREW LANG.

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To the *Proceedings S.P.R.* (Part XXX. 1897, Vol. XII. pp. 45-115) Mr. Podmore contributed an article on "Poltergeists." After analysing eleven then recent cases, he found common trickery detected in four, and confessed in three instances, and he inferred that trickery was the "true and sufficient explanation," probably in the whole set. In much the most curious example (1) that of Worksop, in 1883, the witnesses were "imperfectly educated, and did not give their testimony till some weeks after the event." In a little discussion with Mr. Podmore, I pointed out that some witnesses, including a policeman of sceptical character, gave evidence at the time of the events, and I published that testimony extracted from the local newspaper of the date.<sup>1</sup> The interval of some weeks before the persons were re-examined had produced no additional marvels. I am rather inclined to doubt, as will later be shown, whether memory, after a lapse of time, is always so mythopoeic, so apt to exaggerate, as Mr. Podmore believes: and we know that, among the educated, memory is often inclined to minimize extraordinary occurrences. A case in point is that of Lord Fortescue, who, as a very old man, about 1850, denied that he had heard of the wicked Lord Lyttelton's ghost story, though he was in the house when Lord Lyttelton died. Yet Lady Mary Coke, in her journal (privately printed by the Earl of Home) for the date, tells the tale on the authority of Lord (then Mr.) Fortescue. Lord Chesterfield said that, if a man indubitably rose from the dead, in three days the Archbishop of Canterbury would disbelieve it. Probably most of us know that, if anything very much out of the usual has come into our experience, we gradually distrust our own impressions, and reason the matter away. But the opposite process is doubtless the more common, especially among the imaginative. By dint of excluding

<sup>1</sup> In *The Making of Religion*, pp. 353-358.

evidence to the occurrence of curious phenomena in the alleged *absence* of a person later detected in fraud ; and by insisting on trickery as a *vera causa*, which it is, and by allowing more than I can easily do for “collective hallucinations” (of which Sir Oliver Lodge is sceptical), among the observers, Mr. Podmore succeeded in holding that the eleven cases might be normally explained. To myself the *uniformity* of hallucination, in many places and ages, as to the peculiar and non-natural flight of objects, appeared a thing difficult of belief. Therefore, while admitting the force of the case for trickery in all such instances,—our first, most natural, and most probable explanation,—I do not feel absolutely convinced that it is the only explanation. But I have no other theory to propound, and only wish to keep a door open for some other undiscovered cause.

In March and June, 1899, Mr. Podmore returned to the theme, in the *Journal* of the Society. (Vol. IX. p. 37 and p. 91).<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace had suggested the examination of several historical cases of unexplained disturbances, historically recorded. These can never be satisfactorily analysed. We cannot cross-examine witnesses : we cannot even examine the scenes of the events, in many cases. Moreover few of Mr. Wallace’s instances were such as I should have selected. He omitted the case of Mrs. Rickett’s house,—Hinton, near Arlesford,—attested by that lady, and observed by Lord St. Vincent. The house was pulled down, and it would be unfair to mention some modern facts which may, perhaps, be germane to the matter. Mr. Wallace also omitted the Willington Mill case, to which, therefore, Mr. Podmore did not refer. The Tedworth, Cideville (1851), and Epworth cases remain, and, if only as folk-lore and history, are deserving of some comments. An early, sceptical, and acute psychical researcher, the Rev. Joseph Glanvil, F.R.S., wrote on the Tedworth case, which he had investigated. We must regret that Mr. Glanvil was so unmethodical that his observations are of slight value. I quote Mr. Podmore’s criticisms of the Tedworth affair. (*Journal* S.P.R. Vol. IX. p. 39.)

The Drummer of Tedworth, as told by Glanvil. The disturbances began “about the middle of April,” 1661 (Glanvil only gives two exact dates in the whole narrative), and continued for about two years. Glanvil’s account of it, as we learn from the preface to the fourth (posthumous) edition of *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, was first published in 1668.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Podmore’s criticisms have since been reprinted, with slight modifications, in his *Modern Spiritualism : A History and a Criticism*, Vol. I. pp. 25-43 (Methuen & Co.).

Glanvil himself paid one visit to the house "about this time"—the last date given, on the previous page, being January 10th, 1662. Glanvil's account of all he saw and heard is, in brief, as follows:—On hearing from a maid-servant that "it was come," he, with Mr. Mompesson and another, went up to a bedroom; "there were two little modest Girls in the Bed, between seven and eleven Years old, as I guest." Glanvil heard a scratching in the bed "as loud as one with long Nails could make upon a Bolster." This lasted for half-an-hour and more, and Glanvil could not discover the cause; it was succeeded by a panting, like a dog, accompanied by movements in the bedding; also the windows shook; also Glanvil saw a movement in a "Linnen Bag" that hung against another bed, but was not apparently sufficiently sure of the accuracy of his observation to mention this incident in the first (1668) edition. Further, Glanvil was aroused by an untimely knocking next morning; and his horse fell ill on the way home, and died 2 or 3 days later. This is the only detailed account which we have at first hand; it is written 5 or 6 years after the events, and apparently not from full notes, as Glanvil is unable to give the exact dates.

The rest of the account is founded on the real relation of Mr. Mompesson, confirmed by other witnesses, "and partly from his own letters." There are also two letters of Mompesson's, dated respectively 1672 and 1674. But he gives no detailed confirmation of Glanvil's account; indeed, when the second letter was written he expressly says that he had lent Glanvil's book "for the use of the Lord Hollis," the previous year, and did not know what the account contained. But even if we assume that Glanvil had accurately put down 5 or 6 years later all that he had heard from Mompesson, it does not amount to much; for it does not appear that Mompesson himself witnessed any of the more marvellous incidents—the drops of blood, the chairs moving by themselves, "the great Body with two red and glaring eyes," and all the rest of it. These things were witnessed by neighbours, by men-servants, or by an undistributed "they." So that Glanvil's account of them may be third hand or tenth hand.

Now the first known edition of Glanvil's *Considerations about Witchcraft* is of 1666. Most of the impression was burned in the Great Fire of London, and I have not access to a copy of that date. I give below Glanvil's dates from his edition of 1668.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Daemon of Tedworth," appended to *Considerations about Witchcraft*, ed. of 1668.

Dates:

March 1661. Mr. John Mompesson of Tedworth hears the Drum at Ludgarshal; and takes the Drum away from Drummer whom he leaves in the constable's hands.

April following. Drum sent to Mompesson's house, he going to London.

November 5, 1662. "It" [the Drum] "kept a mighty noise." Boards in the children's rooms move into man servant's hands at his desire.

In this instance no attempt is made by Mr. Podmore to explain the events by fraud: the evidence is merely disabled as late, and, perhaps, "at third or tenth hand." Indeed the evidence is in a confused way. The dates are all wrong. Glanvil places the occurrences between April 1661 and January 1663. This is erroneous. The dates ought to be March 1662—April 1663. Though it is not my earliest document, I cite, from the *Mercurius Publicus* of April 1663, the following sworn deposition of Mr. Mompesson.

From The "*Mercurius Publicus*."  
No. 16. April 1663.

The Information of Mr. John Mompesson of Tedworth in the County of Wilts: taken this day 15th of April 1663, upon oath: against William Drury:

Who saith that at the beginning of March last [1662] was Twelvemonth, he being at *Ludgurshal* in this County, at the Bailiff's house, and hearing a Drum beat, enquired what Drum it was. The Bailiff informed him that he was a stranger going for *Portsmouth*, having a Pass under the hands and seals of two of his Majesty's Justices of Peace for the County of Wilts for his passing to *Portsmouth*, and to be allowed and relieved in his journey; and that he had been requiring money of them, and they were collecting money for him.

He this Informant saith, that suspecting him to be a Cheat, he desired the Officer of the Town to send for him, which accordingly he did, and examining him how he dar'd go up and down in that way beating his Drum, and requiring money; he, this Informant, saith *Drury* answered I have good Authority; and produced a pretended Pass under the hands and seals as aforesaid, *Drury* positively affirming it was their hands and seals. He this Informant saith, that knowing it to be counterfeit, he charged him with it, and was sending him before a Justice of Peace: and then *Drury* begg'd, and confess'd he made it: and upon his begging he let that pass. But he this Informant further saith he took away his Drum, which *Drury* was very unwilling to part with.

He this Informant saith, he left the Drum for some time after at

December, later end, 1662. Drumming less frequent, but "*ginglings as of money*" begin. (As at Epworth, in 1717. A. L.)

January beginning, 1662 [1663]. Singing in the chimney and lights seen in the house.

Saturday, Jan. 10, 1662 [1663]. Drum beat on outside of house. Next night Smith in village hears sound in the room as of horse-shoeing, etc.

"About this time" Glanvil's curiosity took him to the house. He gives his account of his visit.

[The dates are also given as above in the posthumous editions of *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, of 1681 and later.]



*Ludgurshal* ; and that immediately after he had sent for the Drum to his house, a Drum began to beat in the night, *Roundheads and Cuckolds go dig, go dig* (which the said *Drury* did usually beat, and seldome any other note.) This beating of a Drum increast more and more, from room to room : at last he this Informant saith, he burnt the Drum that he had taken from *Drury* ; and then the beating of a Drum, and some time *knocking, several great noises, scratching, troubling the Beds* : sometimes *the noise so violent, that it might be heard a mile* ; and continues to this day (April 15, 1663), and more than formerly. And if they call to it, as several persons have, saying, *Devil, Knocker or Drummer*, come tell us if the man from whom the Drum was taken be the cause of this, give three knocks, and no more ; and immediately three loud knocks were given, and no more. After that, another time, Come tell us if the man from whom the Drum was taken be the cause of all this, by giving five knocks, and away ; and presently five very loud knocks were given, and away, and no more heard at that time.

*Drury's* Examination as to this confesseth his being at *Ludgurshal* about the time named, and his beating Drum there ; his false Pass, and that *Mr. Mompesson* took away from him his Drum ; but denies that he hath any way practised witchcraft, or that he hath been any way the cause of that trouble.

For the Escape made by him, and the Charge given against him by *Mr. Mompesson* of witchcraft, he was sent to the County-goal at Sarum, there to remain till the next Assizes. It may be observed that this *Drury* was about four or five months since committed to Gloucester-goal for felony ; and *Mr. Mompesson* being informed he had several times in the gaol exprest himself pleased at the report of the troubles in his house, saying, *although the Drum be burnt the Devil is not dead: and that he had better let me and my Drum alone* : two or three days after the late Assizes holden there, resolved to go down to Gloucester, forty miles from his house, to inform himself what was become of *Drury*.

The night before he took his journey, a Drum beat in his stable, where it had not been heard to beat before : and the morrow morning his Gelding being brought forth of the stable, was fahn very lame ; but however, he went for Gloucester, and there was informed, as before related, that he (*Drury*) was sent away for Virginia.

*Mr. Mompesson*, being upon his return back from Gloucester, in his way, on Munday night last, lodged at a place called Droughton in this County, within two miles of *Mscut*. (?) On Thursday morning he was informed that the said *Will. Drury* came to his house at *Mscut*, (?) the Munday night, with a Drum at his back, and had beat it that night. Upon which *Mr. Mompesson* procured a warrant to search for, and apprehend him ; which the same day was accordingly done, and the said *Drury* sent to goal.

It is supposed that this *Drury*, with the other prisoners, have made this escape by murdering the Bargemen.

From this account it would appear that the quarrel between *Mr. Mompesson* and *Drury*, the drummer, began in March, 1662. The



noises and disturbances commenced in April. Drury was imprisoned on an independent charge of felony at Gloucester about December 1662: was found guilty and sentenced to transportation; escaped, and began to annoy Mr. Mompesson, who next accused him of witchcraft on April 15, 1663, at Salisbury. The ground of action was the alleged use by Drury, when in gaol at Gloucester, of expressions connecting him with the unexplained disturbances. The Grand Jury found a true bill, but Drury was acquitted on trial for lack of evidence to connect him with the affair. Mr. Mompesson, two or three neighbouring gentlemen, and the parson of the parish, gave evidence, at Salisbury, to the phenomena. Unluckily, we have only Mr. Mompesson's deposition: I have failed to discover the full records of the trial in MS. In the printed deposition, Mr. Mompesson does not say what he himself heard and saw; he merely complains of "knocking, great noises, scratching, troubling the beds," and so forth. There can be no moral doubt, perhaps, that Mr. Mompesson and his witnesses attested their personal experiences of these familiar phenomena. But their evidence is lost or inaccessible. That Glanvil's tales about the disturbances, if not printed till 1666-1668, were current as early as 1662, and were not invented or even exaggerated between 1663 and 1666-1668, I can readily prove.

The earliest contemporary record known to me is a ballad<sup>1</sup> of the year 1662, in which the disturbance at Tedworth began. This extremely inartificial poem was hunted out by Miss Elsie Alleyne at the Bodleian Library. It is earlier, if the printed date, 1662, be correct, than the sworn deposition of Mr. Mompesson, of April 15, 1663. The ballad gives details which are not in Mr. Mompesson's printed statement, but are chronicled by Glanvil at least as early as 1668; for example, the story of the bed staff which spontaneously "went for" the clergyman while he was praying.

A wonder of wonders, being,

A true solution of the strange and invisible beating of a Drum, at the house of John Mompesson, Esq., at Tedworth, in the county of Wiltshire, being about 8 of the clock at night and continuing till 4 in the morning, several days one after another, to the great admiration of many persons of Honour, Gentlemen of quality, and many hundreds who had gone from several parts to hear this miraculous wonder, since the first tune it began to beat "Round-heads and Cuckolds, come dig, come dig." Also the burning of a drum that

<sup>1</sup> *A Wonder of Wonders*. Broadside Ballad. Gilbertson, London, 1662. Wood 401 (193). Bodleian Library.

was taken from a drummer. Likewise the manner how the stools and chairs danced about the rooms. The drummer is sent to Gloucester goal. Likewise a great conflict betwixt evil spirits and Antony, a lusty country fellow.

To the tune of Bragandary.

“ All you that fear the God on high  
amend your lives and repent,  
Those latter dayes show Dooms-days nigh.  
Such wonders strange are lent,  
of a strange wonder that you hear  
at Tedcomb within fair Wiltshire,  
*O news, notable news,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

Of a drummer his use was at great Houses for to beat  
He to one certain house did go and entered in at gate :  
At the House of Master Mompesson  
he began aloud to beat his drum  
*O news, notable news,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

Alarum, March, and Troop likewise,  
he thundered at the gate,  
*The children frightened at the noise,*  
Forwarned he was to beat :  
But he refused, and his Drum did rattle  
as if he had been in some battle  
*O news, notable news,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

He said he would not be forbid,  
neither by his back nor head,  
And had power for what he did,  
They did him Rascal call :  
No Sir I am no such, quoth he,  
two justices' hands in my pass be.  
*O news, notable news,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

'Twas counterfeit he<sup>1</sup> did understand,  
and then without delay,  
He gave his servants their command,  
to set this fellow away,

<sup>1</sup> “ He ” is Mompesson.

And likewise took away his drum,  
 "This you'l repent the time will come."  
*O news, notable news,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

About eight o'clock that present night  
 a drum beat in every room,  
 Which put them in amaze and fright,  
 not knowing how it did come :  
 The first it beat was this old jig,  
 "Roundheads and Cuckolds come dig, come dig."  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

From eight till four in the morn,  
 with a rattling thundering noise,  
 The echo as loud as a horn,  
 and frights them many wayes,  
 T' appease the noise I understand  
 they burned the drum out of hand,  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

But still about the same time  
 this noise continuèd,  
 Yet little hurt they did sustain,  
 but children thrown from bed,  
 And then by the hair of the head  
 they were plucked quite out of bed,  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

From one room to another were they  
 tost by a hellish fiend,  
 As if he would them quite destroy  
 or make of them an end,  
 And then, some ease after the pain,  
 They'd be placed in their beds again.  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

The gentleman did give command  
 to have the children away,  
 Unto a friend's house out of hand  
 them safely to convey.

Whatever they did it made them wonder  
 a rattling drum was heard like thunder.  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

A Minister being devout at prayer  
 unto the God on high,  
 A bed staff was thrown at him there  
 with bitter vehemeney !<sup>1</sup>  
 He said 'the Son of God appear  
 to destroy the works of Satan here.'  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

There's one they call him Anthony  
 That carried a sword to bed,  
 And the spirit at him will fly  
 hard to be resistèd,  
 If his hand out of bed he cast,  
 the spirit will unto it fast,<sup>2</sup>  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

Both Rooms, Stables and Orchard ground  
 a drum was heard to beat,  
 And sometimes in the Chymney sound  
 by night make Cattle sweat,  
 Both chairs and stools about would gig,  
 and often times would dance a jig.<sup>3</sup>  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear.*

So dreadful were these motions all  
 by Satan sure appointed,  
*The Chamber floor would rise and fall*  
*and never a board disjointed :*  
 Then they heard a blow from high  
 three times "a witch, a witch" did cry,  
*O wonders, notable wonders,*  
*Ye never the like did hear."*

The ballad poet says erroneously (as we learn from Mr. Mompesson) that the children were "frightened by the noise" of the actual drum in the hands of Drury. Were it otherwise, with a little good will we

<sup>1</sup> The same tale in Glanvil.

<sup>2</sup> So reported by Glanvil, 1668, 1681.

<sup>3</sup> So also Glanvil.

might suppose that the nervous shock to the "little modest girls" under eleven, caused them hysterically to feign the disturbances witnessed by Glanvil in their bedroom. Mr. Podmore disables Mr. Glanvil's evidence. He was far from being a stupid man, and the children were so very young that I am unwilling to credit them with trickery. I think, too, that Glanvil published a tract on the affair as early as 1663. In June, 1663, Mr. Pepys tells us "there are books of it, and, they say, very true." I fancy that Glanvil was probably the author of one of "these books of it," that he put his narrative later into his *Philosophical Considerations Touching Witches and Witchcraft*, and that the ballad poet simply rhymed after Glanvil's prose (quarto, 1666; folio, 1668). Till the "books" of 1662-1663 are discovered I must leave the drummer with a few remarks.

I happen to know a modern parallel to Glanvil's alleged scratchings. A gentleman, distinguished in law and known in politics, informs me that, going one day upstairs in his house in Maida Vale, he heard a violent scratching, as if of a highly excited tiger on the outside, as he deemed, of the nursery door. Running up he found two of his children (boys, one now grown up corroborated) and the nurse in great alarm. This accident kept recurring; there were no marks or scratches on either side of the door. I was told this, as I suggested that the nurse or the children had scratched the door with a large comb. The owner of the house, being addressed by his tenant, showed a nervous anxiety to evade the topic; and my acquaintance discovered no explanation. This was his only encounter with anything so much out of the common run of human experience. Let us, then, grant that the nurse laid a board of wood, procured for that purpose, against the door, inside, and violently scratched it with some instrument, "with intent to deceive," and from a hysterical desire of notoriety, which she did not obtain, as nobody connected her with the sounds. This explanation, in fact, did not occur to the trained legal faculties of her employer.

As for the Mompesson children, the disturbances were worked by them not only at night, but when put to bed "in fair day." On Guy Fawkes' day, 1662, a board of wood kept going to and fro in the day time, "seen by a whole roomful of people," say Glanvil. Mr. Cragg, the clergyman, who (with two other gentlemen) gave evidence at Drury's trial (April 15, 1663) prayed in the room, "and then, in sight of the company, the chairs walked about of themselves," so clever were these bad little girls in bed.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mompesson

<sup>1</sup> So also in the ballad of 1662.



now sent all the children but the eldest girl away, and took that impostor, aged ten, into his own bedroom, where the drumming (the child being in bed) was as active as ever. She, I suppose, also kept plucking the bed clothes off the bed of the footman (Anthony); or the man said that this annoyance, so common in such cases, occurred. One child succeeded in making three distinct sets of noises in her bed, accompanied by wriggings as of a living thing, in the bolster.

The Rev. Joseph Glanvil, apparently about March 1663 (the date 1662 must be an error) then visited the house. "There were two little modest girls in the bed" (naughty little minxes) "between seven and eleven years as I guessed. I saw their hands out of the clothes, and they could not contribute to the noise that was made behind their heads." Mr. Glanvil little knew the artfulness of little girls. "I searched under and behind the bed, turned up the cloaths to the Bed-cords, grasped the Bolster, sounded the wall, and made all the search possible." A friend aided Glanvil in these studies. A kind of panting noise, apparently under the bed, "shook the room and windows very considerably." This would be worked by collusion, some one in the "cock loft" above would be thumping on the floor; according to our theory.

Glanvil had erities. He was told that he was in a fright and hallucinated. "This is the Eternal Evasion," Glanvil replies. He asserts his perfect coolness, and the certainty of his observations. Sometimes the children were forced to leave their beds and sit up all night, which, of course, was the very thing that little girls would enjoy. Glanvil's report, apart from his own experience, was taken from Mr. Mompesson's conversation and letters; "he being neither vain nor credulous, but a discreet, sagacious, and manly person." In a letter of November 8, 1672, to Glanvil, Mr. Mompesson formally denied that he had ever told the King, as was rumoured, that "a cheat had been discovered about that affair" (1). To do so, said he, would be to perjure himself. He stuek (August 8, 1674) to his evidence, given at Salisbury, in April, 1663. "The shaking of the Floor and strongest parts of the House in still and calm Nights," Mr. Mompesson especially insisted on, as the ballad of 1662 also does. Perhaps no little girl could shake the strongest parts of the house, a phenomenon which was frequent, according to Robert Chambers, in the case of D. D. Home. I have cited Glanvil mainly to show the harmony between his version, though late, and that of the ballad of 1662. But, of course, the lateness of Glanvil's work,

and his inexplicable confusion of dates, do not increase our confidence in his narrative.

The Tedworth case, of course, is not evidential. But I think that my praiseworthy researches have made it fairly clear that absolutely contemporary accounts did not vary much from those of Glanvil in 1666-1668; that the 'deplorable ballad is probably versified from a lost pamphlet of Glanvil's, or some other book almost identical; that very tedious and wearying disturbances prompted Mr. Mompesson's contemporary deposition, and those of his friends; and that very young children could hardly have produced the disturbances, as described, without detection. The phenomena, again, were of the regular poltergeist or "spiritualistic" kind, and their true cause was never discovered. This may, perhaps, be reckoned an advance historically on the results of Mr. Podmore's investigation; but he, by the nature of Mr. Wallace's challenge, was perhaps limited to Glanvil's own account. Otherwise he would have resorted to the proper *Quellen*. These do not wholly confirm his theory of unconscious exaggeration after the interval of a few weeks or even years.

#### THE EPWORTH CASE.

As to the Wesley case at Epworth (December, 1716, April (?), 1717), Mr. Podmore's criticism must be summarised. The evidence consists of letters (January-April, 1717), between young Sam Wesley, then at Westminster with Atterbury, and his mother, his father, and two of his many sisters, at home. We have also an account written for the inquiring Sam by old Mr. Wesley; it seems to have been completed by January 24, and certainly was finished by February 11, 1717. There is also a brief diary of old Mr. Wesley's—December 21, January 1, 1716-1717. Next comes a set of narratives written in August-September, 1726, at Epworth, for John Wesley (who had been at Charterhouse in 1717). The writers or narrators in 1726 are Mrs. Wesley, Emily, Sukey, Naney, Molly, Keziah, the Rev. Mr. Hoole, the man servant, and others. We need not look at a late narrative by John Wesley, a magazine article.

Taking the papers of 1716-1717, with those of 1726, Mr. Podmore decides:

(1) That in 1717, "witnesses narrate of their *own* personal experience only comparatively tame and uninteresting episodes."

(2) "They (1717) allow their imaginations to embellish somewhat the experience of *other* members of the household."

(3) In 1726 these other members adopt the "imaginative embellishments" of 1717 into their own first-hand accounts.

(4) The witnesses (thanks to what I may call mythopoeic memory), make, in 1726, additions to or amplifications of their narratives of 1717.

Now (1) the personal experiences, say, of Mr. Wesley, recorded in 1717, are not tame, and are not uninteresting, I think, either comparatively or positively. He was thrice pushed about by "an invisible power." Again, this, the oddest of all the phenomena (if Mr. Wesley was not drunk, and I never heard that he drank too much), is told by himself of himself, and is not alluded to by any other witness. Moreover, "'it' rattled and thundered, behind and before him, in rooms locked and unlocked" (record of 1717).<sup>1</sup>

(2), (3) In 1717 Mr. Wesley and Emily told Sam, about Mrs. Wesley, things which she did not tell Sam in 1717, herself, but *did* tell Jack in 1726. However, in the letters of Mrs. Wesley, Mr. Wesley, and Sam, in 1717, it is thrice averred that, in 1717, she "forbore many particulars," or did not tell "one third" of the circumstances. Mr. Podmore omits this fact. In 1726, then, she merely *did* tell a few of the things which, in 1717, others told, but she confessedly "forbore." The story of the badger seen by Mrs. Wesley was told by Emily, in 1717. In 1726, Mrs. Wesley says that Emily was present, in 1717, when she saw this illusion, let us call it.

(4) Every circumstance "added" in 1717, by Mrs. Wesley, except a reference to her nightgown and the examination of certain bottles, was told in 1717 by Mr. Wesley, who was with her in an exploration of the house and shared her experiences. There was not, in 1717, "one sound diversely interpreted," as Mr. Podmore declares: there were, Mr. Wesley says, (1717) two *distinct* sounds, of breaking glass and jingling money. The fright of the mastiff was recorded by Mr. Wesley, in 1717, as well as in 1726 by his wife.

Mr. Podmore has probably not observed this, nor noted that, in 1717, Mrs. Wesley confessedly did not record a third of the experiences. The *two* sounds and the mastiff are of contemporary record.

Again, in 1726, Keziah (a child in 1717), did *not* make mythopoeic additions to, or even remember her own experiences, recorded by Emily in 1717 (as by Mr. Podmore's theory she ought to have done), but could only recall a sound imitative of her father's knock. Mr. Hoole's account, in 1726, is much less full and much less

<sup>1</sup>The Letters are in Southey's *Life of John Wesley*.

“sensational” than Mr. Wesley’s description, in 1717, of their common experiences. Mr. Hoole minimized.

Thus I conceive that Mrs. Wesley, Keziah, and Mr. Hoole, in 1726, do not embroider upon the records of 1717.

As to the reports of the four sisters, in 1726, two had not written at all in 1717. The whole family, at that date, were heartily sick of the subject and of Sam’s inquiries. Susan, in 1726, omitted some of the strangest experiences which, in 1717, she had recorded; and mentioned others which, in 1717, she did not chronicle. Mr. Podmore, naturally, notes Susan’s “amplification” in 1726. About the omissions of Susan in the same year, he, as naturally, says nothing. Emily, in 1726, makes a considerable and, I suspect, mythic or misplaced addition to her record of 1717, but she also makes many and most important omissions. These are not remarked on by Mr. Podmore. Manifestly, if he is to argue that, in nine years, there were amplifications, he ought to notice, also, that the omissions are more numerous and more important. This is so obvious that, if he chose, he might say, “by 1726 several narrators had become ashamed of, and therefore omitted, the absurd fables which excitement made them tell in 1717.” This sceptical argument is really stronger than that which Mr. Podmore advances. Perhaps his best plan would be to combine the two. Where witnesses make additions, in 1726, they act under the influence of the magnifying power of the memory. Where the same witnesses make omissions, they do so because they are now ashamed of their exaggerations of 1717, to which, however, they also add, by mythopoeic exaggeration. The double argument does not commend itself to me. But Mr. Podmore must account for the late omissions, of which he says not a word, as well as for the amplifications, on which he dwells with emphasis. At least this is how it strikes me.

We next come to Hetty’s case. She is suspicious, as the fraudulent agent:

(1) Because the agency, she thought, had “had a particular spight at her,” and was noisiest in her neighbourhood. But the agency had also, we are told, “a particular spight” at Mr. Wesley, going the length of three personal assaults. If Hetty *saw* “something like a man in a loose trailing dressing gown” (she is not said to have *seen* him), three or four others in records of 1717 *heard* the sound like that of a sweeping dressing gown. Hetty’s case is not peculiar in this respect.

(2) Hetty had “the singular habit of trembling in a sound sleep when loud noises were going on all around her.” So had the two other girls who shared her bed. (Mr. Wesley, 1717; Mrs. Wesley, 1726.)



(3) Hetty did not write an account in 1717, or none survives, though Emily says that Hetty is writing. Nor are Molly, and Nancy known to have written in 1717. Hetty's silence is not peculiar to her.

(4) Hetty gave no account to Jack, as the others did, at Epworth in 1726. Where was Hetty in 1726, and on what terms with Jack ?

As a matter of fact, in 1726 Hetty was not at Epworth at all, but far away, and could not, like the others, be examined by Jack. For reasons rather obscure, but connected with her recent marriage, Hetty was in her father's disgrace ; he never forgave her, and, living with her husband, a plumber of no culture, she was remote from the scene of Jack's inquiries. The scientific sceptic ought to know the historical facts of Hetty's case. So wretched and so repentant was this beautiful and charming girl, and so kind to her was Jack, that she would probably have confessed to him her early practical joke, if she had been guilty.

Let me add that, if we are to find a trickster, the new maid-servant attracts suspicion. The disturbances began with her ; she was frightened by groans before any one of the family heard anything. She is also the last *recorded* percipient of any phenomena (April, 1717). Mrs. Wesley had a strict eye on her own girls and their lovers ; but we scarcely ever hear where the new maid-servant was on any of the many recorded occurrences of an unexplained kind. Mrs. Wesley acquitted the maid ; but if, as I shall try to show, persons can be frightened into a hysterical condition, and into fraudulent production of odd occurrences, it would be easier to frighten a rustic servant girl than a daughter of the rectory.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Podmore himself, I daresay, will be pleased if I have dissipated his suspicions of Hetty Wesley. I think I have shown, by the evidence, that her case presented no peculiarities : that she was not the only sister who did not write to Sam in 1717 ; not the only sister who trembled in her sleep ; and that, in the Long Vacation of 1726, Jack could not examine her on the spot, as he did the rest of the family, because she was far away. Then there is the servant maid to fall back upon as the impostor—she and any waggish swains whom she may have secreted in the long darkling and winding chamber in the

<sup>1</sup>May I add that Mr. Podmore has said nothing about the hints that the noises were *hallucinatory*? Mr. Wesley, like Lord St. Vincent in the Hinton case, heard nothing at all till he was told about the noises. Later, he did not hear, and some of the others did not hear, a "very loud" knock on his own bed, heard by "most of the family." The Maws, who lived opposite, listened, but heard nothing, when the noises were "in their full majesty." (Recorded in 1726.)



roof of the house. At Epworth a simple boyish mechanism for producing knocks on the *outer* walls of a house is even now familiar. You need no more than a nail, a button, a piece of string, and the cover of a wall or bush. To be sure this trick does not explain a tenth of the phenomena described.

It ought to be observed that, according to Emily Wesley, in 1717, her father had preached against the local "cunning men" for several Sundays before "old Jeffrey," the bogle, began his pranks. That fact seems to me to be the key of the situation. At Cideville (1851) a rural warlock, and two small boys whom he frightened, were certainly the "agents" in the disturbances. In a strange Red Indian case, of which I received reports (1899), the agent, a native girl of fourteen, had received a severe nervous shock from natural causes before heavy weights began to "tobogan about the floor" of the wigwam, accompanied by the usual intelligent knocks and scratches. These, as I now learn (1901), the Indians, at first sceptical, attributed to the agency of a medicine man, lately deceased. In Miss Florence O'Neal's *Devonshire Idylls*, a good country girl is alarmed by a witch, and heavy furniture then becomes volatile. No fraud, however, was detected. Miss O'Neal kindly informed me as to the circumstances. I give another case, received from a Lincolnshire man, the Rev. Mr. Heaney.

THE RECTORY, WEYHILL, ANDOVER, HANTS,

October 20th, 1901.

Dear Mr. Lang,

You ask me to furnish you with the particulars of a "Wise woman" "sending noises," which came under my notice in the Lincolnshire Marshland. I will do so to the best of my power, although it will be a necessarily imperfect account, for I was then only just about to matriculate at Oxford, and I lost all interest in the case when it became clear that the immediate agent in producing the disturbances was the servant girl in the house affected. For it never occurred to me to look more deeply into the matter, and ask the all important question as to what external influences might have been brought to bear upon her to make her act in the extraordinary fashion which she did. I simply thought it a case of hysteria.

It was in the summer of 1867, the year after the cattle plague had raged in the Marshes, when there was an extraordinary reversion amongst the numerous small freeholders and little tenant farmers to the use of charms and spells to safeguard their cows; and "wise-men" and "wise-women" reaped a harvest accordingly.

In my own parish of Croft Marsh there were two such reputed "wise women," Mary X., the wife of a farm bailiff, and Mrs. K., wife of a small tenant farmer, who kept one servant, a nervous, delicate girl. Mary X. had

by far the greater reputation of the two, but Mrs. K. contrived to draw away some of Mary's wonted customers.

One afternoon the servant, who had been sent on an errand, returned in a terrible taking. Mary had met her upon the road, and after "lookin' solid" at her for some time without speaking, had finally said, "Get thee whoam and tell that old b——of a missus of thine that them as I knaws on, does more than them as she knaws on, and them as can, 'ull larn her wi' shakins and talkins, and remblins<sup>1</sup> to mell wi' jobs as belongs to me. Get thee whoam, and moind thou saay I sent thee."

The girl was half dazed with fright, but faithfully delivered her message, and Mrs. K. flew into a tremendous rage, abusing the girl furiously for venturing to repeat such "daffle," and daring old Mary to do her d——dest.

But the girl repeatedly said she knew as summat was conin'; and sure enough within a week disturbances began in the house, strange whisperings, unexpected knocks, and finally moving of furniture. At first the manifestations only took place at night, but in a few days they began in the daytime; and it was then that the servant was caught in the act, I think, of fixing two boards under her bed to form a sort of clapper, and was dismissed on the spot, when the disturbances promptly ceased, and did not recur again. But so far as I can recollect the girl stuck stoutly to her assertion that she had no knowledge of what she was doing, and professed herself as much alarmed as any one else at the whole affair.

Here as in the Grimsby case (Oct., Nov. 1901) we have *malum minatum*,—the witch's threat,—and *dammum secutum*, a set of Poltergeist phenomena. It looks almost like an affair of "suggestion:" how far the trickster (in Mr. Heanley's case) was normally conscious of her acts, we do not know. In Mr. Podmore's second case, at Wem (*Proceedings*, Vol. XII. p. 67) the agent, Emma Davies, "eried out that an old woman was at her,"—the regular old witchcraft symptom,—and *she* may have been frightened, as in Mr. Heanley's instance.

#### WILLINGTON MILL.

The Willington case is closely analogous to that of Epworth, but is nearer our time by a hundred and twenty years. (1835-1847.) The best part of the evidence is found in MS. statements, drawn up during the disturbances, but not in the shape of a regular diary, by Mr. Joseph Procter, the occupant of the house (*Journal S.P.R.* December, 1892, Vol. v., pp. 331-352). Mr. Procter was a Quaker, an Anti-Slavery man, an "early tee-totaller" and a good example of his community. His first statement is of January 28, 1835.

In December 1834, Mrs. Procter first heard of the troubles from the nurse-maid. With her the experiences began, as at Epworth they

<sup>1</sup>To "remble" is to move or shift a thing. Cf. French *rembler*.

began, with the maid-servant. The nurse-maid used to sit by the cradle of one of the children in a room on the second floor. The chamber above was unoccupied. The earliest phenomena were sounds of some one walking heavily in the room above, so that the nursery window rattled, as the windows always do in these cases. Before many days elapsed "every member of the family" had shared the experience. In January 1835 the first percipient, the nurse, left; but the phenomena remained. Some visitors (in January) heard nothing: "all, with one exception, have been disappointed." (January 28, 1835.) The "haunted" room, on the third floor, was examined carefully: nothing in the way of explanation was discovered. There were no rats: the sounds "had no connection with the weather."

On February 18, 1835, Mr. Procter noted the disturbances since January 28. On January 31, heavy "deadened" knocks sounded close to his own bed. Omitting several stories, we find (Dec. 16, 1835) the sound as of winding up a jack, at Epworth, here of a clock: heard by Mrs Procter's sister and a companion.

The bed lifting (as in Nancy Wesley's case, reported in 1726) was part of the experience of Mrs. Procter and nurse Pollard. Mrs. Procter described it to her son, Edmund, "as if a man were underneath pushing up the bed with his back." (Dickens describes a slight earthquake shock in similar terms, substituting "a large beast" for a man, under the bed.) Sounds of footsteps, knocks, and trailing garments were common at Willington as at Epworth. One of the little boys "was found trembling and perspiring with fright," like three of the Epworth girls. Mr. Procter does not recount many of his personal experiences, which were mainly of sounds, especially an odious kind of "whistling or whizzing," heavy knockings, and peculiar moans. The visual hallucinations represented a monkey, "a funny cat," and one or two human phantasms, not beheld by Mr. Procter. In 1847, after twelve years of annoyance, the Procters left Willington: there was a tremendous *charivari* the night before they departed. As at Tedworth, a report was circulated that Mr. Procter had discovered the cause of the phenomena to be a trick practised upon him. This, like Mr. Mompesson, he denied. (Tynemouth, January 7, 1858.) The circulation of this false explanation is, itself, one of the recurrent phenomena, in these cases. No mortal has ever yet discovered, what Sir Walter Scott could not find, "Funny Joe's" confession of having caused the Woodstock disturbances. But Funny Joe is always cited, as if he were an authentic authority. His evidence is precisely on a par with the girl who talked Greek and Hebrew, that old favourite of the

authors of scientific manuals of psychology. For science is easily satisfied, when the evidence suits the theory in vogue.

Here, speaking as an anthropological amateur, I would again remark on the *uniformity* of the phenomena from the Eskimo (Rink) to my Red Indian case, in Hudson Bay Company Territory, to D. D. Home, or to the most ignorant little country girl, or to very early missionary reports from newly conquered Peru, or to Mr. Dennys's Chinese cases, or those of Catholic missionaries in Cochin China; it is always the old story of Epworth, Tedworth, Amherst, Rerriek, and so forth. The thing is "Universally Human." Why? Is there a traditional trick; a common hallucination (as Coleridge thought) or are we still to seek for a theory? Mr. Podmore (1896-97) has the Arundel case. "A bewitched" girl was producing "scratchings," which on a given occasion (Feb. 8, 1884) were, beyond all doubt, fraudulent, as was proved by Mr. Hubbert, F.R.C.S. (*Proceedings*, Vol. XII., p. 67.) Earlier in the evening, however, according to the girl's mother, a "perfectly honest witness," the sounds occurred while she held the child's hands. The mother tried another bed in another room. "She states that the first bed heaved up (as at Epworth and Willington), and that, when they went into the second room, the bed and everything in the room shook." Had the girl "crammed" the Tedworth, Epworth, and Willington cases, with a crowd of others, British and foreign? Had the child been studying historic records, or have they become orally familiar? Once the thing began, the child could scratch her mattress when nobody was in the room, and she did. But about the heaving up of the bed,—*that* she could not do, while in the bed. Was the mother hallucinated in the traditional way, like Robert Chambers, when with D. D. Home?

"The chamber floor would rise and fall,  
And never a board disjointed!"

What we really desire is an answer to the question: How do these stories come to be told? I am not too contented with the answer, "Because young people play a few foolish tricks: the rest is all exaggeration and hallucination." It is the extraordinary uniformity in the reports, from every age, country, and class of society, the uniformity in hallucination, that makes the mystery.

I may be allowed to quote, not as "evidential" but as illustrative of this uniformity, a few cases from Monsieur de Mirville; as his book is not in the hands of everybody. I cite the second edition (1854). This is not the tract in which de Mirville published the



depositions of witnesses in the Cideville case (1850-1851). In the work of 1854, he argues from these depositions in the court of the Juge de Paix at Yerville. In 1854 he collects other examples.

Into the case of Angelique Cottin, which began on January 15, 1846, I cannot go, for lack of a complete *dossier*, or collection of documents. On January 15, 1854, objects flew about in the girl's neighbourhood. Next day, the neighbours had picked out some one as the witch or wizard who threw the spell on her. The disturbances went on, the *curé* was called in, was sceptical, then verified the facts, and sent for the doctors. They were puzzled. On February 2, the famous Arago brought the affair before the Academy of Science. He himself, with M.M. Mathieu and Laugier, had observed the phenomena. A committee of the Academy of Science did not witness anything unusual, and Angelique was dismissed as *non avenue*. The *Gazette des Hôpitaux* (March 17) blamed the committee for satisfying neither believers nor sceptics. How were the experiences of Arago and the rest to be explained? The *Gazette Médicale* declared that the Academy "had exceeded its powers. . . . The non-appearance of the phenomena, at a given moment, proves nothing."

Mr. Podmore (*Journal S.P.R.*, June, 1899) refers briefly to the stone-throwing case at Paris, reported in the *Gazette des Tribunaux* (February 2, 1854). The affair on February 2 had lasted for three weeks. There was a rain of missiles against an isolated house, which was in a painfully battered condition. The police, aided by dogs, did their best, but could track the missiles to no source. Planks had to be nailed on to the openings of the windows and the door place.

Mirville, not till the following winter, went to make inquiries at the office of the *Gazette*. He learned that the owner of the house was suspected of having destroyed his own property: others said that a criminal had been caught. This rumour the police denied. As for the sufferer, Lezible, the occupant of the house, he showed to Mirville the *débris* of his properties, and a scar from one of the flying stones. "What had I to get by smashing my furniture, mirrors, clock, crockery, to the value of £60?" What indeed! An odd point was that Lezible shut his outer shutters, which had a narrow chink where the two flaps met. This didn't baffle the stone throwers. Long thin pieces of tile now flew through the chink! The secretaries of the Commissary of police assured Mirville that absolutely no explanation had been discovered. Now it is easy to try whether Mr. Podmore or I can bombard a house with stones for weeks without being "run in." If "run in" we could explain



to the worthy beak that we were engaged in scientific experiments. However, the case is not "evidential," it merely *donne à penser*.

Any member of the Society who can muster up energy enough to go to the British Museum, may there find a serial styled *Douglas Jerrold*, for March 26, 1847. Or perhaps he may not find it. Mirville cites this paper, at all events, for the unusual phenomena in the house of a Mr. Williams, Moscow Road, Bayswater. He had a family of four, and nourished a Spanish boy of nine to ten years old. For days the furniture flew up and down. The *modus operandi* of the child of ten was never discovered, but, being a foreigner, he was suspected. A similar affair, on a larger scale, occurred in 1849 at Saint Quentin (*Gazette des Tribunaux*, December 20, 1849). No explanation was discovered; the *fracas* lasted for three weeks. A case like that of Angelique Cottin was reported in the *Constitutionnel*, March 5, 1849. The agent was a girl of fourteen. The trouble began as she was putting a child to bed; a cupboard door burst open, and a quantity of lincn flew at the girl. After that "all was gas and gaiters": the furniture danced as usual. M. Larcher, the local physician at Saucheville, attested the facts. The girl had been instrumental in effecting the arrest of a rural malefactor; after his release from prison the phenomena began. A sack used to fly at the girl and envelop her; heavy planks behaved as at Tedworth. The girl was carefully watched, day and night, for a fortnight, by one of the ladies of her employer's family. The girl was sent to her parents, and recovered, but the phenomena attached themselves, at her former master's house, to a baby four months old. A newspaper, *L'Abeille*, of Chartres (March 11, 1849), published the letter of an eyewitness who had seen odd things in the child's cradle, arriving he knew not how, but he does not say that he saw them arrive. The editor sent two reporters, who collected plenty of anecdotes. The *curé* exorcised the child, after convincing himself of the reality of the facts: *how* he does not say. The exorcism succeeded. Obviously the evidence is always given in the very vaguest fashion: in each case it is worth a rush, but a fairly thick band of rushes is difficult to break, and we are still to seek for an explanation of the uniformity of the descriptions.

As to the Cideville case (1851), Mr. Podmore does not seem to have found the pamphlet of M. de Mirville, containing the depositions of witnesses, and I am not aware that Mr. Wallace has supplied him with a copy. I have, therefore, through the kindness of the Marquis d'Eguilles and of the Juge de Paix at Yerville, procured a transcript from the archives of the Court, of the proceedings in the trial of

M. Tinel. I lay these documents at the feet of the Society, in the interests of History. We cannot criticise the historical Poltergeist without going to historical sources. Our systems and theories must be applied to facts, or at least to contemporary records.

As to the Cideville records, they form a large *dossier*. With the permission of the Society I shall analyse and quote from them later. Manifestly they are the only authentic source for the Cideville affair. The transcripts are a present to the Society from the Marquis d'Eguilles, who has no particular interest in these investigations, but much in documentary evidence in disputed points of history. I wish to record my thanks to him for this aid, not only in the matter of the poltergeist, but in many other researches.

[We owe much gratitude to Mr. Lang and to the Marquis d'Eguilles for this valuable gift of a complete copy of the official *procès verbal* of the Cideville trial. It is not reprinted here, for want of space, but we hope to make use of it in a future Part of the *Proceedings*.—EDITOR.]

## REMARKS ON MR. LANG'S PAPER.

BY FRANK PODMORE.

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MR. LANG'S historical researches into the evidence for the Tedworth Poltergeist incidentally afford strong support to my position. Briefly, that position is that, when we succeed in getting the testimony of educated and intelligent witnesses at first-hand, and not too remote, we find that the Poltergeist's performances were tolerably commonplace; and that the really marvellous incidents in every case rest either upon mere rumour, or upon the evidence of uneducated and incompetent witnesses, or more rarely upon the testimony of educated witnesses given long after the events. Mr. Lang, it will be seen, has discovered two additional sources of evidence: the "deplorable ballad," and Mr. Mompesson's first-hand evidence, given in Court in April, 1663. The ballad, as might be anticipated, repeats the same sort of stuff that Glanvil had given us at second-hand—the throwing of the bed-staff, the dancing of chairs and stools, the pulling the children out of bed, the attack upon the man-servant in his bed, and so on. But Mompesson, in his deposition, testifies only to the beating of the drum, knocking, "several great noises, scratching, troubling the beds." Even this evidence, since Mompesson gives no details, and does not say whether he himself heard and saw these things, or whether he is merely summarising the experience of his household, is of no particular value except to show the utmost length to which a responsible and intelligent witness could go. Practically, that is, Mompesson's evidence adds nothing to the evidence of Glanvil, which I had already cited. Now, I by no means intended to reflect on Glanvil as a witness. No doubt, as Mr. Lang says, he was "far from being a stupid man," and probably he was about as good a witness as the times could have afforded. But I pointed out that his narrative was scantily furnished with dates. Mr. Lang goes further, and shows that the dates given are wrong. I further pointed out that his account

was apparently not written down until some years later. Mr. Lang's reply to this is that the ballad, at any rate, confirms Glanvil's account of the disturbances in general. But that account is worthless anyway; and is not rendered more or less worthless by the ballad. The only item in Glanvil's report having any value as evidence is his account of what he himself saw and heard; and the ballad has no bearing upon that.

But Glanvil says that when he was present "it shook the room and windows very sensibly." Mompesson also describes "the shaking of the floor and strongest parts of the house in still and calm nights." Mr. Lang doubts the ability of a little girl to perform this feat. Mr. Lang's experience has obviously been more peaceful than my own. This shaking of the room by continuous slight movements of one foot and leg, and doubtless by any other slight movement repeated at regular intervals, is the easiest of domestic arts to acquire, and also, *experto crede*, the most difficult of all pernicious habits to eradicate; for it can be done unconsciously, and is frequently so performed by a certain acquaintance—if indeed I may claim him as an acquaintance—of my own.

On the whole, I take it that Mr. Lang and I are in substantial agreement about the Tedworth case: it is interesting, but evidential only in so far as it shows that the ways of Poltergeists and children were much the same in the seventeenth century as in the twentieth. Incidentally, I note that the parallel case which Mr. Lang cites, on the authority of a gentleman "distinguished in law and known in politics," is in a fair way to become itself interesting from the antiquarian standpoint. When Mr. Lang first heard the account he does not say; but at any rate the father's story is corroborated by the son, now a grown man, but then a child in the nursery.

But Mr. Lang's views diverge much more widely from mine, I regret to say, on the Wesley case. I will take the points in order, referring to the numbered paragraphs in Mr. Lang's article.

(1) My argument is based upon a comparison of the earlier and later accounts by the same witness. It had therefore only an indirect reference to Mr. Wesley's testimony, in which no such comparison is possible. But, since Mr. Lang challenges me, I will admit that Mr. Wesley seems to have been able, without the help of the nine years' interval, to present us with a narrative which is not tame or uninteresting.

(2) and (3) Mr. Lang writes: "In 1717 Mr. Wesley and Emily told Sam, about Mrs. Wesley, things which she did not tell Sam

in 1717 herself, but did tell Jaek in 1726. However, in the letters of Mrs. Wesley, Mr. Wesley, and Sam, in 1717, it is thrice averred that in 1717 she 'forbore many particulars,' or did not tell 'one third' of the circumstances. Mr. Podmore omits this fact.'

This statement of the ease hardly, I submit, brings out the facts. At the risk of being tedious, I will quote the passages referred to in Mr. Lang's "thrice averred." *Firstly*, Mrs. Wesley writes (25th-27th January, 1717): "It commonly was nearer her (Hetty) than the rest, which she took notice of, and was much frightened, because she thought it had a particular spite at her. *I could multiply particular instances, but I forbear.*" The passage, as printed, seems to refer to the connection of the disturbances with Hetty. Sam Wesley, it is true, interprets the passage somewhat differently. He writes, *secondly*, in reply to his mother's letter: "You say you could multiply particular instances of the spirit's noises, but I want to know whether nothing was ever seen by any" (letter of February 12th, 1717). In any case, I submit, the passage will not bear Mr. Lang's interpretation. The refusal to multiply particular instances is hardly equivalent to the suppression of incidents of a different and more marvellous nature. There remains, *thirdly*, Mr. Wesley's testimony. He writes: "Your mother has not written you a third part of it" (letter of 11th February). On this the only comment which seems to be required is that Mr. Wesley neither says nor implies that Mrs. Wesley had withheld any of her own experiences. Mr. Lang's statement, therefore, that "in 1717 Mrs. Wesley confessedly did not record a third of the experiences" seems to me to go beyond the warrant of the record. The only person who confesses so much is Mr. Wesley; but he did his best, in his own diary, to compensate for the alleged deficiency. And Mr. Lang's inference that amongst the omitted experiences were some of Mrs. Wesley's own, *different in kind* to those which she did describe, appears to me not to be justified either by the written record or by common-sense.

Mr. Lang adds that Emily, as well as her father, mentioned in 1717 that Mrs. Wesley had seen a badger. Precisely; but Mrs. Wesley was not, as would appear from her silence despite Sam's appeal to her, sufficiently sure of having seen it to mention it in 1717. The conviction only grew with years. Surely the vision of a spectral badger could hardly come under the heading: "Multiplication of particular instances"!

(4) "Every circumstance added in 1726 by Mrs. Wesley was told in 1717 by Mr. Wesley." That is part of my argument. In 1717, with the incidents fresh in her memory, Mrs. Wesley refused to "let



herself go": in 1726 she incorporated with her own memory of the incidents the memories and imaginations of other people.

Mr. Hoole's account in 1726 is less sensational than Mr. Wesley's account of the same incident in 1717. Mr. Lang infers that Mr. Hoole minimised. I claim equal license to infer that Mr. Wesley magnified. *Securus judicet orbis.*

In their later narratives Emily and Susannah omit several incidents which they had recorded in their earlier accounts, and insert others which found no place in their original statements. Mr. Lang contends that my argument, being founded on the alleged exaggerations contained in the later reports, is vitiated, because "the omissions are more numerous and important." More numerous they no doubt are: their relative importance, of course, depends upon the standard which we adopt. I notice that the incidents omitted from the later accounts are merely additional descriptions of various kinds of noises; but the incidents inserted are of a wholly different kind—to wit, physical movements, in Emily's case movements of a very striking character, and I claim that these additions, from the evidential standpoint at any rate, are much more important than the omissions.

Now as to Hetty's part in the business. My demonstration—or attempted demonstration—of the untrustworthiness of the testimony is of course in no way affected by the question of Hetty's agency in the matter. I fear, indeed, that I may seem wanting in chivalry in returning to the charge. But the indications are so much stronger than would appear from Mr. Lang's account of the matter that it seems necessary to do so. My suspicions of Hetty are founded on the following passages, which I quote afresh:

Mrs. Wesley writes, January 25th and 27th, 1717: "All the family, as well as Robin, were asleep when your father and I went downstairs (on the nocturnal exploration referred to by Mr. Lang), nor did they wake in the nursery when we held the candle close by them, only we observed that Hetty trembled exceedingly in her sleep, as she always did before the noise awaked her. It commonly was nearer her than the rest." Emily writes (1717): "No sooner was I got upstairs, and undressing for bed, but I heard a noise among many bottles that stand under the best stairs, just like the throwing of a great stone among them, which had broken them all to pieces. This made me hasten to bed; but my sister Hetty, who sits always to wait on my father going to bed, was still sitting on the lowest step of the garret stairs."

And again: "It never followed me as it did my sister Hetty. I

have been with her when it has knocked under her, and when she has removed has followed, and still kept just under her feet."

Mrs. Wesley, in her later account, after describing loud noises which they heard in their bedroom, writes: "Mr. Wesley leapt up, called Hetty, who alone was up, and searched every room in the house."

Susannah, in her later account, writes: "Presently began knocking about a yard within the room on the floor. It then came gradually to sister Hetty's bed, who trembled strongly in her sleep. It beat very loud, three strokes at a time, on the bed's head."

Finally, in John Wesley's version of Mr. Hoole's experience, we read: "When we" (*i.e.* Mr. Wesley and Mr. Hoole) "came into the nursery it was knocking in the next room; when we were there it was knocking in the nursery, and there it continued to knock, though we came in, particularly at the head of the bed (which was of wood), in which Miss Hetty and two of her younger sisters lay."

Mr. Lang's reply to this is: "It was said (by Emily Wesley in 1717) to have a particular spite against Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Wesley tells us that it thrice pushed him about." Moreover, Hetty's habit of trembling in her sleep was not "singular," because Mr. Wesley tells us in 1717 and Mrs. Wesley in 1726 that the two children who shared Hetty's bed did the same. I am indebted to Mr. Lang for a further illustration, which had escaped my notice, of embellishment in Mrs. Wesley's later account. In describing in 1717 the visit to the nursery, Mrs. Wesley says, in the passage already quoted, that "Hetty trembled exceedingly in her sleep." In 1726, referring to the same occasion, she writes: "The children were all asleep, but panting, trembling, and sweating exceedingly." The reader can judge which version is likely to be the more accurate.

Mr. Lang has done nothing to explain why Hetty did not write to her brother Samuel in 1717, though she had apparently allowed her sister Susannah to suppose that she had done so (letter of March 27th, 1717): nor is it clear to me why Jack did not obtain her testimony in 1726, if—as was no doubt the case—he realized its importance. There were posts in those days; and Mr. Lang tells us that Hetty was on good terms, at any rate with Jack.

To reply to Mr. Lang's summary: Mrs. Wesley and Emily both assert that the noises were most frequent in Hetty's neighbourhood. Mrs. Wesley and Susannah both mention that Hetty trembled strongly in her sleep. By the testimony of Mrs. Wesley and Emily, Hetty, on at least two occasions, was up and about the house alone when the

disturbances were in progress. Susannah states that Hetty had written a full account to Sam Wesley in 1717 ; but Hetty either did not write or her letter has not been preserved. Nor did she write to John Wesley in 1726. The presumption of Hetty's guilty agency afforded by these considerations is not perhaps very strong ; but Mr. Lang's arguments seem to me to detract but little from such strength as it possesses.

But, once more, the point is of little importance. Hetty may have been entirely innocent of any share, conscious or unconscious, in the performance. The question in any case has little bearing upon the evidence. I cannot find that Mr. Lang has done anything to impair my demonstration of the untrustworthiness of the evidence upon which the case rests : he has in fact unwittingly supplied me with a further illustration of my argument. My omission to discover this particular instance for myself is the only omission of all those with which he charges me to which I am prepared to plead guilty.

## FURTHER REMARKS.

BY ANDREW LANG.

IT is hard to make my reply to Mr. Podmore short. I may say that I did not quote the Tedworth ballad as proof of the facts, but to show that Glanvil's mythopoeic memory did not invent them between 1662-1666. Mr. Mompesson's deposition is not in detail: I have vainly tried to recover, at Salisbury, the evidence of his witnesses and himself under examination. I do not believe that a child of ten, *in bed*, could shake a room in a squire's house of 1662. What a child, *in bed*, can do in a modern London house, I leave to the larger experience of Mr. Podmore. My "antiquarian" story, of *circa* 1875, is not more "antiquarian" than many in the Society's Census of Hallucinations, is much less "remote" than several of these. As to Epworth, we have in Mr. Wesley's notes, the evidence, desiderated by Mr. Podmore, of "an educated and intelligent witness at first hand," to Poltergeist performances *not* "tolerably commonplace," *not* "comparatively tame and uninteresting." We have more in Lord St. Vincent's account of the disturbances at Mrs. Rickett's house, Hinton, and in Mr. Procter's notes at Willington Mill. Mr. Podmore admits this for Mr. Wesley, and I regard Lord St. Vincent as a witness quite as trustworthy.

I still do not find that Mr. Podmore, in March, 1899, mentioned that Mrs. Wesley (Jan. 25-27, 1717), forbore to "multiply particular instances,"—as she says she could do,—and did not tell "one-third of it." On this head I shall not follow Mr. Podmore's attempts to put a special sense on "particular." The reason why Mrs. Wesley gave a fuller account (which I take to have been oral) to Jack in 1726, than in her letter to Sam in 1717 is obvious to any unprejudiced reader. A sensible woman, now free from anxiety as to Sam's and his brothers' health, with a hundred household and parochial cares, she did not *write* "a third of it." On March 27, 1717, she writes: "I am quite

tired of hearing or speaking of it." That is the simple explanation of her brevity when *writing* in 1717, and of her relative copiousness in *telling* in 1726. Emily also, in 1717, writes: "I could tell you abundance more of it," but she is lazy about writing. Is not this the almost universal experience of psychical researchers, when they ask for information by letter? Mr. Hoole, in 1717, did not write at all, as Sam desired, or no letter exists, and I conceive that there was probably another letter by Emily, and perhaps one by Hetty, of March 27, which we do not possess. Mrs. Wesley and Emily, in 1717, had "abundance more to tell" which they did not then write; if they were more copious by word of mouth, in 1726, it does not follow that they were myth making. I exhibit specimens of Mr. Podmore's reasoning.

In 1717 Mr. Wesley and Emily say that Mrs. Wesley saw ("thought she saw," writes Mr. Wesley), a badger (hallucination, no doubt). Mrs. Wesley corroborated this in 1726, but did not write to Sam about it in 1717. I take it to be one of the "particular instances" which she then omitted; but that is only my opinion. Mr. Podmore writes: "Mrs. Wesley was not, as appears from her silence despite Sam's appeal to her, sufficiently sure of having seen it to mention it in 1717." But she *did*, in her family circle, mention it, unless Mr. Wesley and Emily invented her vision at the time.

Again "every circumstance added in 1726 by Mrs. Wesley was told in 1717 by Mr. Wesley," I remarked. Mr. Podmore replies: "That is part of my argument. In 1717, with the incidents fresh in her memory, Mrs. Wesley refused to 'let herself go': in 1726 she incorporated with her own memory of the incidents the memories and imaginations of other people," for example, the evidence of her husband (his evidence of his own experiences), which fact Mr. Podmore left out.

It is part of everybody's "argument" that the testimony of educated and intelligent witnesses at first hand" is the best. Mr. Podmore gets it from Mr. Wesley, as to the mastiff, for example. But he omits it, till Mrs. Wesley corroborates in 1726, and then he dismisses her evidence, as an "imagination of other people," "incorporated in her memory," with the same logic as he devotes to Mr. Wesley's statement, in 1717, that the other children, as well as Hetty, trembled (Mrs. Wesley adds—1726—panted and sweated) in their sleep. Mrs. Wesley, in 1717, only mentioned the trembling of Hetty, and this peculiarity was made part of the case against Hetty (*Journal*, March, 1899, p. 44). Mr. Podmore omitted to mention Mr. Wesley's



equally contemporary statement that the other children also trembled : Mr. Wesley sat by them alone. As Mrs. Wesley, in 1726, tells us what Mr. Wesley told in 1717, Mr. Podmore, who had omitted Mr. Wesley's evidence to the point, thanks me for "a further illustration of embellishment in Mrs. Wesley's later account." But why did he not give Mr. Wesley's evidence, and why should it be discredited? The logic baffles me. Is it, then, part of Mr. Podmore's argument to omit portions of the evidence of a first-hand, contemporary, educated, and intelligent witness? He calls Mrs. Wesley's mention of the terror of the mastiff, given in 1726, an addition by Mrs. Wesley, "a decorative detail." But he did not tell us that Mr. Wesley gave the detail in 1717. This evidence of the kind of witness chosen by himself, educated, intelligent, contemporary, at first hand, he omitted in the *Journal*, March, 1899.

He also, I repeat, omitted to mention that witnesses, in 1726, omitted parts of what they wrote in 1717. *He* may reckon the things omitted less important than the things added. The witnesses, however, had their own standard, and, in Emily's "abundance of more things to tell,"—but not told,—in 1717, and not alluded to by Mr. Podmore, may very well be the things told by her in 1726. In 1726 Sukey omitted what she told in 1717 concerning the sound as of a man walking in her room, in a trailing garment. Mr. Hoole, in 1726, spoke to the same experience. In any case, when a critic is dwelling on late additions, he should, I think, also record late omissions, and the fact that two witnesses certainly and confessedly did make omissions in 1726, whatever these omissions may have been.

As to Mr. Hoole, I think that I may have misled Mr. Podmore by my own inaccuracy. I said that "Mr. Hoole," in 1726, "minimised." The fact is, first, that he does not seem to have been always with Mr. Wesley, who was alone when some odd things occurred, Mr. Hoole being upstairs. Secondly, in 1726, Mrs. Wesley says that, in Mr. Hoole's presence, the noises were "lower than usual," but Mr. Podmore may discard her statement. But, when I erroneously said that "Mr. Hoole minimised," Mr. Podmore replies, "I claim equal license to infer that Mr. Wesley magnified." Memory, I have insisted, may magnify, or may minimise. But it magnifies in Mr. Wesley's case; minimises in Mr. Hoole's, just as may happen to suit Mr. Podmore's contention. Meanwhile, as before, the contemporary, first-hand, educated, intelligent witness goes to the wall in the person of Mr. Wesley.

As to Hetty, I merely repeat that there was nothing singular in her

case. There are circumstances, and such were Hetty's, in and after 1726, when only a very resolute researcher will vex a woman with letters about an old ghost story.

May I suggest that as the Wesley papers are very easily accessible in Southey's *Life of John Wesley*, the curious had better read them for themselves? I quite think that Emily, in 1726, did add a myth or two, as I think I hinted already.

#### NOTE.

[Two points in the above argument may be briefly referred to:

(1) The evidence of Mr. Wesley. Mr. Lang calls this first-hand. Mr. Podmore draws a distinction between the first-hand part of it,—that relating to Mr. Wesley's own experiences,—and the second-hand part,—that relating to the experiences of others. A summary of Mr. Wesley's account of his own experiences, including details of what Mr. Lang calls "the oddest of all the phenomena," viz., his being "thrice pushed by an invisible power," was given by Mr. Podmore in the *Journal*, March, 1899, with instances in which Mr. Wesley's second-hand testimony as to the experiences of others represented their experiences as more remarkable than would appear from their own *contemporary* accounts.

(2) The later evidence contains, says Mr. Lang, omissions as well as additions; thus it does not in all respects exaggerate, but in some cases probably minimises; and this tends to show that the additions need not be exaggerations. Mr. Podmore, in his remarks above, contends that the omissions relate chiefly to the less marvellous kinds of incidents, viz., noises; whereas the additions introduce various instances of the more marvellous kinds, such as "physical phenomena." (It has often been observed that "physical phenomena" tend to be introduced into late or second-hand accounts.) Now it is inevitable that many details should be forgotten after a time by witnesses, and it might have been expected *a priori* that for this reason later narratives would generally be less striking and detailed than contemporary ones. As a matter of fact, the opposite is generally the case, which shows, as we all know, that there is a tendency to exaggerate unusual events in retrospect.

In this case the arguments brought forward on both sides, together with the original records, will give the reader full material for estimating the value of first-hand as compared with second-hand, and contemporary as compared with later testimony, and we do not propose to continue the discussion.—EDITOR.]

## IV.

DISCUSSION OF THE TRANCE PHENOMENA  
OF MRS. PIPER.

BY HEREWARD CARRINGTON.

§ 1. *Introductory.*

THE importance of the problems arising from a study of Mrs. Piper,—her trance-utterances and automatic script,—cannot well be over-estimated. It would almost seem that the S.P.R. had at length reached the *crux* in its history; that turning point which it is impossible to ignore. And, apart from absolute suspension of judgment and neutrality of mind, which few of us possess, there seem to be two, and only two, roads open to the impartial investigator: one leading direct to Spiritism; the other diverging off, and leading us into a maze of “unknowns” and speculative hypotheses, which, though ingenious, are nevertheless somewhat unwarrantable, and do not afford us much mental satisfaction. The whole case is one continuous series of glorious uncertainties; of doubts, suspicions, semi-convictions, more doubts and again uncertainties, leaving us dissatisfied with ourselves and wondering whether, after all, there *is* such a truth as Spiritism or no! But the problem must be faced; the last report on the Piper phenomena has brought this question to a head, and we must decide in our own minds at any rate as to the source of the knowledge displayed. There really seem to be but two hypotheses which we need consider in this case: one, the Spiritistic; this we accept only after failing in every other conceivable direction; the other, any hypothesis or combination of hypotheses which affords a reasonable explanation of the phenomena in question. Of the two, it is hardly necessary to say which one is likely to be more widely accepted, if only a loophole is left open by which the other is evaded. There are, in the first place, many weighty *a priori* assumptions against the probability of the Spiritistic hypothesis in the Piper case. That only *one* medium should have

supplied us with sufficiently strong evidence of "spirit return" to make that hypothesis even the most probable one is in itself a most extraordinary and suspicious circumstance; and that we should base our belief in the survival of the soul, nay, in the very existence of a soul at all, upon the automatic scrawl of one entranced woman is to some of us a most stupendous assumption. But *a priori* objections must here be set on one side, and the facts of the case met with a counter-argument sufficiently strong to render this alternative hypothesis at least a reasonable one. Now it must be admitted that the arguments brought forward by Professor Hyslop in his Report make the Spiritistic hypothesis at least thinkable, and, instead of struggling and straining our facts to make them appear supernormal and spiritistic in character, the facts themselves are of such a nature that they force one to seek for hypotheses that will account for the knowledge shown without reverting to the supposition that the communicators are "veritably the personalities that they claim to be,"<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* that they are spirits. The necessity of such a hypothesis is obvious if we are to discard that one with which Dr. Hodgson and Professor Hyslop have supplied us, and it is the object of this paper to suggest an explanation, which, while leaving many points undecided and unexplained, yet seems to me to fulfil most of the requirements of the case; and, indeed, this is all that can be said of the Spiritistic hypothesis, which, while it has many good points and strong evidence in its favour, yet has also many contradictory statements to account for, and many extraordinary difficulties to contend with before it clears itself from all suspicion.

To turn, then, to the Piper phenomena.

§ 2. *The hypotheses already advanced to account for the phenomena.*

Of the various hypotheses that have been brought forward to "explain" this remarkable case, *fraud* is very naturally the first one which will have to be met and refuted. Until this factor is eliminated the entire evidence is, of course, evidentially worthless. But I shall not dwell upon the question here. Every one who has been associated with Mrs. Piper for any length of time, or studied her trances, or even the written reports, has, I believe, become firmly convinced that she is not a conscious impostor. Of course it is next to impossible to prove this on paper. I am aware that many persons still continue to believe that Mrs. Piper obtains her information in a perfectly normal manner; by inquiries of paid

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII. p. 406.



agents, and by the "information bureau" system, if I may so call it, exposed in the *Revelations of a Spirit Medium*. No doubt this is very extensively employed by mediums in this country (U.S.A.), but I do not believe that Mrs. Piper obtains her information in this way. However, it is unnecessary to dwell on this point, and I shall not discuss it further.

The remark is sometimes made that Mrs. Piper's trance utterances represent nothing more than "the wanderings of a hysterical woman." It is, of course, chiefly made by persons who have never studied or even seen the Piper reports published in the *Proceedings*; but I discovered not long ago a very similar statement from the pen of one of our most valued critics and contributors to the work of the Society. In *Cock Lane and Common Sense* (p. 327), Mr. Andrew Lang accuses Dr. Carpenter of an "almost incredible ignorance of what evidence is." Now, without impertinence, it seems to me that Mr. Lang exposes himself to very much the same charge when he describes Mrs. Piper's automatic script as "very mournful and incoherent utterances" (*Independent*, Dec. 1901, p. 2869). Mr. Lang has openly expressed his dislike for the Piper phenomena before now, but that is no excuse for his wilful disregard of the specific facts indicated in this series of trance sittings.

Regarding the theories of fraud and hysteria as removed from the field, therefore, we now come to the various hypotheses that may be suggested as counter-arguments to Spiritism. In the first place it must be conceded that both *muscle-reading* and *suggestion* (conscious and unconscious), are generally out of the question; the former, as there is no contact between medium and sitter; the latter we may disregard, as a study of the stenographic reports fails to indicate more than the faintest suggestions, and these on very rare occasions. As the reports are verbatim, I suppose they are to be relied upon.

The same objections hold good with regard to *hyperaesthesia* on the medium's part. Indeed, it is hard to see where this could possibly come in, generally speaking.

The question of *chance*, pure and simple, is absurd; especially in the case of G.P., and in Professor Hyslop's sittings, as his statistical table abundantly shows (Vol. XVI. p. 121).

As to *knowledge gained unconsciously* by the medium: that may perhaps explain some few incidents, but very few, and is not worth considering seriously.

Nor will *secondary* or *multiplex personality* alone account for the phenomena; for, though the necessary dramatic play may here be



exhibited, this personality would lack the requisite knowledge which gives the force to the Spiritistic hypothesis.

As for *telepathy* and *clairvoyance*, we must suppose that these supply the necessary *data*; the knowledge gained by some supernormal means, which supply the personality with the requisite personal memories and recollections, and give to the sitter the general impression that he is in very truth in communication with his deceased friend or relative. Of these two, *clairvoyance*—as we understand it—has operated on but rare occasions. There were some traces of it in the old Phinuit *régime*, but most of these were in the form of *experiments*, and there are but very faint traces of this faculty operating in recent sittings. We are forced, therefore, to accept telepathy as our explanation until we succeed in obtaining a better one. But the theory of telepathy has been answered by both Dr. Hodgson and Professor Hyslop with “arguments of considerable force,” and personally, I do not consider it sufficient to account for the facts recorded, *if taken alone*. Professor Hyslop’s arguments appear to me to be almost convincing on this point. We are left, therefore, to account for the facts as best we may, or to fall back upon the old and much despised theory of Spiritism. Most assuredly this covers all the facts in the case, and it is a hypothesis which we may be forced to accept some day; but for the present let us stand it to one side, to be registered by the world at large as “not proven.” (Proof, by the way, in this case, must rest entirely on *comparative probabilities*, and so will be judged differently by various persons, according to their subjective mental attitude in these questions.)

### § 3. *The possibility of combining these hypotheses.*

To revert now to the hypotheses, I contend that *no one hypothesis* will explain all the facts in the Piper records, and on this point I believe that the majority of those who read the *Proceedings* will agree with me. But will a *combination* of these hypotheses suffice? I certainly believe that, with more or less straining, it will. This very point is, it appears to me, deliberately skipped by Professor Hyslop in his carefully drawn up Report. We find (Vol. XVI. p. 124), the following sentence—

“I leave to the ingenuity of *a priori* speculation the combination of assumptions necessary to meet the simple hypothesis which I have preferred to defend as satisfactory for the present. Hence, with the refusal to consider these, telepathy is the only real or apparent difficulty in its connection with secondary personality that I shall consider.”

Why should Professor Hyslop refuse to consider these? I venture to

think that it is precisely this *combination* of objections which is likely to occur to the average person who believes fraud to be eliminated in this case. That, to me, seems a very weak point.

§ 4. *The value of the previous evidence estimated.*

Now if we go back in our review of the Piper phenomena, I believe that few persons would care to stake their belief in a future life on any evidence published prior to Dr. Hodgson's Report in *Proceedings*, Vol. XIII. Sir Oliver Lodge (Vol. VI., p. 647), classified some 41 instances which he considered as "especially difficult to explain by direct thought-transference," but Mr. Lang claims to have "explained" all these more or less satisfactorily, except the "snake skin incident."<sup>1</sup> Vol. VIII. (*Proceedings*) certainly contains no evidence sufficiently strong for us to found such a belief upon; and indeed such was the conclusion of Dr. Hodgson himself (p. 57). In *Proceedings*, Vol. XIII., outside of the G.P. notes, there seems to be—indeed stronger evidence than previously, but hardly enough upon which to base the belief in a future life. The Reports in Vol. XIV. are exceedingly dubious, owing largely to the extraordinary confusion prevailing throughout. If, therefore, some person, candid, open-minded, but ignorant of this Society's work, were to ask what scientific evidence there was for a belief in the immortality, or at least the survival of the soul, and we should refer him to the G.P. notes and to Professor Hyslop's Report, the question is—*would that be sufficient?* I venture to think that it would *not*. Of course the case is different with Dr. Hodgson. He has seen, he tells us, many private and personal passages written out by the entranced Mrs. Piper which we have not seen; they, unfortunately, being *too* personal and *too* private to be published! Also Dr. Hodgson has had the advantage of personal observation; of watching the symptoms of the trance, the dramatic play of personality and many other of these interesting manifestations which we can *not* witness. Naturally this personal scrutiny carries far more weight to the mind of an observer than would hundreds of printed pages to the same individual; and that this personal and prolonged investigation *does* tend to convince is obvious from the position taken by both Dr. Hodgson and Professor Hyslop. However, the majority of the human race cannot enjoy these privileges, and, while they should be allowed for, no one can convince *others* except on the actual testimony itself; and it is consequently from the printed pages that we must argue the point.

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings* S.P.R., Vol. xv., p. 41.

§ 5. *The Piper phenomena are more spontaneous than experimental in their character.*

Now, in attacking the position taken by Professor Hyslop, I must differ from him in one of the first and most crucial points in the whole case. On p. 142 (*Proceedings*, Vol. XVI.), we find the following sentence :

“The Piper phenomena are *experiments*, complete in themselves, and are *not spontaneous* occurrences.”

Here is where I entirely differ from Professor Hyslop, or I have mistaken the meaning of the word “experiment.” Spontaneous phenomena are exactly what they *are*, it appears to me. An investigator “sits” with Mrs. Piper and calmly waits for whatever messages may come through her hand. The conversation is invariably opened by some “control”; each new subject is broached by him; (if by the sitter as a “test,” it very seldom succeeds); and the knowledge is offered or written out quite spontaneously, to be either recognized or disclaimed by the sitter. In experimental thought-transference, on the other hand, the agent (presumably the sitter) has some definite idea in his mind which he endeavours to impress upon that of the percipient (here, —medium). It is in his supraliminal consciousness, and no account is taken of anything which may happen to be passing through his *subliminal* consciousness. Thus: the figure 64 may be in the agent’s (supraliminal) mind.—The percipient says 37.—“Wrong!”—How do we know that 37 was not in the *subliminal* consciousness of the agent? We cannot. Obviously *experimental* thought-transference *must* take place between the supraliminal consciousness of one person and the *same stratum* of consciousness in the mind of the other. Were this not so, there would be no *experiment* about it. Sir Oliver Lodge’s argument as to distant telepathy, that “it ought to be constantly borne in mind that this kind of thought-transference, without consciously active agency, has never been experimentally proved,” (Vol. VI., p. 453), is answered by Mr. Lang in a somewhat telling question—“How can you experiment consciously on the unconscious?” (Vol. XV., p. 48). Hence it is no argument against telepathy to say that such and such a fact was not in my mind (supraliminal consciousness) at the time,—rather the reverse. Consequently, in the Piper case, I must profess to differ absolutely from Professor Hyslop in his statement that these are *experiments*; it seems to me that that is precisely what they are *not*.

§ 6. *The possibility of unconscious telepathy.*

Granting then that the knowledge gained by Mrs. Piper is abstracted from our subliminal consciousness, we have no direct proof that this latter may not be thinking of anything,—some incident entirely distinct from that upon which our supraliminal is engrossed. On the other hand, we have very good evidence to show that such *is* frequently the case. “Miss X” remarked that—“it ought by this time to have passed into an axiom that it by no means follows that what is at the top of our minds will be likely to tumble out first” (*Essays in Psychical Research*, p. 117-18). Similarly Dr. Hodgson assures us that—“on March 18th, 1895, . . . her deceased sister wrote with one hand, and G.P. with the other, while Phinuit was talking, all simultaneously on different subjects” (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII., p. 294). For further proof of this see Mr. Myers’ articles on “Automatic Writing,” Mr. Gurney’s experiments in hypnotism, etc.

The point I am trying to emphasise is this :—that the great majority of the bare *facts* in the sittings could have been obtained by the medium by means of telepathy from the subliminal consciousness of the sitter ;—though the latter’s “supraliminal” might have been busy with other thoughts at the time, and expecting something entirely different. That is no proof that telepathy was not in operation between the medium and the sitter’s subconsciousness.

But what of the facts that are not known to the sitter and have to be verified afterwards? Of these many are wrong, others are unevidential, and still others are unverifiable, whereas the residuum may be explained, perhaps, by means of the latent memory of news subconsciously heard, or by telepathy from the living person himself. On examination it will be found that very few facts fail to come under this head ; and surrounded as they are by more or less irrelevant talk and suggestive remarks, they may very possibly be the result of simple chance. Such a theory is, I know, somewhat exasperating to those who are convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena ; but the following extract bears out my view precisely, and will be appreciated by all those Psychical Researchers who have had some phenomenon explained in a perfectly normal manner, but upon which they were willing to stake their existence as being supernormal in character. Lord Lytton remarked that . . . “thus it is whenever the mind begins, unconsciously, to admit the shadow of the supernatural ; the obvious is lost to the eye that plunges its gaze into the obscure” (*Strange Story*, II., p. 13).

It will be observed, however, that I here limit myself only to *facts*,—



the actual knowledge shown by the medium in the trance state,—and I do not attempt to weave those facts together so as to form a personality. On that subject I shall have a theory to offer presently. But for the moment I only wish to emphasise the point that all the actual *facts* (with very few exceptions) obtained and written out in these sittings might have been drawn from *one person's* mind,—his subliminal consciousness,—and, when Dr. Hodgson was holding his sittings for Professor Hyslop, the knowledge displayed would yet be explainable on this hypothesis, if space is no obstacle to telepathy, and the facts might still be explained in this way, though they might be somewhat less distinct and consecutive, and, indeed, this proves to be the case.

§ 7. *The strong and the weak points of the Spiritistic hypothesis.*

Turning, now, to the Spiritistic hypothesis, it must be admitted that there are many facts that point to this explanation as the true one. For instance, the extremely rapid interplay of personality is, so far as my own knowledge goes, unparalleled in the history of this subject; personalities, moreover, which differ so radically from each other in character, knowledge and general characteristics. Again, the intimate character of some of the messages conveyed, apparently, the almost irresistible conviction that the sitter was indeed conversing with his deceased relative. But it is the *combination* of all these wonderful characteristics which conveys to the sitter the impression of the reality of this independent personality. As Dr. Hodgson has so well expressed it (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII., p. 360) :

“It is not this or that isolated piece of knowledge merely, not merely this or that supernormal perception of an event occurring elsewhere, not merely this or that subtle emotional appreciation for a distant living friend,—but the union of all these in a coherent personal plan with responsive intellect and character, that suggests the specific identity once known to us in a body incarnate.”

All this is well known and recognized, but there are, on the other hand, many apparently irreconcilable points to be considered in connection with this view of the case under consideration. Granting that the confusion displayed in the automatic script may be accounted for on the spiritistic hypothesis as readily as, or more readily than, on the telepathic, there yet remain many extraordinary statements on the part of the communicators which certainly point to sheer ignorance, on subjects well known to them alive, rather than to any flaw in the actual transmission. Thus we have the remarkable utterances of Rector,



Imperator, etc., quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick in her "Discussion" (*Proceedings*, Vol. xv., p. 32). Mr. W. S. Moses, again, does not know the names of his own "controls" (Vol. xiv., pp. 38, 40 and 41); similarly G.P. does not remember (?) his Greek (Vol. xv., p. 42).

All this, of course, arouses one's suspicions, and makes us accept with extreme caution any statement coming from this source. As a further example of this point we have the apparently ludicrous statements as to the occupation in the life to come. As Professor Hyslop remarks: "Living in houses, listening to lectures are rather funny reproductions of a material existence" (*Proceedings* S.P.R., Vol. xvi., p. 259). Indeed one would think so! To reconcile these statements, Professor Hyslop has to resort to the supposition that they are "merely automatisms," and other purely arbitrary suppositions. For this there seems to be but little authority, and as the statements are made with apparently the same assurance as the remainder of those set forth, one can but wonder whether these utterances are not due in origin to one initial source, and that source assuredly not "spirits."

The same objections may be brought to bear upon the mistakes and contradictions in the messages. These have been mentioned briefly in the above paragraph, and whereas it may be admitted that *partial* mistakes and incoherences are in favour of the spiritistic hypothesis, what are we to say to the absolute ignorance shown, the contradictions, and grossly false information given by Mrs. Piper's "controls," or the communicators themselves? These points, together with the fishing, shuffling, and tentative questions (more frequent in the Phinuit days than now), strongly point to Mrs. Piper's secondary personality as the origin of the entire phenomena.

#### § 8. *Phinuit a secondary personality.*

One of the strongest objections, however, to the spiritistic hypothesis is (in the present writer's opinion), what he has chosen to term "the evolution of Phinuit." Now this gentleman—who, we are thankful to say, no longer manifests in Mrs. Piper's trances—was almost universally considered to be a secondary personality, and although he *might*, (perhaps), have been what he claimed, *i.e.* a spirit, the facts were so overwhelmingly opposed to it and there is so little evidence for his existence that the assumption of his spiritual nature (!) is, to say the least, obviously gratuitous. His inability to speak French—though a Frenchman; his ignorance of medicine—though a doctor; and his utter failure to prove his identity, or even to know his own name

(see Vol. VIII., p. 53), all are contrary to the claims of Spiritism. But it is unnecessary to dwell on this point longer. Phinuit is, I believe, generally acknowledged to be a secondary personality of Mrs. Piper; but the argument of some spiritists is that even granting this, knowledge was frequently displayed by "spirits" independently of his control, and which *prima facie* bore distinct marks of the communicator's identity; not to speak of those who have communicated since Phinuit's disappearance. To this argument I reply that Phinuit was one of Mrs. Piper's *first* "controls"; that he announced to the world at large his own spirit existence as confidently as did the best communicators, and that it was *through him* that almost all the alleged spirits conversed with the sitters, in the early days. Professor Hyslop's ingenious theory of the secondary personality being a kind of borderland or "neutral ground," if I may so express it, between the living and the dead would explain this last point, however. But the fact remains that one of Mrs. Piper's *first* "controls" was no spirit at all, but merely a secondary personality! How is it possible, then, for us to discriminate between Phinuit and, let us say, Rector or Imperator—neither of whom has ever proved his identity satisfactorily? If one is a secondary personality of Mrs. Piper, why not all?—for Phinuit's "dramatic play" was certainly equal to anything that either Imperator or Rector supplies us with, if not better.

In those days the evidence presented facts which tended to show the influence of living minds as well as those of the dead, but thought-transference from the living seemed to be gradually eliminated, and the evidence to point more and more strongly to the action of disembodied spirits alone. Now this would be perfectly rational on either hypothesis. On the Spiritistic, it would represent the gradual improvement of the "machine"; a "clearing the decks," so to speak, of all useless and unnecessary encumbrances, and affording greater facility for direct spirit intervention. On the telepathic theory, on the other hand, this "clearance" would probably represent the gradual formation of the faculty for combining suggestions and telepathic ideas into a separate personality. Of course this is a very provisional theory, and the spiritistic explanation has still many points in its favour. But because spiritism is the *easiest* explanation (at present), are we justified in accepting it without further attempts to explain these phenomena otherwise? Most assuredly no! If this had been the policy of the S.P.R. from its foundation, we should never have reached many of the important truths which it has now firmly established, and many facts would still have passed for "supernatural" amongst the majority, which are now accepted more or less as a matter of course, simply on

account of the reasonable basis upon which these facts rest, and are explained; (*e.g.* automatic writing).

§ 9. *An Analysis of "Psychical Research."*

For example, nearly the whole range of "psychical research" could be explained by that one word—spirits—if accepted; yet many would analyse these phenomena very differently! Thus: all the "physical phenomena" of Spiritism and "Poltergeists" would be explained as either fraud, hallucination or telekinesis: all clairvoyance, prevision, and precognition as the result of chance, illusions, and hallucinations of memory, and (in the first of these at any rate), as imposture very frequently: all apparitions of the living and dead as either subjective or telepathic hallucinations; all haunted houses as a combination of fraud, illusion, hallucination, expectancy, suggestion, and, perhaps, telepathy from the living or "some subtle physical influence,"—in addition to normal sounds and noises greatly magnified; aye, even thought-transference itself might be a form of "brain-waves" or "ether-vibrations," granting that it is accepted at all! Such an analysis is, very probably, repugnant to many minds, especially to those who have become more or less convinced of the reality of a "life beyond death," and, whereas I do not altogether believe in the strict analysis just given, still, when once a belief in the supernormal begins to operate, the "common-sense" side of the question is frequently ignored—as somewhat repugnant to the feelings of those concerned. But I will again quote from that clear-brained, level-headed thinker, Lord Lytton, where he says (*Strange Story*, Vol. II., p. 284):

"The moment one deals with things beyond our comprehension, and in which our own senses are appealed to and baffled, we revolt from the Probable, as it appears to the senses of those who have not experienced what we have."

What a truism!

§ 10. *The possibility of over-estimating the value of the evidence.*

The object of the previous remarks is to pave the way for a few of somewhat similar type applied to the problem of the Piper trance phenomena. Mrs. Sidgwick thinks that the "evidence for direct communication . . . may easily be over-estimated" (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XV., p. 21). At the time that this was written, the present writer was less inclined to accept that statement as true than he is now, after having seen that Professor Hyslop unknowingly colours—highly colours

—many incidents which, looked at from another standpoint, fall within the range of a perfectly normal explanation.

Thus:—Professor Hyslop makes much of the fact that Mr. Carruthers—one of the “communicators”—does not recognize Dr. Hodgson, while the latter is “sitting” on his behalf, and during his absence (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XVI., p. 194). Now this is of frequent occurrence in cases of secondary personality, when, in the abnormal condition, the subject does not recognize former friends and acquaintances, or even his own wife and family (see *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. V., p. 391; Vol. VII., pp. 249, 256, 257, etc.). If multiplex personality be assumed in this case, the non-recognition of Dr. Hodgson is certainly what would be expected. Again, the lack of clearness in the communications of suicides<sup>1</sup> may be due to unconscious suggestion, perhaps telepathically conveyed. Moreover, so far as the *published* notes go, they are surely insufficient to establish anything with certainty; the element of chance being too great.

§ 11. *Some advantages of the “secondary personality” hypothesis.*

On the whole, therefore, there are many points in favour of the “secondary personality” hypothesis; and, apart from the supernormal knowledge displayed, and the dextrous interweaving of the facts gained into a distinct personality, the only rational argument against this theory is that the personalities displayed in the Piper case are so infinitely superior in style, graphic exposition of character, and dramatic play of personality to all other known cases of a similar character, that we are, some say, almost entitled to doubt whether or not they belong even to the same *genus*. This supposition appears to me absolutely unwarrantable. It must be remembered that the difference displayed is *purely one of degree, not of kind*; the superiority consists simply in a greater isolation of the different personalities, and in their far more rapid interplay than is generally the case. Just *why* this great superiority should exist is indeed a most puzzling problem; and the only theory that seems at all tenable is that under the vastly greater opportunities for improvement which Mrs. Piper has enjoyed, over other mediums, the “conditions” have so benefited her that she has developed into a stronger medium; meaning by this—on the hypothesis proposed below—that Mrs. Piper’s brain has greatly developed the capacity for combining the numerous suggestions and telepathic impulses conveyed from the sitter’s mind; that these personalities are

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII., p. 376.



composed, as Professor Newbold suggests, by the “weaving together by Mrs. Piper’s nervous mechanism of all the complex suggestions of the séance room, supplemented by telepathic and clairvoyant impressions got in connection with the sitter and with the articles which he brings” (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XIV., p. 9).

In the above argument, it will be understood, I did not take into account the supernormal knowledge displayed, but merely the unity of consciousness and individual personality represented. That Mrs. Piper should be so far superior to all other mediums on this point may to some appear a strong argument for the spiritistic hypothesis; but when one considers the years spent in the careful training of this faculty, under the constant observation of Dr. Hodgson, it appears equally plausible on the telepathic. And if we are challenged to produce *another* Mrs. Piper for the purpose of proving the theory above advanced, we reply that two such cases would be just as puzzling and inexplicable as one,—as either the spiritistic or the telepathic hypothesis might be again applied to the solution with precisely the same result as occurred in the first case—viz., a continued diversity of opinion, each party claiming that the second case proved *their* theory! If the telepathic hypothesis is a strain upon our credulity, so, taking everything into account, is also the spiritistic.

§ 12. *Comparison of the Piper personalities with other known cases of a similar type.*

Now one of Professor Hyslop’s greatest objections to the “secondary personality” hypothesis is that, as a rule, the phenomena observed are far more *mechanical* than is the case with Mrs. Piper’s “controls.” This is undoubtedly the case, and, standing alone, this is a very strong card in the spiritist’s hand. Personally, I know of no other case even approximately similar to the marvellous “interplay of personality with reciprocal exchange of ideas, as if real, that so characterises the Piper case” (*Proceedings*, Vol. XVI., p. 279). My only reply to this is, firstly, to again emphasize the fact that the difference is one of *degree*, and not of *kind*; and, secondly, that secondary personalities are not invariably as mechanical as Professor Hyslop maintains. To quote one simple case (that of Ansel Bourne), I need but remind the reader that *his* secondary personality—personating A. J. Brown—was so completely natural that not one of his many newly-acquired friends and acquaintances ever detected anything uncommon or unusual in his conduct during a period of several weeks (*loc. cit.* Vol. VII., pp. 221-257).



The case is not in any way analogous to the Piper phenomena, but merely illustrates the fact that secondary personalities are capable of reproducing, in a perfectly natural manner, a distinct personality, which is itself absolutely unknown to, and wholly different from, the original supraliminal consciousness of the subject. Indeed this is recognized by Professor Hyslop, for he says :

“The crucial test of Spiritism, in this and all other cases, must turn upon the question of telepathy to furnish the *data* upon which any secondary consciousness has to work. Until it is more fully studied, we shall have to assume that secondary personality is equal to the task of explaining the dramatic play of personality, and all non-evidential *data*, and base our conclusion upon the insufficiency of telepathy to supply the objective facts in evidence of personal identity” (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XVI., p. 292).

### § 13. *Spiritism versus Telepathy and Secondary Personality combined.*

We come, therefore, to the *combination* of telepathy and secondary personality as an explanation of the phenomena under discussion. This is admittedly the strongest antagonist which the spiritistic hypothesis has to face, but it seems extremely doubtful whether it will account for *all* the phenomena recorded, or no. Personally, I am exceedingly doubtful as to its ability to do so. But if we reject every hypothesis in turn, as insufficient to account for the accepted facts, we shall be driven by sheer weight of evidence into an acceptance of the spiritistic hypothesis. Possibly this may occur at some future date, but for the present let us set that to one side, and, after examining all the remaining hypotheses in turn, and finding them insufficient to account satisfactorily for the phenomena observed, we must endeavour to invent some hypothesis which will account for a greater proportion of the facts than any hitherto advanced—or remain without any hypothesis at all. This last state of mind is certainly anything but satisfactory; and it remains for us, therefore, to frame some theory which will fulfil the requirements as nearly as possible.

Naturally each one of us looks at any evidence presented for our judgment in an entirely different light; according to his outlook upon the Universe, and his own subjective mental attitude towards these subjects. Consequently, each one of us has some more or less vague theory as to the source from whence those writings proceed, and it is upon my own hypothesis, gradually evolved from the repeated readings of the Piper reports and script, that I beg to offer a few brief remarks;

not that I expect them to receive any acceptance, be it observed, but rather that they seem to afford at least a plausible alternative to the spiritistic theory, without so much straining upon the alternative hypotheses.

§ 14. *Tracing the growth of a telepathically initiated secondary personality.*

To build up this theory, step by step, I shall be obliged to go "as far back" as hypnotism; meaning by this that, in the beginning at least, we are working upon a (comparatively speaking) perfectly normal and rational basis. The late Mr. Myers, then, maintained that almost the only uniform phenomenon in the hypnotic trance was the "formation of a secondary chain of memory," and claimed that "hypnotism . . . may be regarded as constituting one special case which falls under a far wider category,—the category, namely, of *developments of a secondary personality*" (*Proceedings*, Vol. v., p. 387). Nor is it even necessary to revert to hetero-suggestion for the production of this phenomenon; it is possible to produce alteration of personality by auto-suggestion alone;—"I have seen a man cultivate the power of automatic writing. Another learned to change his personality, while the third would become somnambule" (*Hypnotism*. By J. R. Cocks, M.D., p. 304). In all these cases, a distinct personality (and without any verbal suggestion whatever, it will be observed) is induced, together with the usual loss of memory on "coming-to."

To revert now to the published experiments in thought-transference. Few psychological researchers will deny the existence of this supernatural method of communication, I take it, or doubt that telepathy, from however great a distance, is indeed a fact. *Combining*, now, the facts of telepathic suggestion and hypnotic suggestion we come, by an easy transition, to the phenomenon of *telepathic hypnotism*, which is—according to the definition given above—the *telepathic production of a secondary personality*.

This, therefore, brings us at least one step nearer an understanding of the Piper "controls" than heretofore. We have found that secondary, and perhaps multiplex, personality may be induced by telepathy, each personality retaining its own chain of memories and its individual identity; yet generally lacking that supernatural knowledge displayed by the communicators in the Piper case. The trance is very probably closely allied to the hypnotic, yet is not precisely the same (see *Proceedings of the American S.P.R.*, p. 105), and the "controls" would represent, on this hypothesis, telepathically produced secondary personalities.

But it is the *facts revealed* by these personalities, rather than the personalities themselves,—the supernormal knowledge displayed, and not simply the strong indications of an independent intelligence,—which cause us to turn towards spiritism for an explanation. Indeed, were it not for the pertinent remarks and proofs of “shared memory” given, we should have no cause for supposing that either “parapathy”<sup>1</sup> or telepathy had any share whatever in the formation of these personalities. But as the very “ground-work” of their identity, so to speak, is composed of these very scraps of knowledge, we must assume that “noopathy” enters into the case, both in the actual formation of the personality, and in keeping it, when once formed, supplied with pertinent facts.

§ 15. *The “Difficulties” of the “Telepathic Hypothesis” simplified.*

We now come, therefore, to the very heart of the problem—the crucial point of the whole case. Granting that this personality is once telepathically initiated, whence does it derive the continuous stream of information written out in the trance state; especially those facts not within the sitter’s memory or knowledge at the time? The theory of “discriminative telepathy,” if I may so call it, has been met with almost crushing arguments by Professor Hyslop, and were this the only alternative to spiritism we should, I venture to think, be almost forced into an acceptance of the latter theory. But I do not believe that our choice rests between these two hypotheses only. I contend that the personality displayed through Mrs. Piper’s automatic writing was obtained—not by telepathy between the medium’s brain and distant persons in this world, but by parapathy from the sitter’s subliminal consciousness: that it was extracted thence *in toto*; identity, memory, personal knowledge, and individual consciousness, just as displayed, without resort to any source of knowledge further than the sitter’s own sub-consciousness, and was removed thence in one compact mass, as it were, rather than that it was collected piecemeal from the ends of the earth. (How this entered the *sitter’s* subliminal consciousness I shall endeavour to show presently, § 19.) Of course this does not mean that all the knowledge displayed in the trance condition, through Mrs. Piper’s hand, was obtained *at one time* from the sitter’s subliminal self, but that the facts themselves were all there, and obtained from that one fount on different occasions, I do contend.

<sup>1</sup>For definitions of “parapathy” and “noopathy” see Professor Hyslop’s *Report*, p. 125, foot-note.

That facts which we were totally unconscious of ever having known may be obtained by automatic writing is a well-known fact, and Mrs. Piper seems to have been the automaton; thus, instead of our subliminal consciousness writing unknown facts through *our own* hands, Mrs. Piper writes them for us, the latent knowledge being supplied by parapsyche from our own sub-consciousness.

§ 16. *Résumé of the previous argument.*

Thus far nearly everything suggested has been said before in more or less similar language, and it but remains for me briefly to recapitulate, before passing on to this, our last and most crucial problem, viz., the knowledge of facts apparently unknown to the sitter. We have seen (i.) that our "spirits" may not be spirits at all, but telepathically produced personalities. (ii.) That the requisite dramatic play of personality and unity of consciousness would accompany the secondary personality thus created. (iii.) That the unverified and unverifiable facts in the sitting cannot be counted as evidential; and (iv.), that those verifiable facts already known to the sitter cannot be proved to lie outside the limits of telepathy, if the facts were known, at any time: (a) to the supraliminal, or (b) to the subliminal consciousness of the sitter, or of any one within the immediate vicinity. If we admit the above conclusions, and,—according to the rigorously scientific elimination process, we *should* admit them,—then those who defend the spiritistic hypothesis are forced to base their faith upon the facts which were, to the best of the sitter's belief, wholly without his memory or consciousness, and had never become known to him through the recognized channels of sense. Of these, a portion may have been known to the sitter and temporarily or permanently forgotten by him, while another portion may have become known to him subliminally, but never have risen above the threshold of consciousness—such as conversations heard when asleep, etc. Of the remainder of the facts in these reports, it would be a very nice question to settle as to how far *chance* may be accountable for them. Amidst the confusion and excitement in most of these sittings; amidst the shuffling, stumbling, and "fishing"—(more common under the Phinuit *régime* than now, however); amidst the many tentative remarks and absolute falsity of numerous positive statements, it would be almost surprising if we did *not* find *some* true incidents which would be applicable to any one particular case, either to the sitter himself or to some relative or friend of his.

But it must be admitted that all this is purely speculative, and perhaps unwarrantable. We must not strain our "perfectly natural"



solutions to the breaking point in too many places at once, or the chain may become too weak to support the strain placed upon it. Both sides of the question must be judged fairly, and without prejudice, and if it is possible to arrive at any solution of these problems without reverting to what Mr. Lang calls "animism," it is clearly our duty to do so; but we must not make ludicrous attempts at explanations which are both unsupported by evidence, and *prima facie* extremely improbable;—"There is a point at which the explanations of common-sense arouse scepticism" (*Cock Lane and Common Sense*, p. 60).

Conceding this point to the spiritistic side of the controversy, therefore, I shall assume, for the sake of argument, that the facts obtained by Professor Hyslop by means of Mrs. Piper's automatic writing, were not known by normal means and forgotten by his supraliminal self, though lodged within his subliminal memory, and that chance is insufficient to account for the successful statements made. We are now face to face with the most—and only remaining—important problem of all the Piper or analogous phenomena, viz., *how is this knowledge, unknown to the sitter, obtained?* The hypothesis of "spirits" and exclusive telepathy from widely scattered living persons both appear to me exceedingly improbable;—the former for obvious reasons, the latter because of the vast assumptions necessary and difficulties encountered within the hypothesis itself. But if we reject both of these theories (together with "the Absolute and the Devil!"), we are forced, it appears to me, into some such hypothesis as the following.

§ 17. *The writer's theory for explaining these phenomena: Initial Remarks.*

In the first place, I should suggest that many—perhaps all—of the thoughts in the minds of those about us are constantly being "telepathed," as it were, to the brains of others; that each individual consciousness is the nucleus and radiating point of hundreds of such telepathic messages, which, though constantly being received and dispatched, are entirely carried on below the level of consciousness, so that we never become cognizant of them except in some abnormal condition, or under some extraordinary emotional influence; when this thought tends to merge into consciousness as an automatism (sensory or motor). Occasionally one of these telepathic messages rises above the level of consciousness in the form of a veridical dream or phantasm, a crystal-vision, a warning voice, a restraining hand (hallucinatory); or, again, in the numerous *motor* types of messages, such as automatic and planchette writing, trance utterance, table-tipping, etc. All this



has been discussed so fully by the late Mr. Myers, in his papers on "The Subliminal Consciousness," that I need not have entered into the problem at all were it not for the fact that whereas former writers have regarded these telepathic messages as rare and sporadic, the present theory suggests that they are of almost constant occurrence, but very rarely merge into consciousness, save as an automatism, or when the medium gets *en rapport* with our "subliminal," and so attains the facts by unconscious telepathy.<sup>1</sup>

§ 18. *Objections to the above theory and replies thereto.*

The only serious objections to this hypothesis are (i) that if this were actually the case, one's brain would be the recipient of vibrations, not only from one's friends and relatives, but from every living being in the universe; and (ii) that, even granting that the facts are telepathically transmitted as suggested above, they would form an indescribable chaos from which it would be almost impossible to select the right facts for the person thought of; thus making the medium's telepathic powers worse than useless: for, instead of an orderly array of thoughts, connected with some particular individual, and classified, to a certain extent, by some unknown association process, with his individuality, the medium's subliminal consciousness would find itself groping vaguely amidst a bewildering mass of evidential material, strewn helter-skelter throughout the sitter's sub-consciousness.

I shall answer the second of these charges first, thus "clearing the ground," so to speak, for the reply to objection number one.

Now it must firstly be noticed that these mistakes frequently *do* occur,—the right facts are given, but in relation to the wrong person. This is precisely what we should expect on the above hypothesis, and is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the spiritistic theory. Thus Professor Hyslop says (in reference to a string of facts just given in his

<sup>1</sup>Since writing the above, I find that Mr. Myers has advanced very much this same view, from a slightly different standpoint. In *Phantasms of the Living* (Vol. II., p. 302), the following sentence occurs: "I conceive that, if telepathy be a fact, something of diffused telepathic percolation is probably always taking place. This at least is what the analogy of the limitless and continuous action of physical forces would suggest. . . . And similarly it is not unreasonable to suppose that the same telergy, which is directed in a moment of crisis towards a man's dearest friend, may be radiating from him always towards all other minds, and chiefly towards the minds which have most in common with his own." See also *From India to the Planet Mars*, p. 387-8, where this point is just touched upon.

Report),—"In fact the whole passage is definitely applicable to my brother Robert, and not to the others." (*Proceedings*, Vol. XVI., p. 77).<sup>1</sup> Much of the confusion in the Reports which was previously explained as the rapid and unknown changes of the communicators may also be due to this cause. The facts are more or less confused and ambiguous,—sometimes applicable to the wrong person rather than to the right one; oftentimes applicable to almost any one at all. But I shall not dwell too much upon this point, for, though many mistakes are committed and considerable confusion sometimes apparent, the result, generally speaking, is that the incident in question is *usually* connected with the right person. We are left, therefore, to speculate as to the force or energy at work which would separate these telepathic ideas from different minds into the fully rounded-out personalities, and combine these thoughts into more or less complete individualities.

There are, of course, two conceivable methods by which this result might be obtained. (i.) The facts may be associated with that individual, and classified, *as they enter our brain*,—thus forming part of a group of facts (telepathically obtained), which in themselves form that individuality by means of some association process;—or (ii.) that the facts are in reality in a very confused condition, but are singled out, as in some way distinctive, by the medium, and combined by *her* subliminal self into a separate individuality, *in the very process of abstraction*.

It would be necessary to assume in this case that the fragmentary knowledge gained is in some way distinctive; each thought or memory being "labelled," so to speak, and applicable to that one person solely. This may indeed be the case to a certain extent, for even when our supraliminal consciousness hears the name of some well-known friend, it is at once associated with a host of memories and recollections concerning that individual; and we may surely suppose that the *subliminal* self, with its far wider range of possibilities, and highly developed mechanism of susceptibility and suggestion, may discriminate between the thoughts of one person and those of another.

<sup>1</sup> See also the following statements in the last part of *Proceedings* issued (XLIV). On page 195 (Vol. XVII.) Mrs. Verrall says: "But I have no doubt that a certain number of statements classed as incorrect or unverifiable are as a fact statements wholly irrelevant to their context and belonging to some other series of communications." Again (p. 136) Mr. Piddington wrote: "In face of this fresh evidence, I think it cannot reasonably be doubted that the three statements . . . wrongly given by Mrs. Thompson in trance in connection with Miss Clegg, owe their origin to reminiscences of Mrs. Thompson's dead sister, Mrs. Turner, which 'Nelly' got hold of, *but used in a wrong relation.*" The italics are mine.

As to the *first* of these objections (that, on the hypothesis proposed, one's brain would be the recipient of vibrations from every living organism indiscriminately), the theory just advanced, as an answer to objection (ii), would partially dispose of this objection also, and it only remains for us to answer the natural inquiry—*why* should our friends influence us more than other persons? If this constant telepathic communication is a fact, *why* should some thoughts influence us more than others, merely because they happen to belong to one's friend or relative? Here is indeed a complex problem, and one which will require all our ingenuity to solve, but, in place of any better forthcoming explanation, I would suggest the following hypothesis, which, bold venture as it is, yet seems to fulfil the requirements of the case better than any other so far advanced.

§ 19. *The writer's theory for explaining these phenomena: Continuation of the theory.*

It has frequently been observed that two persons, when constantly in each other's society, tend, very frequently, to "grow alike," both physically, in their modes of thought, and in their general mental and moral "make-up." It is as though their minds had become *adjusted* to one another's, so to speak; that interchange of thought was becoming both a more frequent phenomenon, and that the process of communication was being facilitated as the time progressed, and the two persons in question came to know one another better, and to let their minds run more and more in the same channels. Now *by what process* is this mental telegraphy facilitated? In other words,—if we assume that telepathic communication is a fact, and that it is, in such cases, apparently developed, what is the actual mental process involved which would facilitate its action?

In answer to this question, I would suggest that the two persons here involved have had their *mental receivers and transmitters gradually adjusted to one another's*; so that, whereas at first only a few "divergent rays" are received by us, as time progressed and our mental transmitters and receivers began to be adjusted at the proper *foci* to the other person's receivers and transmitters respectively, the process becomes clearer and more frequent, and leads to almost constant subconscious telepathic interaction between the two subliminal selves.

It will be seen then that, on this hypothesis, facts and personal knowledge may be freely exchanged without the recipients being aware of that fact either at the time or afterwards, unless it emerges into

consciousness as an automatism, or is abstracted thence by the medium, and given back to the sitter as a piece of entirely new information. In fact, all knowledge apparently unknown to the sitter is merely filtered through Mrs. Piper's brain, and, mingling with her "spirits" or secondary personalities, is expressed through the medium's hand with the invariably dramatic setting, thus conveying a strong impression that the messages are in reality due in origin to the action of disembodied spirits.

We here arrive, therefore, at a conclusion which, although it does not *disprove* spiritism, nevertheless renders that hypothesis unnecessary. For, if we can account for the knowledge displayed by the medium which is, to the best of his belief, unknown to the sitter, then most assuredly there is nothing else of such moment in the spiritistic hypothesis, as to detain us from rejecting it as at least gratuitous. For I claim that this apparently unknown knowledge may indeed be known to the sitter, although he himself may be entirely unaware of such knowledge,—*it having been gained by unconscious telepathy from those in constant association with him*; and that many facts undivulged may still be within the safe keeping of his subliminal self, ready to be evoked under certain conditions at present too little understood to be extensively practised; and this, it appears to me, might be the solution of the Piper and all kindred phenomena.

#### § 20. *Conclusion.*

In conclusion be it said that I do not intend this to be more than a tentative hypothesis, and that I am in no way fighting or opposed to the philosophy of spiritualism. Realizing, as I do, the tremendous importance of the question being definitely decided either for or against this belief, and the revulsion of feeling which must necessarily follow in the wake of any such thing as a "scientific demonstration of a future life," it appears to me that, before accepting it, we should strain every conceivable hypothesis to its utmost before "letting down the bars" before the proof of immortality. To the spiritist, this attitude must seem to denote an extraordinary frame of mind; it is hard for him to appreciate the tremendous impediments and extreme difficulty any one of a materialistic temperament experiences in attempting even to conceive any form of a "future life" whatever. But this is a matter of personal opinion from an "outsider's" point of view. What one's opinion would be were one in the place of Dr. Hodgson or Professor Hyslop, it is impossible to say, but for mankind in general, bas-

ing their whole belief on the printed pages of our *Proceedings*, it would seem that this absolute proof is still wanting, and that the majority of us are still inclined to murmur with old Omar :

“ Strange, is it not ? that of the myriads who  
Before us pass'd the door of darkness through,  
Not one returns to tell us of the road  
Which to discover we must travel too ! ”



## REMARKS ON MR. CARRINGTON'S PAPER.

BY PROFESSOR J. H. HYSLOP.

THE spirit of Mr. Carrington's paper, which is sympathetic, makes it unnecessary to waste my time in getting at the issue involved, and hence I shall simply take up each section in its order and make such comments on points concerned as the nature of the question requires.

I shall premise my remarks, however, with an important consideration which I mean to keep in view in all my comments. There are two questions in the problem of psychical research in so far as it has to do with the spiritistic hypothesis. The first is the question of *explanation*; the second is the question of *evidence*. Both demands must be satisfied in any hypothesis put forward, whether it is spiritistic or not. The theory must actually explain, and it must have evidence in its support. If the hypothesis presents only one of these requirements, it is defective, and science cannot entertain it, even though it happen to be true outside of our knowledge. Science forms its convictions not on mere possibilities, but on knowledge—the knowledge that the theory explains and that it has evidence. This criterion will be applied throughout my remarks. I shall use now one and now the other aspect of it as occasion demands.

(1) Mr. Carrington misunderstands the whole case when he says that it is an *a priori* objection to the probability of the spiritistic theory "that only *one* medium should have supplied us with sufficiently strong evidence of 'spirit return' to make that hypothesis the most probable one." The reason for making so much out of the Piper case is not that it is so unique, but that we have in it both quantity and quality of material to justify the discussion of the hypothesis in all its complexity. Mrs. Piper is not the only medium from which such phenomena have been obtained. There have been plenty of them in history representing phenomena similar in character so far as simple supernormal quality is concerned. But they have not been the subject of prolonged scientific

experiment and inquiry. It is the latter fact, and this fact alone, that is the reason for putting emphasis on the Piper case. It is the only one that justifies the scientific man in saying that he has sufficient evidence in it to make out a case which will explain other less evidential instances as well. The spiritistic theory does not depend *wholly* on the Piper case, but only for its consistency in a large mass of facts and its exceptionally scientific character.

(2) I have nothing to say regarding section 2, except to indicate the reservation which I make in regard to the actual explanatory powers of telepathy and clairvoyance. I make bold to assert that *they explain absolutely nothing*, not even non-spiritistic phenomena of a supernormal character. They are simply evidential criteria; that is, owing to the possibility of such facts as they denominate, we simply find it more difficult to get the required evidence for a spiritistic theory. Cf. *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. x., pp. 214-215; also my report, *Proceedings*, Vol. xvi., pp. 294, and 127 footnote. One of the most amusing things to me in the whole history of psychical research is the tendency of its members to appeal to telepathy as explaining both spiritistic and other phenomena after it has been carefully defined as merely a name for phenomena still to be explained. The term was adopted to describe mental coincidences which are not due to chance and which have some causal nexus, but it is not a name for the cause, and hence cannot be used to explain anything. As an explanatory principle, it represents simply the *unknown*, and all explanation must appeal to a *known* principle, not necessarily a fact known at the time. I took special pains to indicate this briefly in my report (p. 294), where I showed that human consciousness was a *known* principle, and was only *extended* in supposing its continuance. It is thus capable of explaining the same kind of facts that it explained in actual life. Telepathy and clairvoyance explain *nothing*. They are simply names for facts, if facts, still to be explained. (Cf. *Proceedings*, Vol. xvii., pp. 248-9 and 261: *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. x., p. 214). Hence I deny at the very outset the fundamental assumption of my critics, and maintain that the spiritistic hypothesis has a fulcrum of some importance in supporting itself. If it is to be set aside, we must prove the explanatory powers of the alternatives employed, and not gratuitously assume that we are explaining a phenomenon by calling it a mysterious name.

(3) Mr. Carrington's quotation from my report misses the point. I was simply rejecting the *combination* of theories on the scientific principle that a theory which does not apply in the main features of its nature to the whole mass of phenomena is not applicable at all.

The Ptolemaic theory of astronomy explained the solar system as fully as the Copernican system, but not as *simply*. The combination of "cycles and epicycles" covered the field well enough, but the combination was both unnecessary and too complex to satisfy the proper method of science, which is that a theory must be simple and have no adjuncts which are necessitated merely by its own inadequacy. The adjuncts must be known or proved facts naturally fitted to the theory. The combination of Mr. Carrington has no unity, and is merely arbitrary. The spiritistic theory gives unity to a far larger mass of facts than any of the other hypotheses enumerated by Mr. Carrington, and which he rejects as insufficient when taken alone to account for the results. The adjuncts which are attached to the spiritistic theory are drawn from normal and abnormal psychology, and represent known facts in living human experience, so that in drawing our explanatory general principle from a known human consciousness and our adjuncts from accepted psychology, we cover the field by a simple theory, and must reject the combination which Mr. Carrington mentions for the same reason that the Ptolemaic astronomy was rejected in favour of the Copernican.

(4) In section 5, Mr. Carrington disputes my contention that the Piper phenomena are experiments and not spontaneous occurrences. There is a very decided misunderstanding here of the passage which he quotes from me, and which he disputes. I drew the distinction between the "experimental" and "spontaneous" to contrast the Piper phenomena with those of *apparitions*. We can exercise no influence on the occurrence of apparitions, but we can at least choose the time for the Piper phenomena and ask questions during the sittings. These facts give the case the general nature of an experiment. The spontaneity involved in the phenomena occurs, we may say, only when the "communications" are allowed to take their own course. This is for the evidential purpose of excluding both suggestion and guessing. But asking questions completely destroys the spontaneous nature of the phenomena precisely as questions in the experimental work of psychology assume the problems of the laboratory to be experimental. Besides, in any conception of the term, the Piper case is experimental in comparison with those phenomena which the Society has classified as spontaneous. That is what I had in view in my distinction, and it holds good at least to the extent of showing that we have a far more valuable set of phenomena in the Piper results than can ever be obtained by recording casual and spontaneous experiences. In every essential feature the Piper sittings are experi-

ments of precisely the same sort as are the experiments with subjects in the work of experimental psychology.

Let me also differ from Mr. Carrington regarding the cogency of Mr. Lang's question as an argument against the statement of Sir Oliver Lodge. You can answer Sir Oliver Lodge only by experimentally proving the kind of telepathy which he says, I think correctly, has not been proved. Mr. Lang's sceptical question, implying that we cannot "experiment consciously on the unconscious," is not in any respect a proof that telepathy is subliminal. It would rather show that it is both unproved and unprovable.

(5) Section 6 maintains "the possibility of unconscious telepathy." I do not dispute this. What I want to know is: "Is it a fact?" not "Is it possible?" What Sir Oliver Lodge maintained, and I agree with him, is that this kind of telepathy has never been experimentally proved, and until it has been so proved, we are not obliged to consider it as a scientific hypothesis for either explanatory or controversial purposes. The "possibility" of it may serve as an evidential limitation in the question of *demonstration*, but will not be a consideration in *inductive* problems. The claim here by Mr. Carrington that "the great majority of the bare facts in the sittings could have been obtained by the medium by means of telepathy from the subliminal consciousness of the sitter," is subject to limitation of what has just been said. If that kind of telepathy is scientifically proved, I can agree; but I deny that it has been scientifically proved. What people have been doing in this work is extending the meaning of telepathy without producing the facts that would justify it. Not knowing its laws and conditions or limitations, when confronted with an apparent spiritistic phenomenon, we ask: "But what if telepathy can obtain its data from the subliminal?" Then by virtue of the right to ask the question on various occasions, we presently surreptitiously assume it to be a *fact*. Presto! and the whole thing is done.

In his reference to the sittings held by Dr. Hodgson in my behalf, Mr. Carrington neglects to note that many of the facts in those sittings were quite as unknown to me as to Dr. Hodgson, and that we must either extend the telepathy to other minds to account for them or advance the hypothesis of previous subliminal acquisition telepathically by myself. As Mr. Carrington treats of this latter theory further on, I shall omit consideration of it at present, and only call attention to the misconception of the facts of the record.

(6) In putting forward the dramatic play involved in the phenomena as apparently the first matter in favour of the spiritistic theory, Mr.



Carrington reverses the order of cogency as stated by myself in my report. I make that fact purely secondary, and perhaps Mr. Carrington would do so if asked regarding it. But I call attention to the matter to emphasise the question of selectiveness in the phenomena as related to the problem of personal identity as the really strong point for the spiritistic theory first to be considered, and if telepathy cannot meet that, it must take second place.

The "difficulties" which are mentioned as suggested by Mrs. Sidgwick in her discussion of Dr. Hodgson's report, I must dismiss, as they do not seem to me of any scientific importance.

Mr. Carrington thinks that my suppositions to explain statements regarding material existence, etc., are purely arbitrary. Now I was careful to show that in two respects my explanation of such phenomena simply reproduced the admitted facts of present knowledge. I indicated as an *ad hominem* point that I had only to assume telepathy as the normal mode of communication in a transcendental world, as it is assumed to be a sporadic occurrence in this, and second, that the prevailing idealism in philosophy would afford an analogy which prevented all assumption of the supernormal to account for the occurrence of such phenomena. Besides, Mr. Carrington neglects to observe that it is not necessary for me to resort to these suppositions, as I said they were not proved, and that the essential feature of the theory maintained was that the "communicator" is in a mental condition at least somewhat like our secondary personality (pp. 284-5) while communicating. This again is a resort to present knowledge and conceptions to explain the occurrence of such messages as he thinks offensive to our ideas of what ought to occur. I cannot go into details of this feature of the theory, but it explains how amnesia of both the normal life in the transcendental world and the past terrestrial life might occur, and in every way disturb the apperceptive powers for rightly representing the conditions of spirit life. This enables the spiritistic theory to explain what the telepathic theory cannot pretend to explain, so that when you are reduced to a choice between them, the former becomes preferable, whether proved or not.

The question of "mistakes, confusion, and contradictions" is too large to discuss in detail here. Each one of these would have to be considered by itself. But I may briefly indicate that contradictions, no matter how numerous, in regard to affairs on "the other side," do not in the least affect the spiritistic theory, but only the reliability of the controls for telling the facts about such a life. The spiritistic hypothesis rests wholly upon facts that we can verify on "this side,"



and that are unquestionably supernormal and inexplicable by telepathy. Contradictions about things terrestrial are a positive objection to telepathy, because after assuming the powers which must be attributed to it to explain away the spiritistic theory, there is no excuse for contradiction. Besides, we have no right to suppose that discarnate spirits know anything more about "this side" than we know about theirs. They may have as much difficulty in finding out facts here as we have in finding out about their affairs.

(7) The objection based on what Mr. Carrington calls (in § 8) the "evolution of Phinuit" misconceives the whole problem, and shows very clearly how assumptions made for evidential reasons become supposed facts. After some animadversions on this point of Phinuit's nature, Mr. Carrington says: "But the fact remains that one of Mrs. Piper's first controls was no spirit at all, but merely a secondary personality." Then he asks a question as to the possibility of distinguishing between him and the present controls. Now let me say in reply, first, that in my argument I assumed that the Emperor group are also secondary personalities (pp. 153-4, 264, 265-6, and 292). But *assuming* this for evidential purposes is not admitting it to be a *fact*. As personal identity was the standard, I had to test these trance personalities by the same criterion as others, but their failure to indicate their identity is not *proof* that they are Mrs. Piper's secondary personality, but merely a reason for suspending judgment and conducting the argument on the concession that they have not satisfied the conditions of evidence. The absence of proof for the presence of spirits is not proof for the absence of spirits, and yet the majority of writers and critics perpetually commit the error of making the assumption which this statement denies. Hence we must not forget that the assumption for argumentative purposes that Phinuit was the secondary personality of Mrs. Piper is not equivalent to the denial that he was in reality a spirit. For all that we know, he was that, but the evidence did not prove it. Phinuit and the Emperor group satisfy one term of the double standard which I mentioned near the beginning of my remarks. They can be *explained* by the spiritistic hypothesis, but they do not conform to the *evidential* criterion. Hence argumentatively we must *assume* them to be what they may not be in fact, but we have no right to convert a logical expedient into evidence that they are not what they claim to be. In all this I wish merely to emphasise the truth—so easily disregarded—that failure to prove a case is not evidence of the contrary view; it simply leaves us in a condition of agnosticism.

(8) In section 10, Mr. Carrington misunderstands the purport of Mrs. Sidgwick's statement that the "evidence for direct communication . . . may easily be overestimated." In this Mrs. Sidgwick is disputing Dr. Hodgson's *possession* theory, which concerns the *modus operandi* of communication, and not the fact of it. Mrs. Sidgwick admits that there is a considerable amount of evidence for spiritistic communication, which seems to imply an admission of the cogency of incidents for the spiritistic theory which Mr. Carrington here thinks are weakened by my discussion. (Cf. *Proceedings*, Vol. xv. pp. 17-18.) But his misconception of her statement makes its quotation irrelevant to the point which he wishes to make regarding an incident in my record connected with the "communications" of my uncle. This was his failure to recognize Dr. Hodgson, of which Mr. Carrington says I make so much.

But Mr. Carrington misses my point in saying that secondary personality in hypnosis and other forms shows precisely this failure to recognize certain persons present. This may all be very true. But I was using the failure to recognize Dr. Hodgson as a difficulty in the telepathic hypothesis. I was certainly not dealing with secondary personality *alone* in the Piper case, but with a telepathic agent by supposition. On this assumption I ought to have gotten a knowledge of Dr. Hodgson's presence precisely as I did in the case of my father, who had heard of Dr. Hodgson while living, but my uncle had not, as I had never talked with him about the subject. The curious feature of the Piper case is that the personalities who, when living, knew or had heard of Dr. Hodgson, always or generally recognize him, while those who never knew him do as my uncle did in this case. Why should telepathy always duplicate the spiritistic phenomena and nothing else? Besides, Mr. Carrington should note that Dr. Hodgson is constantly recognized during the supposed secondary condition of Mrs. Piper, so that it is not consistent that my uncle should fail to do this, except on two assumptions: first, that I was dealing with a spirit, and, second, that the telepathic powers of Mrs. Piper are limited to the nature of the personality represented, or rather extended to the coincidences between what is true of both the living and the dead and apparently nothing else! That was the point which I wished to make so as to show how complicated telepathy might be, or had to be, to account for the delicate psychological distinctions which it draws, a distinction which its experimental form seems never to recognize. The "multiplex personality," which must be assumed in this case, must represent the multiplicity of the alleged "communicators," and

you would have to give some rational account of the consistency of the Emperor group and their phenomena with the supposed elasticity and cleavage assumed by Mr. Carrington, as well as the strange tendency of the assumed personalities to coincide in their work with the demands of a spiritistic hypothesis, showing psychological powers and distinctions which now indicate no limitations, and now precisely those which we should expect on the spiritistic theory.

(9) In regard to the combination of telepathy and secondary personality in the Piper case, Mr. Carrington must not ignore the fact that I called attention to this possibility and remarked that, as the non-evidential matter might all be referable to secondary personality, the whole issue turned on the question whether telepathy could adequately account for the acquisition of the supernormal facts. Having claimed that telepathy could not rationally account for this acquisition, so far as present evidence is concerned, and as the various controls can be *explained* by the spiritistic hypothesis, it was not only consistent but necessary to accept the hypothesis which was most consistent with all the facts, and so treat it as preferable, that is, as a working hypothesis. If you suppose that telepathy is all that Mr. Carrington assumes it to be, then the case may be as strong against the spiritistic theory as he supposes. But he should have remarked that my whole argument threw upon him and similar critics the burden of proving the kind of telepathy which he assumes, and which I do not admit for one moment as either proved or as having the respectability of a working hypothesis.

(10) What Mr. Carrington says in section 14 of a "telepathically initiated secondary personality," is practically answered by my last remarks above. When such a thing gets inductive or other evidence in its support, I can reckon with it, but I am not, in an inductive problem, under any obligations to refute mere possibilities. I simply demand of every assumed possibility that it present evidence of its being a fact, just as Mr. Carrington demands of the spiritistic theory, not that it be possible—for this he apparently grants—but that it have evidence.

Of course, Mr. Carrington is only stating in this way what is really involved in the usual telepathic theory, so that, apart from the language, we have only the old hypothesis to consider, and this is subject to the criticism that the sitter cannot telepathically produce real personalities of which it knows nothing, except we suppose that there is no personality which he does not know, at least subliminally, all having been acquired in the manner discussed in later sections. But, apart from this

supposition, the limitation of telepathically initiated secondary personalities is found in facts not known by the sitter as we have been accustomed to define "knowledge." Mr. Carrington must produce the evidence that such assumptions are justifiable, not assert their possibility, as we are not dealing in this problem with mere possibilities but evidentially supported hypotheses.

(11) In section 15, Mr. Carrington speaks of "difficulties of the telepathic hypothesis simplified," and then proceeds to maintain that the sitter may have telepathically acquired at some time the facts that are supposed to be entirely "unknown." It is amazing to see this called "simplifying the telepathic theory!" I have a very simple reply to this contention. It is, Give us the evidence that any such thing is a fact. I am not going to say that it is impossible. For all that I know, this and many other things are quite possible. One other writer says that "the ether fairly teems with the vibrating thoughts of the bygone ages, and all (*sic*) that is necessary to become possessed of this store of universal knowledge is to become sensitive to ether vibrations and learn how to translate them into ordinary language." Very possibly, so far as I know. But you would think that a man who does not stumble at the acceptance of such a stupendous claim as this without an iota of evidence, would not get excited about spirits which claim to have some evidence in their support. Now Mr. Carrington seems to imitate this man and does not produce any evidence that the sitter is possessed of such subliminally acquired knowledge by means of telepathy, and until he does, a scientific man is under no obligation to discuss it in an *inductive* problem. Only when it gives some evidence of being a fact in non-spiritistic data can we discuss it as an objection to the spiritistic theory. Besides, it is certainly strange that Mr. Carrington should demur to the acceptance of the spiritistic theory on the evidence of "one case" when he is willing to tolerate a far more stupendous theory without evidence of any sort. The Piper case may not be enough to *prove* the spiritistic theory, but it has to be explained by some theory, and as the spiritistic hypothesis seems to have in it both the requisite explanatory and evidential credentials, it is certainly legitimate to treat it as a working hypothesis, and exact of every other competing doctrine the satisfaction of the same demands. I must contend, on the very nature of telepathy as a supposition, as well as the contradiction between the magnitude and the necessary limitations of his theory as applied to the facts, that it does not explain anything, and Mr. Carrington has given no evidence that his conception of it is a fact



in any case, so that neither credential of a legitimate scientific hypothesis is embodied in his supposition.

In this theory Mr. Carrington has certainly followed the injunction which he imposes upon sceptics in section 13, namely, that "we must invent some hypothesis which will account for a greater proportion of the facts than any hitherto advanced." Now what I dispute is the right to "invent" any hypothesis whatever. Newton was very careful to say in regard to gravitation "*hypotheses non fingo*," by which he meant that he limited his suppositions to *known* principles, and simply extended their operation *with evidence*. If we are to be allowed to "invent" hypotheses *ad libitum* without responsibility to evidential considerations, I think I could produce several theories to rival the spiritistic, some very simple and some very large. I have never understood scientific method to permit this, and hence I simply ask of every theory presented that it present the two fundamental credentials of every legitimate hypothesis, namely, explanatory *and* evidential capacity, and perhaps I should add, as an important corollary, applicability to details. Mr. Carrington has not supplied any of these conditions in his proposal. To support it, he should present something like the experimental data which the Society's *Proceedings* record in favour of telepathy, as limited to the present active states of consciousness, and in favour of the spiritistic theory. There is not the slightest attempt to do this, and until it is done, I am not called upon to scientifically consider such statements as this: "I should suggest that many, perhaps all, of the thoughts in the minds of those about us are constantly being 'telepathed' as it were to the brains of others," except to say that they are assertion, not evidence.

(12) In Mr. Carrington's remarks on what we should expect from his hypothesis in the way of mistakes and confusion, he actually departs from the very principle with which he starts out in the discussion. This was to accept the less stupendous theory. I shall not question the liability to mistakes in the selection from so large a mass of experience, including both supraliminal and subliminal knowledge, except that if telepathy is half as large as Mr. Carrington and others suppose, it ought not to make any such mistakes as are actually committed. But if we can explain such mistakes by the normal laws of consciousness, we do not have to resort to the supernormal at all. Mr. Carrington takes an unverified hypothesis, and then to get out of a difficulty which it presents, "invents" a weakness in it to simulate it to the finite which is not in the original supposition. In the application of the spiritistic hypothesis, I had proceeded upon the implications of



personal identity, and assumed what must be true on that idea, namely, that the subject, the discarnate soul, would show the strength and weakness of consciousness as we know it, and so I explained the mistakes and confusions by the various incidents of normal and abnormal memory. That is, some mistakes can be explained by the ordinary lapse of memory, others by the amnesia produced by the condition of secondary personality in which the discarnate spirit is supposed, on the internal evidence of the record, to be. I thus resort to the *known* to explain my case, and Mr. Carrington resorts to the *unknown* for his explanation both in the conception of the hypothesis at large and in the adjunct expressing its limitation. Besides, Mr. Carrington has stated as an objection to his theory a range of selectiveness that it must imply, which I think every scientific man would regard as fatal to it until experimentally proved, and this evidence is not here offered.

(13) The Ptolemaic character of Mr. Carrington's theory is shown in the "cycles and epicycles" which he has to contrive to make it work. He finds that it implies subliminal acquisition from every living person, and then, to account for the selectiveness of Mrs. Piper's subliminal, he supposes that the thoughts of friends and relatives have a specially constituted nature to be impressed or selected which others do not have. Where is the evidence of such an assumption? Of course, it is the interesting fact that, generally at least, the "communications" purport to come from friends, and that spontaneous coincidences are usually connected with friends. But Mr. Carrington forgets first that it is only from friends that you can ever discover evidential instances of spontaneous coincidence, and that it is only incidents about friends that you can hope to have any chance to verify as a rule. For all that we know, especially if Mr. Carrington's hypothesis be true, there is plenty of telepathic communication between living people, but as no communication of the ordinary sort takes place between them, there is no evidence of the telepathic impression. It is not necessarily the mental attitude of our friends that causes the telepathy between us, but it is the accidental circumstance that we can converse or exchange letters that *proves* it, and we must not mistake the evidence of a fact for its cause. The only resource for Mr. Carrington is to increase the selective capacity of Mrs. Piper's telepathic action, and so make it so intelligent and acute that he cannot escape the supposition that it is perfectly devilish. This is what I had in mind when laying so much stress on the incident in which my uncle failed to recognize Dr. Hodgson. I was indicating that telepathy as a mechanical process ought not to coincide with what we should expect on the spiritistic theory without supposing

that it was sufficiently intelligent and self-conscious to know what it was doing, and if it knows this, it knows that its own work is not spiritistic. and we have to add the devil to it to make the phenomena intelligible. That it is devilish may be the correct interpretation, and I shall not claim to possess data for refuting this view ; but I shall insist on the telepathist recognizing frankly the implications and consequences of his theory.

Moreover, the fact of friendship is not an intelligible reason for supposing that telepathy is primarily affected by it. It may be that it is as imagined, but to justify the supposition, we must have very much more evidence than the coincidental circumstance that our collected data represent experiences between friends. Let me say right here that I can give a very simple explanation of all such coincidences on the spiritistic theory, but I have always refused to tolerate it even for myself because it lacks the requisite evidential features. But there is nothing in friendship, so far as it is psychologically known, to suggest that telepathic action especially depends on it, and until some reason can be found, in the very nature of it as a phenomenon, to create this expectation, we must treat the coincidence between it and telepathy as insufficiently understood to assume any general law based on it. Besides, granting it, how would Mr. Carrington explain the constancy of Mrs. Piper's supposed telepathy in the selection of memories related to deceased persons and not related to the living, without also supposing a most fiendish intelligence in the selection? Surely the fact that a friend has died can hardly so alter the nature of my memories regarding him as to distinguish them radically from the memories about living friends. Hence, if telepathy is not intelligently selective, I ought to get a constant confusion of incidents between the living and the dead, which as a fact I do not get, as the records show. Again, I say you must add the devil to your hypothesis to make it work, and if this is so, let us admit it, and recognize a part of our hypothesis is a fiendish capacity of the subliminal to know just what it is about and to simulate the spiritistic exactly.

(14) I am aware that Mr. Carrington regards his hypothesis as merely tentative, but what I am maintaining is that we are not entitled to "invent" even tentative hypotheses, unless they actually explain and can present in their favour an adequate body of empirical evidence. The contention that the possibility of such a theory renders the spiritistic theory gratuitous is not relevant, because after admitting that the spiritistic theory actually explains and has at least some evidence in its support, it is clear that his own theory is quite as gratuitous

as the one he wishes to set aside, and the attempt to "invent" it only reveals a more or less conscious or unconscious motive in the respectability of scepticism for evading the issue. If gratuitousness is an objection to a theory, and I admit that it is, I must say that every theory not supported by adequate experimental evidence is gratuitous and so objectionable. "Inventing" hypotheses simply to get rid of a perfectly plain and reasonable supposition which accords with the known both in its simplicity and complexity simply reveals, in the last analysis, a disposition to make our ignorant neighbours' opinions of our sanity the standard of truth and scientific method. We need some sense of humour in this matter. I cannot see that the gravity with which we can propose or receive the most stupendous miracle in favour of scepticism and incredulity in any way proves that we are scientific. What we must realize in discussing the spiritistic theory is that it is not our business to "invent" hypotheses to prove it gratuitous, but to show that it does not explain and that the evidential conditions are not satisfied. To resort to the contrivance of *a priori* hypotheses, however valuable as indications that the conclusion has not been demonstrated, is simply a tacit admission that scientifically and inductively the case is against you. All that the spiritistic theory claims is that it conforms to the canons of induction, not that it is secure against the fertility of human imagination. It may be false, but it is scientific. So far as we are concerned, scientific method may not be the criterion of truth, but as long as that is the accepted standard, and I accept it, we have only to conform to it to throw upon adherents of that method the responsibility for accepting or rejecting hypotheses which satisfy their own conditions. On the other hand, if imagination and "invention" are to be our criteria, I think the admission would be very cordial that spiritism would obtain credibility on quite easy terms.

(15) Mr. Carrington has apparently taken no account of the fundamental feature of the theory that he is criticising, namely, that the communicator is not in a normal mental condition while communicating. That conception is the clue to many of the "difficulties and objections" which so naturally present themselves against the spiritistic theory. A recognition of this assumption, as based on (a) the internal evidence of the messages, (b) the statements of the communicators, and (c) its conformity to what we know in pathology, would suggest a unity in the whole that brings it into an intelligible form. All criticism which neglects this part of the theory as defended simply evades the issue. There is no reason to suppose, from any conception of telepathy as it is experimentally known, that it should reproduce the characteristics of

an abnormal mental condition on the "other side," which we can easily understand in terms of the various phenomena of secondary personality. The theory as I have presented it in my report is not grappled with at all until this feature of it is adequately noticed. The reader may not be satisfied with the evidence for the supposition, but he should at least show why it is neither explanatory nor adequately supported by fact.

ON PROFESSOR HYSLOP'S REPORT ON HIS SITTINGS  
WITH MRS. PIPER.

By FRANK PODMORE.

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THAT no detailed criticism of Professor Hyslop's report on his series of sittings with Mrs. Piper has yet appeared, is due no doubt to the extremely voluminous nature of the report itself and its accompanying appendices. Certainly the mere bulk of the work is sufficient to repel most critics. Not lightly may one essay to controvert conclusions which are supported by some 650 pages of argument and evidence. To my thinking, however, Professor Hyslop is justified in the appeal which he makes for a patient and detailed study of records that involve, even remotely, issues so momentous:—

It seems to me impossible to obtain a proper conception of the issues involved without a most painstaking study of . . . detailed records. On this point I make no concessions to the popular demand for a merely readable story, but expect from those who claim to be intelligent a minute and patient study of the phenomena, such as we demand in all scientific and philosophic problems (*Report*, p. 18).

After such study as I have been able to give to the matter, I find that I differ from Professor Hyslop's views almost as widely as it is possible for one honest and unprejudiced investigator to differ from another in the interpretation of the same subject-matter. But I gladly pay my tribute at the outset to his notable industry, patience, ingenuity, and, above all, his serious and whole-hearted appreciation of the importance of his task. But my own credentials will no doubt be called in question, and, indeed, before setting out to explain why my conclusions on the evidence before us differ from Professor Hyslop's, I should like to defend my claim to be considered an unprejudiced witness. Prior to the publication, in 1898, of Dr. Hodgson's monumental report on Mrs. Piper's later trances (*Proceedings*, Vol. XIII.), I had held that her utterances were amongst the strongest evidences



which we possessed for telepathy, or at least for some supernormal faculty of acquiring information outside the possible radius of the senses; on the other hand, it seemed to me that the indications of the action of discarnate spirits were so slight and shadowy as to be hardly worth taking into account. After some conversations with Dr. Hodgson during his visit to this country in 1897, and careful study of the *Report* issued shortly afterwards, I inclined to the opinion that the case for spirit intercourse was at any rate strong enough to be accepted as a provisional hypothesis. That in the course of the four or five years which have intervened my views have gravitated back to the standpoint which I held before 1898, is due partly to recent study of the history of spiritualism, and partly to the perusal of Professor Hyslop's report. The effect of that report on my mind has been not merely to discredit altogether the spirit hypothesis so far as this particular series of sésances is concerned, but retrospectively to cast some shadow of doubt on the results previously recorded by Dr. Hodgson.

Thus much in defence of my claim to be heard as an unprejudiced critic. Now to the argument. Professor Hyslop asserts that the issue presented by these records "is simply whether spiritism, or telepathy from living persons exclusively, is the more rational hypothesis to account for the facts" (p. 5), and as between these two he gives his vote decidedly in favour of the former. Whether his preference, as between these two hypotheses, is justified or not, I have not needed to inquire. The offer of a choice between these alternatives implies the exclusion of other explanations. To one such possible explanation Professor Hyslop does briefly define his attitude—fraud is, he thinks, excluded by the past history of Mrs. Piper's mediumship. Now, certainly, in the previous sésances recorded in Dr. Hodgson's reports, fraud in the only form not hopelessly inadequate—the acquisition of knowledge by private detectives—seems excluded by the conditions of the case. But Dr. Hodgson's case for the exclusion of fraud was founded mainly on the records of first sésances, held with persons whose names were entirely unknown to Mrs. Piper. Obviously, if Mrs. Piper maintained however so well equipped a detective agency, she would find little opportunity to make use of her information until she knew at least the names of her sitters. Now the first sésances on which Dr. Hodgson relied were in most cases strikingly successful. But the first sésance in Professor Hyslop's series, according to his own original estimate of it, is "absolutely worthless" as evidence (p. 20). It is true that, in accordance with his mental habit, he modifies this estimate on further reflee-

tion, and is now of opinion that "it could be made quite intelligible, if not slightly evidential, by disentangling its threads of suggestive possibilities." But his original judgment remains on record, and I doubt if many readers will be inclined to dispute it. The first séance, then, in the series may be called a failure. But clearly, without imputing deliberate fraud of a kind of which Mrs. Piper's past history affords no indication, at each séance after the first it became more and more likely that the true statements may have been founded on knowledge normally acquired by the medium, either in her waking state from things heard and read, or in the trance by inference from things let drop by the sitter, or generally from his acceptance or rejection of previous utterances; and these normal channels of information were possibly wide enough to have conveyed everything in the later séances which was true and relevant. Now, to this question Professor Hyslop has not addressed himself at all. He contents himself with refusing to discuss the possibility of fraud, in what he considers the only form conceivable in the case, that is, the employment of detectives for obtaining information (p. 6), on the ground that that hypothesis was excluded ten years ago (p. 5). But in connection with the strikingly successful groups, mostly of first séances, recorded by Dr. Hodgson and others in previous reports, there was no need to insist upon the possible operation of such familiar causes as chance-coincidence, fishing, inference from hints let drop at the sitting, or the reproduction of information casually acquired by the medium before the séance, because the facts stated at these séances were often so detailed and accurate as to make the mere suggestion of such an explanation ridiculous. The question of deliberate and systematic fraud was discussed and rejected, not merely as being inadequate to the results, but as being, with anonymous sitters, practically impossible. In considering the present records, however, in which the first séance was a failure, and the chief successes were scored towards the end of a series which extended over many months, when the sitter had long ceased to be anonymous, we may perhaps exclude fraud, but we are not equally entitled to exclude chance-coincidence, skilful inference, and the reproduction of information casually acquired. Professor Hyslop says indeed (p. 11) that he was careful to avoid giving suggestions, either muscular or by his questions. But it appears from the record that he generally let the medium know whether her statements were right or wrong, so that she might have been enabled gradually to correct them, which she seems to have done.

In considering generally from the evidential standpoint the utter-

ances at Mrs. Piper's later séances, it is to be noted first, that the machinery of the trance communication is by no means simple, or even intelligible, except with expert interpretation. Mrs. Piper is entranced, and apparently unconscious of what goes on. The messages given are written through her hand. The intelligence which inspires those messages, whatever its precise nature, is certainly complex, and of an unusual if not unique kind. The view of the process of communication provisionally adopted by Dr. Hodgson and Professor Hyslop is that Mrs. Piper's organism is made use of by the spirits of certain deceased persons for the purpose of communicating with their friends who are still living here. But for the most part that communication is supposed to take place in an indirect way. Professor Hyslop's father does not, *ex hypothesi*, himself control the bodily movements of Mrs. Piper. That function is too delicate and uncertain to be entrusted to any but an expert spirit. Professor Hyslop's father, uncle, brother, or other communicating spirit, dictates, therefore, what he wishes said to one of the customary controls, usually "Rector" or "G. P.," who in turn translates the messages somehow into terms of Mrs. Piper's muscular activity. But occasionally the ordinary process is interrupted by the intrusion of alien spirits, who either succeed temporarily in obtaining possession of Mrs. Piper's organism or divert the attention of the controlling spirit. Once more, the supposed orderly process may be interrupted by "automatisms"—vague, meaningless remarks thrown out by the communicating spirit (or by Mrs. Piper's own subliminal consciousness). Thus on p. 332 occurs the remark, "Do you hear her sing?" This remark is not, to the uninstructed reader, more out of place than many other remarks interjected in the course of the trance-writings. But it is not recognised by Professor Hyslop as relevant, and is dismissed as "one of the automatisms which are quite frequent in these sittings" (p. 352, note). Now, cumbrous and far-fetched though this hypothesis of communication at two removes may appear, there can be little doubt that it has a very direct relation to the observed phenomena, so direct that we are practically confined to the choice of one out of two alternatives—the hypothesis either accurately represents the facts, or is itself responsible for the appearances which suggest those facts. If Mrs. Piper's organism is not controlled by spirits in the manner supposed, we are forced to conclude that her trance utterances have been moulded to their present form so as to accord with a theory gradually elaborated by Dr. Hodgson and his fellow-workers.

The practical result of this complicated mechanism is that the

messages delivered through the entranced Mrs. Piper are extraordinarily ambiguous and uncertain in their interpretation. To begin with the simplest difficulty, the actual script is extremely indistinct, and can apparently only be read, if read at all, by those who, like Dr. Hodgson himself, have had long practice in deciphering it. In some instances quoted in the reports it seems to have baffled even Dr. Hodgson. The ambiguity of the writing may sometimes have given openings by which the trance intelligence could gain information. Consider, for instance, this passage :

“I am with her (with whom?). Yes, I have A—— A—— [undec., possibly either Alice or Annie]. (Is it Alice?) Alice (Alice who?) *I do not say Alice, I say Annie*” (p. 307).

This is quite in Phinuit's old style. Again, in one place the word “mother” is printed five times, but “a close re-examination of the original automatic writing indicates that the first of these words looks like ‘mother.’ The others look like ‘brother.’” (p. 316). On another occasion the sitter asks, “Who passed out soon after you?” The answer given is “mother [? brother] is here also” (p. 331). In some cases the indistinctness of the writing may even have led to unconscious perversion of the record. In one case, *e.g.*, the sitter asks for the name of a younger brother to be given. The writing proceeds: “Cannot hear you. Do not hurry so. Do you mean F——? (Sitter: ‘Yes, father, I mean F., if you can tell the rest.’) ‘Yes, I can remember very well, FRAD (?)’” Professor Hyslop then explains that the symbol printed as D was really very like NK, and that Frank was the brother's name (pp. 337-8). One cannot help wondering whether, if the brother's name had happened to be Fred, the resemblance of the last character to NK would have seemed to Professor Hyslop quite so conspicuous.

But, after all, the writing is the least of the difficulties in the interpretation of these communications. The really serious obstacle lies in the nature of the communications themselves. There is a large amount of what, for our present purposes, we must dismiss as mere padding. The controlling spirits are voluble in protesting that they will do their best; asking the sitter to have patience; complaining of the conditions, and so on. This part of the communications is coherent enough, but not evidential. The messages of deceased relatives are for the most part fragmentary and incoherent. They are also indirect, tentative, and ambiguous in form. Last of all, they frequently, perhaps generally in the earlier sittings, contain no indication of the identity of the supposed communicator. That identity



has to be inferred from internal evidence. In other words, the message is assigned to the relative to whom it would be most appropriate. Thus, to take one case out of many, Professor Hyslop explains that at a certain part of the first sitting he originally supposed himself to be communicating with his brother, but later saw reason, purely from internal evidence, to suppose that his father, not his brother, was the communicator (pp. 22, 307, and 361). In other words, the messages for the most part bear no label of origin; in some cases they bear no label of destination either. Names are thrown out haphazard, to be taken up and identified or left, as the sitter wills. Thus, to take a salient case, at the second sitting the "control" announces that there is a little girl-spirit trying to find her mother. He then proceeds:

"Who is *Ruth*?

(Hyslop: I do not know *Ruth*.)

Not to thee, friend, but to thee [*i.e.* it refers to R.H.]" (p. 319).

If we were dealing with the ordinary professional clairvoyant, who describes, before a roomful of her clients, the apparition of a sweet-faced widow lady, or an old gentleman with silver hair, or some other typical figure, we should say that the conditions were cunningly devised to ensure that her clairvoyant descriptions should never fail to find a billet somewhere. In reality, ambiguous messages of the kind often dealt in by Mrs. Piper, bearing marks neither of origin nor of destination, widen the scope of chance-coincidence in much the same way, though no doubt to a less extent. Obviously the cap is more likely to be found to fit if it is not aimed at one particular head.

The evidential value of fragmentary, incoherent, and indirect statements of the kind here dealt in by the trance-intelligence is extremely difficult to estimate. Taken as they stand, many of them are meaningless. To have any meaning, they require to be filled in or interpreted. It is, of course, in the process of filling in or interpretation that the real danger lies. The material is so vague that several interpretations would often fit about equally well, and the interpreter is tempted to choose that meaning which best accords with his wishes or his preconceptions.

But to come to particulars. It would obviously be impracticable, within reasonable limits of space, to analyse the evidence presented by the whole series of sittings. Nor is any such complete analysis necessary. As already pointed out, the information given at a prolonged series of sittings is of course less and less valuable as evidence for supernatural activity (spirits, telepathy, or anything else) the later it comes in the series. At each sitting the medium starts with a



larger stock of information, normally acquired, than at the sitting which went before. Moreover, as the sittings proceed, the medium obviously has more and more opportunities of acquiring information from outside sources. I do not suggest that the medium, in the present case, made any illegitimate use of any outside source of information which may have been accessible to her; but clearly that possibility is not one which we can altogether exclude. For this reason I should have preferred to begin my analysis of Professor Hyslop's records with the first sitting. But as the first séance was at the best inferior to the others, in order not to treat the case unfairly I have chosen the second séance for detailed analysis.<sup>1</sup> As the first séance, however, is evidentially the critical one, I have thought it well to give a brief summary of its results, which does not greatly differ from Professor Hyslop's own statistical summary in the table printed on p. 118 of his Report.

After the preliminary conversation with the controlling spirits, there enter at the first sitting a lady with gloves and a little girl, who do not give their names and who fail to obtain recognition. Thereafter, in the course of the sitting, seventeen names are introduced spontaneously by the trance-intelligence. Of these, five—Margaret, Annie, Charles, Willie, and Elizabeth—are correct; but it should be added that the lady introduced as Elizabeth was known in life as Eliza. Of the remaining names 11 are incorrect, viz., Lillie, Alice, Henry, Albert, Alfred, Mr. Morse, Walter, Edwards, Ell-el, Robertson, Corrie. But "Lillie," we are told, would have been correct and pertinent if it had been Sarah Luella; "Ell-el" might be an attempt at Eliza; "Robertson" would have a meaning if it were Robert's son; and "Corrie" might have been intended for Mary or for Cornelia. Finally, there is a name not deciphered, but probably intended for Ellen or Allen. On this Professor Hyslop comments, "Allan (*sic*) could have one possible meaning, and Ellen two."

The amount of coincidence here is clearly not more than chance would afford. In fact, the trance-intelligence may be accounted distinctly unlucky in scoring only 5 successes in 16 trials with quite commonplace names. Probably in most English families, at any rate, the number of hits would have been greater.

The second sitting was, according to the statistical summary, one of the most uniformly successful of the whole series. There are, according to Professor Hyslop, 12 "incidents," resolvable into 49

<sup>1</sup> See Professor Hyslop's remarks on the first séance (Report, pp. 20 and 21) and his statistical summary, on p. 118, of the statements contained in it.

"factors," of which 45 are true, 3 indeterminate, and one false. Clearly, therefore, we shall do no injustice to the record if, having perforce to content ourselves with analysing a sample, we choose the second séance for the purpose.

Now there is one, and, so far as I can find, only one definite true statement made at this séance. The full name of the sitter—James Hyslop—is given. Even that information is given piecemeal—the "James" at the beginning, the "Hyslop" at the end of the sitting—a procedure which, if fraud were in question, would certainly seem suspicious.

If the sitter's name had been given at the first séance, when the precautions taken against the discovery of his identity seem to have been pretty complete, it would have been a valuable piece of evidence. Coming, in this piecemeal fashion, 24 hours later, when the medium had had the opportunity of passing in review the events of the first sitting, and the names of likely sitters, we cannot assign so much weight to it. Professor Hyslop's general interest in the subject was known, since he had lectured on psychical research even in his father's lifetime. And to Miss Edmunds, at any rate, it appeared probable that he was one of the persons who would apply to have sittings with Mrs. Piper (see p. 345). In the circumstances the name "James" may have been a "try-on," the favourable reception of which would justify the confident ejaculation of "Hyslop" at the end of the sitting. Excluding "Ruth," of which we have already spoken, four other names were correctly given at this séance—George, Charles, Willie, and Eliza (Elizabeth). All these had been introduced at the previous séance, the first-named by Professor Hyslop himself. Moreover, the relationship (brother) of George and Charles had also been indicated at the preceding séance; and the relationship of Willie and Eliza is not precisely indicated in the second séance. Three names are incorrectly introduced—"Robertson," "Elsie" (which is promptly changed, after repudiation by the sitter, to Eliza), and "Uncle Charles." The sitter remarks that he does not know any Uncle Charles. The trance-intelligence replies: "I think is not a real uncle; you must remember what I mean." Professor Hyslop's comment is: "With the resemblance of the word *Charles* (slight resemblance only, and noticeable only to those familiar with these sittings) to this uncle's name, and the fact that he was *not* a real uncle, the incident has a perfectly definite meaning" (p. 316). He was apparently an uncle by marriage, and his name, as we learn later, was James B. *Carruthers*.

There is one other quite definite statement made at the sitting. Professor Hyslop's father was, he says, "the last to come here." This is claimed as correct, and it is correct if understood to apply only to the immediate family. It is not even true of blood-relations, for Professor Hyslop's cousin, Robert H. McClellan, had died since (p. 17). Still less is it true of the communicators in general, for the uncle by marriage, who is supposed to be communicating through a considerable part of this same séance, had also died after Mr. Hyslop, senior. Supposing that the form of the sentence had been modified, and Mr. Hyslop's spirit had said that he was the last but one to come here, or even the last but two, would Professor Hyslop have written down either of these statements as false?

If we turn to the substance of the communications, we shall find them much more coherent than in the previous sitting, but on the other hand there are fewer definite statements. The intelligence communicating is much freer, and seems more sure of the ground, but contrives to utter very little beyond the commonplace or the readily conjecturable.

I will briefly summarise the various points, omitting the purely general topics, such as the difficulties of communicating, the pleasure of meeting the sitter again, the grief of those left behind, etc., matters which make up a large part of the communication:

(A) After the introduction of the two names, "James" and "Willie," comes the advice, "Do not work too hard." This communication is interpreted as coming from the sitter's father.

(B) A few lines introducing Brother Charles, and interpreted as coming from him.

(C) A passage with the advice: "Don't worry;" a reference to "trouble in your (sitter's) head," which Professor Hyslop cannot distinctly remember. The passage concludes with the words, "Tired out."

In the detailed notes (p. 314) the passage is interpreted as coming from the father. But in the report (p. 28) it is apparently assigned to the uncle.

(D) "E—Elsie, El—Elsie" is written. Sitter repudiates the name Elsie, and it is immediately changed to Eliza. Then follows general talk about the loneliness and grief of Eliza, *after* the sitter had intimated by his question that Eliza was still living.

This passage is referred to the sitter's uncle, James Carruthers.

(E) A reference to "Uncle Charles," with the explanation, added after repudiation by sitter of the suggested relationship: "Not a real

uncle ;” a statement that he (or the sitter) “used to be so nervous ;” a message to “the girls ;” a question, “Have you seen the children yet ;” a reference to George, and then : “Are you troubled about him ? He is all right and will be, James.” Then the advice : “Worry not ;” and the recognition of the accordion, which had been brought to the séance, with other things belonging to the late Mr. Hyslop, in accordance with the usual practice at these séances of bringing objects familiar to the deceased person who is supposed to communicate.

This passage is interpreted as coming from the father.

(F) Another reference to “Eliza,” and a decided change in the attitude of the communicating intelligence, possibly inspired by the sitter, who on the introduction of the name Eliza remarks : “Tell us who are with you, and that will help Eliza.”

The passage is referred to the uncle.

(G) A reference to the sitter’s lectures, and to his scepticism about a future life.

Referred to the father.

(H) The Ruth episode.

(I) Sitter’s father states he was “the last to come here.” More reference to sitter’s difficulties and scepticism.

(K) Sitting ends with Mrs. Piper’s ejaculation of the sitter’s surname—Hyslop.

It will be seen from this bald summary—the accuracy of which can be tested by reference to the full report of the sitting—that, if we omit the reference to the trouble with George, there is nothing in the statements made to call even for the exercise of telepathy. There is certainly a shrewd appreciation of Professor Hyslop’s own character, and of the relations subsisting between him and his father ; in short, a dramatic realisation of the situation generally. But a person of somewhat more than the ordinary acuteness and sympathetic insight into character would probably have made as good a show by utilising the experience gained at the first sitting, even if the identity of the sitter remained unknown. But, as already said, it seems possible that, in the twenty-four hours which elapsed between the first sitting and the second, Mrs. Piper’s trance-intelligence had penetrated Professor Hyslop’s disguise ; and that when he came for the second time she knew or strongly suspected who he was. Such an assumption seems, however, hardly necessary to explain the results. The things said are the mere commonplace of mediumistic séances ; the attitude indicated of the older to the younger generation is far from being uncommon ; in



short, the whole situation is such as might have been divined by an intelligence far inferior to that of Mrs. Piper's trance-personality. But Professor Hyslop says that not only the ideas, but the form in which they are conveyed, were characteristic of his father. Here, again, the phraseology seems too little distinctive to justify any certain inference. They are phrases which, in this country at any rate, would naturally come from the mouth of a medium playing, with some plausibility it must be admitted, the part here assumed. But let the reader judge for himself. Here are the chief words and phrases used at the séance, and claimed as characteristic: "Give me my hat and let me go;" "Tired out;" "It was me [the "me" is natural for father]"; "What is their loss is our gain;" "Stick to this;" "Do you recall your lectures, and, if so, to whom do you recite them now? [this word "recite" is very singular: it is like him];" "Well, I was not so far wrong, after all;" "You had your own ideas;" "Well, it is not a fault;" "Sincerity of purpose;" "All the difficulties which you encounter," etc., etc.

One more point before we leave the consideration of this séance. In the statistical summary already mentioned Professor Hyslop enumerates 49 separate factors, of which one only is classed as false. There were three incorrect names given—"Elsie," "Robertson," and "Uncle Charles." Which of them is classed as "false," and which as "true" or "indeterminate"?

Let us now take a sample from another part of the series. In February, 1899, Dr. Hodgson held five sittings with Mrs. Piper, on Professor Hyslop's behalf, in the absence of that gentleman. I propose to deal with the first of these, partly because it is the first, partly because, as containing no "mixed" or "indeterminate" statements, it is the simplest. Every statement is classed, in the statistical summary, as true or false: there are 8 true incidents, consisting of 14 factors, and 2 false incidents, one containing 4 and the other 6 factors, or 14 true factors against 10 false; on the whole a favourable balance. I cannot, by any system of calculation, make my analysis of the sitting agree with Professor Hyslop's. The false factors can readily be identified; indeed I make the total sum rather larger. But the true factors, on the most favourable interpretation, amount, according to my reckoning, to 11 only. But let the reader judge. The relevant matter begins about half way down page 370.

Rector is represented as explaining to the spirit of Professor Hyslop's father that the sitter is "not James, but Hodgson." The spirit then says that he wants to speak to James (one true factor), and refers to a previous conversation on the subject of Emanuel Swedenborg



(one true incident, consisting of two factors, but clearly not evidential, as the reference to Swedenborg had been made at a previous sitting).

Then follows the precise statement by the spirit: "I am thinking of the time some years ago when I went into the mountains for a change with him, and the trip we had to the lake after we left the camp" (one wholly false incident of 4 factors).

Next comes a long and definite, though fragmentary, account of a trip out west, and an accident to the train, owing to the engine going through a bridge, which delayed their journey several days, and gave his father a nervous shock, from which he never fully recovered (one wholly false incident of 6 factors).

There is a vague reference to a fire (one true factor, but not evidential, as it had already cropped up at previous sittings).

After the mention of the fire, and the railway accident, and the nervous shock, comes the statement: "I have now completely recovered from this, and I can walk about as well as ever I could" (p. 372). Apparently Professor Hyslop counts this statement as true (one "true" incident of 2 factors).

A reference to "long talks" on "possibilities of communication" (one true incident of 2 factors).

A spectacle case is produced. The spirit recognises the ease as having been his own, and states correctly that he called the glasses "spectacles" (one true incident of 2 factors).

There is then a reference to "Nannie." As there was apparently no person named Nannie to whom a reference here could be pertinent, I should class "Nannie" as false, or, at best, as indeterminate. But it seems clear from the summary that Professor Hyslop has classed it as true, on the assumption that "Nannie" was Rector's mistake for "Maggie" (one false factor).

The only other evidential statement in the séance occurs on p. 375, an allusion to Professor Hyslop being in New York at the time (one true factor, but, as Professor Hyslop points out, the statement has little evidential value).

To sum up, then, I find 11 false factors as against 10, and 11 true as against 14, on Professor Hyslop's reckoning.

Practically not one of the 11 true factors has any value as evidence, being either repetition of statements made at previous sittings, or, as in the case of the recognition of the spectacle ease, things such as the medium could readily infer without extraneous assistance.

But the false statements are new, precise, and categorical. And Professor Hyslop adopts a very curious method of dealing with

them. The statement that Mr. Hyslop, senior, went with his son to the mountains, and then on a trip to the lake after leaving the camp, is admitted to be false. But they did once go together to a town called Champaign (generally pronounced Champagne, and so pronounced, according to the stepmother, by Mr. Hyslop, senior, though Professor Hyslop thinks he called it *Campane*). After this they went to Chicago, and naturally visited the lake shore whilst in the city. Professor Hyslop then suggests a possible reconstruction of the statement, as follows :

Mr. Hyslop, senior, is supposed to be dictating to Rector, who is writing through Mrs. Piper's hand (p. 409) :

"I am thinking of the time some years ago when I went into [Father says 'Illinois.' Rector does not understand this, and asks if he means 'billy.' Father says, 'no ! prairies.' Rector does not understand. Father says, 'no mountains.' Rector understands this as 'No ! Mountains,' and continues] the mountains for a change with him, and the trip we had to the lake after we left [Father says, 'Champaign.' Rector understands 'camp,' and continues] the camp." The name of the town is usually pronounced *Shampagne*, and according to my stepmother my father so pronounced it when living, though my own recollection is that he often pronounced it *Campane*.

The following are a few more instances of the same method : On p. 384 the spirit being asked what medicine he used to take besides strychnine and Hyomei, replies *morphine*. Mr. Hyslop, senior, did not apparently take morphine, but he did take arsenic. "Now this arsenic is not morphine, but it is a poison that was very closely associated in father's mind when living with the common class of poisons, and it might be a natural mistake to make here in mentioning it instead of arsenic" (p. 410).

Again (p. 386) the spirit is asked if he remembers Samuel Cooper. The reply is that he was an old friend in the West, and that they used to have long talks on philosophical subjects. Of Samuel Cooper, an old neighbour of Mr. Hyslop's, the statement is false. But there was (p. 411) a Dr. *Joseph* Cooper, with whom Mr. Hyslop may have corresponded on theological matters in 1858. It is true that Joseph is not the same name as Samuel, that the correspondence is purely conjectural, that in any case writing is not the same as talking, and that theology is not precisely philosophy, also, that Dr. Cooper did not live West of Mr. Hyslop, but, unfortunately, East. There was, however, a Cooper Memorial College, which was founded after his death, of which Mr. Hyslop may have been thinking ; or the mention of talk on philosophy may have been intended to refer to Dr. Cooper's

correspondence on theology with Professor Hyslop's uncle. "The misunderstanding would probably be Rector's" (p. 500). On the whole Professor Hyslop thinks that the incident "has considerable interest and importance" (p. 410).

Once more, after referring to friendly discussion and correspondence with Cooper, the spirit continues (p. 397): "I had also several tokens (? the word is apparently not legible), which I recollect well. One was a photo, to which I referred when James was present. . . ." No photograph can apparently be traced of either Samuel Cooper or Joseph Cooper. But Professor Hyslop finds much significance in the allusion to the "tokens." For his explanation of the term, which is too long and involved to quote, see pp. 411-2.

Or, again, take this statement. The spirit says (p. 397): "Do you remember the stick I used to carry with the turn in the end, on which I carved my initials? If so, what have you done with it? They are in the end—with the turn—TURN, he says."

To a plain man this is a very clear and definite description of a stick with a curved handle, having the owner's initials carved by himself on the curved part of the handle. Now Mr. Hyslop, senior, did at one time possess a stick with his initials carved upon it, not apparently by himself; but the stick was straight. Further, he had possessed at least two sticks with curved handles, but on neither were his initials carved. But one of the latter sticks had been given to Mr. Hyslop by his brother-in-law, who had been responsible for the loss of the straight, initial-bearing stick.

"If, then, the sentence had read: 'Do you remember the stick I used to carry with the turn in the end, which was given me for the one on which my initials were carved in the end?' it would have expressed the exact truth very clearly . . . and there would have been no confusion about it" (p. 415).

It is hardly necessary to give any more instances, or to carry the analysis further. The reader can compare my summary with the detailed statements in the appendices, and see for himself whether I have perverted the facts. He can also, with very little trouble, satisfy himself that the samples which I have chosen for analysis have not been chosen unfairly. No doubt the last series of sittings, held in May and June, 1899, show a decidedly smaller proportion of incorrect statements, and a larger amount of coherent and relevant matter. But this was of course inevitable, if the trance-intelligence knew how to profit by its own previous mistakes, and to utilise information gained from the sitter at previous sésances. Moreover, we are hardly entitled

to assume, as Professor Hyslop does apparently assume, that the medium did not make use of external sources of information.

The conclusion reached some years since by Dr. Hodgson and most other persons who have studied the previous evidence—that Mrs. Piper, as a matter of fact, did not derive the information uttered in her trances from such sources as private enquiry agencies—rests primarily on the consideration that the actual conditions under which the séances were held would have rendered such fraud useless or impossible. It did not rest, and ought not to rest, on any one's conviction of the honesty of the medium. The whole history of spiritualism and psychical research should convince us that we are never entitled to assume the honesty of the medium. We know at once too much and too little of mediumship. Too much, for we know that almost every type of mediumship has been connected with dishonesty in the past; too little, for if there are honest mediums we don't know by what signs to distinguish them from the dishonest ones. I take it as axiomatic then that if any information was given at these later séances which could, in the interval of five months and a half which had elapsed between the first séance of the first series and the last of this later series, have been obtained by any fairly intelligent person,—whether from registers, tombstones, old newspapers, directories, or any other sources,—this information is to be attributed to such sources. That so little real information was given goes to show that at any rate the medium was not an adept in making enquiries. But there is one incident—the curious confusion between the identity of John McClellan, father of one of the communicating spirits, and another person of the same name coming from the same part of the country, to whom reference is made in a county history—which might be held to point to an unsuccessful attempt of the kind. Professor Hyslop considers the passage in which this suspicious mistake is made as “one of the finest sets of pertinent and evidential incidents in the record” (pp. 111, 470, 535).

Psychologists tell us that in perceptive processes inadequate and ambiguous stimuli are peculiarly apt to give rise to hallucination; or, in other words, faint sights and sounds are liable to be interpreted according to the wishes or beliefs of the percipient: and the same law appears to hold good when we are dealing not with sensations but with ideas. History supplies us with abundant examples of elaborate theories constructed out of material sufficiently vague and indeterminate to allow wide latitude of interpretation.



## SUPPLEMENT.

## REVIEWS.

*Modern Spiritualism: a History and a Criticism.* By FRANK PODMORE.  
2 Vols. 8vo. (Methuen & Co., London, 1902.)

Apart from the *Proceedings* themselves, this book may fairly be described as the most important contribution to the subject of psychical research that has—up to the end of 1902—appeared since the publication of *Phantasms of the Living*. If a long and profound study of the subject and a wide acquaintance with cognate subjects, an accurate knowledge of facts and a philosophic grasp of principles, a strict and impartial adherence to scientific method regardless of whether or not it leads to distasteful conclusions,—if these are the qualities requisite for dealing with this topic, it would be hard to find any living writer better fitted than Mr. Podmore for the work.

Apart from the desirability of having the whole history in a single compact form, with the most copious and exact references to the original authorities, we had reached a stage at which a critical summary of the results so far attained was urgently needed, and it is fortunate indeed that both tasks have fallen into such competent hands. It may be added that the book is written in a clear, concise and crisp style, which makes it easy and pleasant to read.

The author thus describes his object in writing it (Vol. I., p. xi): “The system of beliefs known as Modern Spiritualism—a system which in one aspect is a religious faith, in another claims to represent a new department of natural science—is based on the interpretation of certain obscure facts as indicating the agency of the spirits of dead men and women. The primary aim of the present work is to provide the necessary data for determining how far, if at all, that interpretation is justified. But the question, Is the belief justified? cannot, as the whole history of mysticism stands to prove, be finally answered until we are prepared with a more or less adequate answer to two subsidiary questions: first, If not justified, what is the true interpretation of the facts? and, second, How can the origin and persistence of the false interpretation be explained?”



To answer these questions, we have to take account of the history of the movement and of the prior systems of belief from which it sprang. The persistent neglect of the evidence by its opponents seems to have been due to their belief that the movement would die out of itself; and ten years ago these expectations appeared on the way to fulfilment; but within the last decade the strongest evidence ever adduced for the belief in communion with the dead has been furnished through Mrs. Piper, while the physical manifestations occurring in the presence of Eusapia Paladino have strongly impressed more than one eminent man of science.

“Whether the belief in the intercourse with spirits is well founded or not, it is certain (says Mr. Podmore, Vol. I., p. xiii) that no critic has yet succeeded in demonstrating the inadequacy of the evidence upon which the Spiritualists rely. That evidence groups itself into two distinct categories; and in some cases those who accept the one category reject wholly or in part facts coming under the other. In the first place we have to consider certain subconscious activities manifesting themselves in trance speaking, automatic writing, seeing of visions, which though they may be readily counterfeited, are not necessarily, or in typical cases, associated with imposture. In the second place, second in the historical as in the logical order, there are certain physical manifestations, unquestionably, in their later developments, bearing strong resemblance to conjuring tricks, but as unquestionably appearing in the first instance in the presence and through the agency of uneducated and unskilled persons, mostly young children, and in circumstances where the hypothesis of trickery presents formidable moral as well as physical difficulties.”

To the man in the street, “spiritualism” generally connotes the “physical phenomena” only; and though to students of psychical research the mental phenomena are at least equally familiar, Mr. Podmore’s analysis of the development of the two classes is not only original, but highly instructive.

He points out that the physical phenomena are of comparatively recent origin. With the exception of the single well-defined Poltergeist type, there is—broadly speaking—no parallel to be found for them in civilised countries during the last three or four centuries at least.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the mental manifestations—inspired writing and speaking, spiritual healing, telepathy and clairvoyance—may be derived directly through the phenomena of Animal Magnetism back to those of ecstasy, obsession, magic and witchcraft. Thus it appears that this type stretches back in a series that has probably never been broken to the dawn of human history,—showing so far no tendency to disappear with the advance of civilisation,—while the former species has only occurred sporadically—

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sidgwick points out in her article on “Spiritualism” in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that a practice of causing heavily-loaded tables to rise by “magic” seems to have existed among the German Jews in the 17th century. See Von Harless, *Ägyptische Mysterien*, 1856, pp. 130-132.

as a sort of adventitious or parasitic aftergrowth, attached here and there to the main organism of belief, but at no time forming an integral part of it.

“For the proper understanding of the subject it is essential to note (Vol. I., p. xiv) that the recognition of the trance phenomena, as testifying to the existence of a spiritual world, preceded the acceptance of the physical manifestations as signs and wonders vouchsafed from that world. The raps and movements of tables did not, in the ultimate analysis, originate anything; they served merely to confirm a pre-existing belief. It is, no doubt, amongst other causes, primarily because of the failure to recognise this historical sequence that most attempts to demonstrate the falsity of the Spiritualist belief have proved ineffectual. It was of little use for the American doctors to prove that the raps could be produced by cracking of the joints, or Faraday that tables could be turned by unconscious muscular action alone; for Maskelyne to imitate the rope-tying feats of the Davenport Brothers; or for hardy investigators at a later date to seize the spirit form at a dark séance. Alike in the larger historical cycle and in the sequence of each individual experience, the faith in Spiritualism was buttressed by these things, not based on them; and though shaken, could not be permanently overthrown by any demonstration of their futility.”

The subject divides itself into three main topics, which we may take in order: (1) the history of the movement, (2) the so-called physical phenomena, (3) the mental manifestations.

#### I. THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

Mr. Podmore shows that Spiritualism is historically the direct outgrowth of Animal Magnetism, starting, *e.g.*, in America from the revelations of a magnetic clairvoyant, Andrew Jackson Davis—the “Poughkeepsie Seer,” and its first exponents being drawn from the ranks of those who had studied and practised Animal Magnetism. The spiritualistic interpretation of the trance had also been widely adopted in Europe long before 1848, the year of (among other things) the famous rappings. For a proper understanding of the subject of Spiritualism, then, it becomes necessary to study the earlier mystical beliefs and especially the cult of Animal Magnetism in America and Europe. Until recently those who paid any attention to this cult were divided into two fiercely opposed camps—one believing devoutly not only in the phenomena but in the most fantastic explanations of them, especially the operation of a subtle fluid; while the other rejected them wholesale, as the results at least of mal-observation, if not of fraud. The two eminent men of science, Bertrand and Braid, who accepted the phenomena while attempting to relate them to known physiological laws, entirely failed to gain the ear of their scientific contemporaries, and were treated with even more contempt by believers than by sceptics. “Nature, it may be said, (observes

Mr. Podmore) abhors a Mugwump." Let us hope that the S.P.R. will never be led to stultify its work through sharing in the same prejudice!

In the case of hypnotism, posterity came round after all to the side of the Mugwumps, finding in their views a rationalistic explanation of facts which it was no longer possible to ignore; and Mr. Podmore suggests that the modern doctrine of telepathy may similarly be found to furnish a rationalistic explanation of many facts which have been attributed to spiritual agencies. Readers of the *Proceedings* will be aware that the same view was maintained by Mr. Myers in his articles on automatic writing, although, of course, Mr. Podmore is inclined to press the explanation much further than Mr. Myers did.

His work is divided into four books: I. The Pedigree of Spiritualism; II. Early American Spiritualism; III. Spiritualism in England; IV. Problems of Mediumship. In Book I., Possession and Witchcraft are first treated of, with accounts of many historical cases of "speaking with tongues" (a topic which recurs in connection with various clairvoyants and later trance mediums): the Nuns of Loudun, the Tremblers of the Cevennes, the Convulsionaries of St. Médard and the Irvingites. Witchcraft has often been taken as a text to show the folly of human beliefs and the unreliability of human testimony. In *Phantasms of the Living* Gurney had already pointed out that, as a matter of fact, the evidence for witchcraft was very poor, consisting to a large extent of inferences rather than observations, while the observations were either those of children and uneducated persons, or reported at second-hand. To this Mr. Podmore adds an instructive comparison of the earlier witchcraft to the later Poltergeist phenomena. In both cases it is almost always children or uneducated persons who are concerned. There is much, again, in witchcraft which is now understood to be due to hysteria and suggestion, affecting both the bystanders and agents or victims, and Mr. Podmore gives reasons for supposing that the similar Poltergeist effects are attributable to similar causes.

It is important to note that the general argument depends for its cogency on the assumption—an assumption amply borne out by the whole history of "physical phenomena"—that the things described were not the things that occurred, but only what the witnesses—sooner or later, but generally later—believed to have occurred. Not that this assumption is taken by the writer for granted; but that detailed comparisons of contemporary with later, and first-hand with second-hand, evidence show it to be necessary. The principle has long been accepted—theoretically—by the S.P.R., and we lose nothing by seeing it applied now and then with relentless logic.

An interesting confirmation of Mr. Podmore's explanation of Poltergeists is to be found in a case given above (p. 320) by Mr. Lang, in which Poltergeist phenomena were produced by a servant girl in consequence—apparently—of a prediction made to her by a witch, which seems to have acted as a suggestion. The special interest of this case is that the girl

appears to have acted automatically, without intention and perhaps unconsciously.

We may find in the future that a good many cases of "physical phenomena" may be similarly explained. See *e.g.* a case reported by Professor Janet in the *Bulletin de l'Institut Psychologique International* (December, 1901) and referred to by Mr. Podmore (Vol. II., p. 325).

The next part of the book treats of the rise and progress of "animal magnetism" before and after Mesmer, its spread in different countries and the various theories as to some kind of force, generally conceived of as a fluid, to which the effects were attributed; the early observations of the trance by Puységur; the so-called transpositions of the senses described by Pététin; the occasional instances of what appeared to be clairvoyance or thought-transference observed by some of the most scientific investigators; the growth of the trance-phenomena, which gradually came more and more, partly through the influence of Swedenburg, to be attributed to the control of spirits—especially in Sweden, France, and Germany; the German somnambules, with their visions of heaven and their crude mystical, or rather material, theories of the universe; the comparatively late introduction of mesmerism into England, where the interest roused in it was keen indeed, but limited, its opponents being even more violent than its supporters, and where the Spiritistic interpretation of the trance found little favour;—of all these things a valuable historical account is given, with full references to the original sources.

What chiefly strikes one is the hurry that these observers were in to come to conclusions, and find explanations—or even to found complete theories of life on what they had witnessed. They had, indeed, abundance of facts before them—facts even which, unlike many of those with which psychical research has to deal, could be repeated at will. It was easy enough to induce visions, to obtain trance utterances, to produce—in well-trained subjects—"transpositions of the senses" and "phrenological" phenomena, specific reactions to metals and magnets, and so on. But, as we know, the experimenters generally failed to grasp one important principle,—the efficacy of suggestion; and for want of this much of their work is useless. Now, as Dr. Bramwell remarks (*Proceedings*, Vol. XII., p. 224) and as Mr. Myers especially insists upon (*Human Personality*, Chapter V.), "suggestion" is not an explanation, but merely a formula (like many other so-called explanations); but it is now recognised to be a formula indispensable to any rational interpretation of hypnotism. The history of animal magnetism shows us, then, the imperative necessity of suspending our judgment on a science still in so rudimentary a stage as psychical research, lest we, too, should be wandering uselessly in a labyrinth, and shutting our eyes all the time to some clue which may be lying close at our feet.

Early records of clairvoyance and thought-transference are next treated of, with critical discussions of some of the best evidence. The careful reader of this early evidence (to be found in the *Zoist* and elsewhere)



will probably agree with Mr. Podmore in thinking it inconclusive. The experimenters, as a rule, made little or no allowance for hyperæsthesia and heightened intelligence in the trance, or for subconscious interpretations by their subjects of slight indications unconsciously given by themselves. The possibilities of codes and of conjuring were not taken much account of, and the records generally were kept with little care. There remain, however, a certain number of good cases, to which weight may fairly be allowed, since they have been reinforced later by evidence more up to modern requirements. Among these, Mr. Podmore gives a prominent place to the remarkable trance utterances of Cahagnet's subject, Adèle Maginot (already described in his article in *Proceedings*, Vol. XIV., p. 50), the only one of the early sensitives whom he thinks worthy to be compared with Mrs. Piper.

He passes on next to the early cult of mesmerism in America. Here the subject was chiefly taken up by persons of little or no scientific education, with the result that the more extravagant theories of phrenology and nerve-fluids were carried to great extremes and set forth in barbarous systems of nomenclature.

The mesmerised subjects soon developed into trance mediums, of whom Andrew Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie seer, was the most famous. His "Harmonial Philosophy" was expounded in a series of lectures given during trance, and afterwards published. These "Revelations" deal with the evolution of the universe,—or, as Davis preferred to call it, the *Universeœlum*,—and show a curious mixture of arrogance and ignorance. Mr. Podmore gives a few instances of the "scientific" statements made—*e.g.* the description of the ichthyosaurus inhaling through an adipose branchæ (*sic*) an atmosphere which consisted of carbon, nearly counterbalanced by oxygen. Of his philosophy, we are not after this surprised to hear that its meaning is "elusive beyond the tolerated usage of philosophers." Yet his work shows traces of certain qualities which may partly account for the extraordinary popularity it achieved. He had clearly been much influenced by Fourierism and Swedenborgianism; he had realised "something of the orderly progression from the primæval fire mist; something of the unity in complexity of the monstrous world; something, too, of the social needs of his time and of ours—the waste, the injustice, the manifold futilities and absurdities involved in the present stage of economic evolution. . . . He could appreciate the bigness of the ideas with which he dealt, and in a semi-articulate, barbarous fashion, could make other people appreciate them too."

But his fame is chiefly to be attributed to the "Rochester knockings," which formed the next epoch in the movement, and were regarded by Davis and his followers as the fulfilment of his prophecy of freer spirit-intercourse with earth.

The history of the originators of these knockings—the Fox sisters—and their host of followers and imitators, given in full in Book II., needs no special comment here. Copious extracts are given from original sources



of the best evidence for the "physical phenomena" produced by these mediums; and it is shown how far that evidence falls short of what is required. "To the reader of to-day" (says Mr. Podmore, Vol. I., p. 249, and few would probably be prepared to contradict the assertion) "the mere statement of such belief on such grounds may well appear preposterous. Logical grounds for the belief—as logic is understood in the modern world—were clearly wanting. But the matter should not on that account be summarily dismissed as a pale recrudescence of mediæval superstition. For which of us is in better case? The causes of belief in the last analysis are not logical. It should not be overlooked that, in the present instance, the men who believed, if not of high intellectual distinction, had at least proved themselves capable, and had won more or less reputation amongst their fellow-citizens as merchants, preachers, university professors, physicians, lawyers, legislators, and men of science; that many of them had embraced such belief when still in the prime of life and the ripeness of their judgment; that the same beliefs are held by a large number of persons, even at the present day. We may feel assured that in one form or another the belief in such marvels, as it has revived again and again in the past, will manifest itself again and again in generations to come; and history shows that those who sneer at such credulity without attempting to understand its causes, are perhaps themselves not the least likely to fall victims, precisely because they do not understand."

As an aid to such understanding, the author gives a graphic account of the American *milieu*, in which the cult first grew and flourished (Vol. I., p. 208, *et seq.*). "It was in the conditions of a new and rapidly expanding civilisation, and perhaps in the special genius of the American people, that the explanation must be sought. . . . We find a nation in whom the standard of popular education and intelligence was much higher than in England, and probably most other European countries at the same date. But this very diffusion of education was in some aspects mischievous. In the older civilisations the world of ideas is still an oligarchy, with a constitution to some extent fixed and defined. There are recognised standards and precedents for the guidance of thought in every department. But in the American Republic of fifty years ago, every man claimed the right to think for himself, and to think as extravagantly and inconsequently as he chose. . . . Speculation [had] a freedom which would have been impossible in a more settled society. . . . Outside the few large cities [there was] an immense fringe of semi-rural 'townships,' carved out of the wilderness but yesterday, and filled with an enthusiastic horde of pioneers, who had learned to read and to think from men, or as we have just seen, from children,<sup>1</sup> scarcely better trained and equipped than themselves. . . . There was inevitably expended on the problems of life a large amount of vigorous but crude and undisciplined thinking; and

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. J. B. Ferguson, a prominent spiritualist of the time, at the age of thirteen conducted a school at one end of a log house; a shoemaker, who worked at his trade at the other end, holding himself in readiness to help in keeping order.

the results stand on record now in the history of various American religious epidemics, of American Socialisms, of American phrenology, of crusades against alcohol, tobacco, pork," etc. Socialism especially seems to have been most intimately bound up with spiritualism. What was attractive in the new creed was its humanitarian and religious side, its appeal to the liberal instinct in all departments of thought and feeling, its claim to provide men with a satisfying solution of the most vital problems. "The strong impulse (Vol. I., p. 225) which transformed the tricks of mischievous children . . . into the beginnings of a new gospel of hope and freedom proceeded from men like Warren Chase and John Murray Spear, full of crude but sincere aspirations for the bettering of the world; men whose eyes were often blinded by the very splendour of their distant ideals to all that was sordid and contemptible in the present. There were many men of the same type who were at that very time labouring for the abolition of negro slavery. . . . Many of [these Spiritualists] shared with the Socialists and reformers their large enthusiasms and their generous incapacity to see the trickeries and mean egotisms which surrounded them."

The follies and extravagances associated with the movement were indeed obvious enough, as may be seen from the instances given by Mr. Podmore. But he is careful to point out—and this is what makes his history of value—that all these absurdities were mere excrescences on the movement, and not an essential part of it. The main body of Spiritualists repudiated them, and though they received the physical phenomena credulously enough, they regarded them chiefly as signs—not as evidences—of a spiritual force. It was on the mental phenomena that they relied,—the indications of intelligence in the raps; the trance-utterances and visions; the doctrines that in many respects harmonised with their previous beliefs, and at their best had nothing positively repugnant to ordinary common-sense. "The special characteristic of the Spiritualist movement from the beginning has been its democratic character. There has been neither recognised leader nor authoritative statement of creed. This characteristic again gave breadth, tolerance, and expansiveness to the movement, which made it unique among religious revivals, and rendered it possible for the new belief to combine with almost any pre-existing system of doctrine" (Vol. I., p. 299).

This too great elasticity and plasticity—this "anæmic optimism"—had, however, its drawbacks. The philosophy and religion of that early school of Spiritualism cannot appeal to cultivated thinkers of to-day. The philosophy is essentially materialistic, and the religion essentially parochial. "The world [which the spirits] present to our view (Vol. I., p. 302) is a strictly material world, developing by processes of material evolution towards an unknown end. There is no mystery about their teaching. Spirit is only attenuated matter; the other world a counterpart of this; the living universe an endless series of beings like ourselves. Their view in short represents the product of common-sense, the common-sense of

the ordinary uninstructed man. . . . There is rarely any hint of deeper insight. The problems of Space and Time, of Knowing and Being, of Evil and Good, of Will and Law, are hardly even recognised. Common-sense is not competent for these questions ; and in so far as the Spiritualist scheme fails to take account of them, it falls short of being a Theology, or even an adequate Cosmology. But such as it is, though it makes no appeal to the higher imagination, and ignores the deeper mysteries of life, it has for nearly two generations satisfied the intellectual needs and the emotional cravings of hundreds of thousands of votaries. And its followers can boast that"—they have the qualities of their defects—"throughout that period they have shown a sympathy for opinions differing from their own, and a tolerance for their opponents, unique in the history of sects called religious."

In 1852 the new ideas first penetrated into England through the visit of an American medium, Mrs. Hayden. Up to that time, such "clairvoyance" as had been found associated with the mesmeric trance had not as a rule received the Spiritualistic interpretation. An epidemic of table-turning now set in, answers to questions being obtained by tilts or by raps at particular letters as the questioner ran his finger along an alphabet. The results were received with much greater scepticism in England than they had been in America. G. H. Lewes, *e.g.*, showed how he could get any answer he wished for through the medium's observation of the way he hesitated at the appropriate letters, and others noticed that she could only succeed when the alphabet was in her view. Braid again, and afterwards Faraday, proved that the table might be moved with entire unconsciousness on the part of the agents. The English mesmerists in general, however, adopted table-turning with enthusiasm, finding in the supposed vital or "electro-odical" force that produced it a confirmation of their theories of Animal Magnetism. On the other hand the practice was violently attacked by a group of Evangelical clergy, who attributed the movements to Satanic agency.

## II. THE SO-CALLED PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

At this period the "physical phenomena" exhibited by most mediums were sporadic and simple—raps, spirit-lights, and a rudimentary form of slate-writing, as practised by Miss Marshall. The rapid growth of spiritualism is to be attributed rather to the extraordinary outburst of automatic activity—visions, trance-speaking, writing and drawing—that next took place, and which excited much more interest in its adherents. The literature of the time is chiefly concerned with these, and the physical phenomena are generally passed over with such remarks as that of Mrs. de Morgan that "instances of tables rising from the floor to the height of three or four feet are so well attested" that it is hardly necessary to refer to them.

In 1860, however, the movement entered upon a new phase, in

consequence of what Mr. Podmore describes as the American Invasion,—the visit of a long succession of American mediums, the most prominent of whom was Home, to England. Professional mediumship had now become highly developed, and the physical phenomena were much more complicated and varied than before. Descriptions are given of typical performances of the principal mediums of this period, and of the successful imitation of many of them by conjurers; also of many exposures and discoveries of fraud. Mr. Podmore of course fully admits that to prove trickery in some cases is not to prove it in all, and that it is conceivable that a medium might sometimes cheat and at other times produce genuine phenomena; but he contends that, apart from the evidence presented by Home's séances, no presumption of a new physical agency is established by the records of these mediums.

With regard to the general method of dealing with evidence on all these subjects—the mental as well as the physical phenomena—one difficulty is that the accounts are always more or less ambiguous, because the recorder unconsciously assumes in the reader a certain degree of familiarity with the circumstances. Any one who has made a serious attempt to give a really accurate description of a complicated event will know how difficult it is to avoid using some expression which may legitimately be misinterpreted by a reader. And the witnesses here dealt with are often little practised either in observing or describing. The question then constantly arises: when a passage or an event is susceptible of two or more interpretations, which ought we to take?

When this question arises in the course of a scientific research into any alleged new fact or principle, the authenticity of which is disputed, every one agrees that we should invariably take the less favourable interpretation,—that the burden of proof lies throughout on those who attempt to establish the new fact or principle.

It is because psychical research is hardly yet recognised as a branch of science—even by psychical researchers—that this method is so grudgingly admitted in its case. People cannot get away from the idea that we are investigating the characters of the witnesses rather than the events occurring in their presence. Of course the character of the witness is one factor in the evidence; and if our primary object were to determine whether a witness or a medium was an honest person, it would not be out of place to exercise charity of judgment. But the question of the probity of witnesses is here a purely secondary one, and concerns us merely as bearing on the question of the authenticity of the facts. In judging the latter, it cannot be too strongly insisted on that we are bound always to take the most unfavourable interpretation.

Mr. Podmore has faithfully followed this principle, with the result that his book is an admirable example of scientific method, and will no doubt be fiercely attacked on that score.

It must further be admitted that in his lighter moments he sometimes allows himself to indulge in humorous gibes, which add to the literary



form of the narrative, but are hardly calculated to conciliate opponents. His more serious utterances, however, show no lack of sympathy or respect for those who differ from him in opinion; for instance, his description of the early American spiritualists, some part of which has already been quoted, and the following passage in reference to the physical phenomena:

(Vol. II., p. 141) "The dealings of science with spiritualism form an instructive chapter in the history of human thought. Not the least instructive feature of the chronicle is the sharp contrast between the tone and temper of those men of science who, after examination, accepted, and of those who, with or without examination, rejected the evidence for the alleged physical phenomena. Those who held themselves justified in believing in a new physical force—for De Morgan, Crookes, and other scientific converts did not at the outset, nor in some cases at all, adopt the Spiritualist belief proper—showed in their writings a modesty, candour, and freedom from prepossession, which shine the more conspicuously by comparison with the blustering arrogance of some of the self-constituted champions of scientific orthodoxy."

After a most careful examination of the subject, however, he comes to the conclusion (Vol. II., p. 182) that "generally, the strongest evidence yet considered for the genuineness of any of these manifestations falls far short of the standard of proof which is required before any such claim can be admitted." He brings forward two general objections to the acceptance of the marvels. (1) If the physical effects claimed to have been produced are not due to known physical causes, we have to assume not one new force capable of acting upon matter, but several, because the effects are of so many different kinds.

This, of course, is a merely *a priori* objection, and as such is liable to be upset by further discoveries. Readers who are interested in the question may be referred to an extremely ingenious speculation in Mr. Myers's *Human Personality*, Vol. II., pp. 530-543, as to how a force or entity, analogous to Clerk Maxwell's Demons in the power of dealing with molecules as we deal with masses of matter, might produce many of the alleged kinds of phenomena.

Yet (adds Mr. Myers, *op. cit.* p. 543) "it is to 'will power' that the communicating spirits themselves ascribe their achievements; to some mode of operation quite unexplained, but even more direct, more fundamental, than those imagined molecular powers which I cited to show how men who believed that no 'demon' existed, found it necessary to invent one."

(2) Mr. Podmore's second objection is much more serious, since it relates to the nature of the actual facts. "It is briefly this: The annals of Spiritualism offer no physical phenomena which do not, in the last analysis, depend on the experimenter's unaided senses for their observation, and on his memory for their record." Sir William Crookes at the outset of his researches laid down certain rules to which he thought



scientific proof of a new physical force should conform (see his *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* pp. 6-7) viz., that the effects produced should not depend for their evidence on simple observation, but should be capable of being registered by scientific instruments, and measured and tested by scientific tests, so contrived as to be proof against fraudulent manipulation; e.g. the passage of an object into a hermetically sealed tube.

The experiments which come nearest to satisfying these conditions are, no doubt, those of Sir William Crookes himself with Home, especially the experiments in the alteration in weight of a board. In these experiments, one end of the board rested on a table and the other was supported by a spring balance. Home placed his fingers on the end on the table and "willed" the board to become heavier or lighter; the variations in weight being recorded by an automatic register. Mr. Podmore suggests that the effect might possibly have been produced by the use of a dark thread with a loop attached to some part of the apparatus—perhaps the hook of the spring balance—and the ends fastened, say, to the knees of Home's trousers (he gives instances of tricks performed by similar means). We can only say that the possibility of this particular trick does not seem to have occurred to the experimenters (of course not even a conjurer can be expected to be familiar with all possible conjuring tricks), and that the conditions of the séances, *as described*, do not exclude it. A similar explanation is suggested for the movements of a lath and some other small objects at the séances.

But to suggest a possible explanation of an event is not to prove that it occurred in the way suggested, and Mr. Podmore adds (Vol. II., p. 243): "It is not easy to see how the investigators . . . could have been deceived, and repeatedly deceived, by any device of the kind suggested; and if we find ourselves unable to accept Mr. Crookes' testimony, we are guided to an adverse decision less perhaps by any defects which have been demonstrated in the particular evidence here presented than by that general presumption against the operation of the supposed new physical energy which . . . inevitably follows from an analysis of all the cognate evidence accumulated down to the present day." The evidence for Sir W. Crookes' experiments may not be perfect, but it is undoubtedly very good. If there were plenty of other evidence of the same kind as good, the cumulative effect would be great indeed. It is really because the good evidence is so slender in amount that cautious persons may hesitate to build on it.

The evidence for Home's phenomena is poor enough apart from that of Sir W. Crookes. It must be remembered that he had been practising as a medium for some twenty years before these sittings, and though he was never actually exposed, his sitters generally seem to have imposed no tests on him, and there are many circumstances in the reports which point to some kind of trickery. The reports, e.g., of his levitations (see Vol. I., p. 244, and Vol. II., pp. 253-4) suggest that he

was trying to deceive his sitters in the dark by making them think that he was floating in the air when he was really supported by normal means. There is also evidence that illusions, and even hallucinations (see Vol. II., p. 268), were fairly frequent at his séances, and as Mr. Podmore says, this may account for many alleged phenomena.

The objection generally offered to this explanation is based on the supposition that it implies some kind of hypnotic or abnormal condition on the part of the hallucinated sitter, whereas sitters as a rule remain in a normal condition throughout a séance. But hallucinations are often experienced in a normal condition; just as suggestions are often successfully imposed by medical hypnotists on patients in a normal waking state: and it seems possible that part of a successful medium's equipment depends on a similar unexplained power of influencing people in an unusual way,—something that transcends the skill of a conjurer much as the hypnotist's power of suggestion transcends that of the ordinary doctor.

Besides the instances given in the text of an apparent power of this kind, we may refer to a remarkable account published by Dr. Gibotteau in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (Sept.-Oct. and Nov.-Dec., 1892) of hallucinations imposed—perhaps telepathically and certainly without verbal suggestions—on himself and one of his friends by a peasant woman, the daughter of a reputed witch.

The section on physical phenomena concludes with two of the most interesting chapters in the book, entitled "Automatism" and "Dream Consciousness," containing an analysis of the natural history of mediums from the psychological point of view. "It would betray" (says the author, Vol. II., p. 289) "a very inadequate conception of the nature of the movement to dismiss it as merely one more instance of the exploitation of fools by knaves. That many so-called mediums have been knaves of a commonplace type there can of course be little question. . . . But the typical mediums, the men or women who have risen to eminence in their profession, would not come under any such familiar formula. If knaves, they seem at any rate to have shared in the folly of their dupes. It is no doubt in this fact that the secret of their power lay. The medium succeeded in deceiving others because, wholly or partially, he at the same time deceived himself; and he deceived himself because, as a rule, he was not fully aware of what he was doing." This thesis is defended with a profundity of knowledge and a wide and philosophic insight into human nature; but it is impossible to do justice to it in the limits of a review.

### III. THE MENTAL MANIFESTATIONS.

But, as already indicated, however conclusively it may be proved that the so-called physical phenomena afford no evidence of the action of any physical force beyond that exerted by the human muscles, Mr. Podmore maintains that the strength of the argument for spiritism remains

unaffected, for this really depends on the evidence for supernormal mental powers, as manifested in numerous cases, and pre-eminently in the case of Mrs. Piper. Evidence of this kind is on an altogether different footing from that for the physical phenomena, because it relates to matters much simpler in themselves—mere utterances or writings, instead of movements involving an indefinite number of objects besides the medium—and also because it does not depend on continuous observation of what is going on at the moment, but may be recorded in such a way as to be permanently available for study.

Granting that Mrs. Piper has supernormal powers, we come next to the question whether telepathy from the living is adequate to explain them, or whether we must invoke telepathy from the dead. It matters not in the first instance whether the latter kind of telepathy consists merely of impressions conveyed from the discarnate to the incarnate mind, or whether it develops into a temporary fusion of the two minds—the discarnate one taking the predominant part and governing the organism for the time, according to Mr. Myers's theory of possession. We have first to substantiate the agency of the discarnate mind in the matter, before we need discuss its method of action.

When the case of Mrs. Piper was first discussed, it was generally recognised that as much as possible should be explained by telepathy from the living, before invoking other agencies; and this for two reasons: (1) the evidence for such telepathy is both good and abundant; (2) the evidence for the most obvious other alternative—telepathy from the dead—cannot, from the nature of the case, so far as we can see at present, ever be so good, because we only know what takes place at one end of the telepathic chain, whereas in telepathy from the living we can gain information as to both ends.

These are obvious—even trite—considerations; but it is necessary to repeat them from time to time because controversy on this subject tends to degenerate into arguing whether telepathy from the living or from the dead is more probable *a priori*. The result has been extremely unfortunate. Some who advocate telepathy from the dead have so persistently undervalued telepathy from the living as to have created, apparently, an impression that we no longer care to have evidence for it. In the early days of the S.P.R. the great importance of telepathy was better understood. Mr. Balfour, for instance, in his Presidential address, speaks of it as “a fact (if fact it be) . . . far more scientifically extraordinary than would be the destruction of this globe by [collision with some star]. . . . It is a profound mystery if it be true, or if anything like it be true; and no event, however startling, which easily finds its appropriate niche in the structure of the physical sciences ought to excite half so much intellectual curiosity as this dull and at first sight commonplace phenomenon” (*Proceedings*, Vol. X., pp. 9-10).

Apart from the urgent necessity of learning more about telepathy on account of its own intrinsic importance, it is, I am inclined to think,

along this line that our best chance lies of proving personal immortality. "Whether or not," says Mr. Podmore, (Vol. II., p. 359) "the conditions of another world permit its denizens to hold halting communication with those here is a question of slight and transitory import if we have it in our power to demonstrate, from its own inherent properties, that the life of the soul is not bound up with the life of the body." He refers to Mr. Myers's view that the transcendental powers of the subliminal self afford evidence of its immortality; but in one important respect he misconceives this view,—supposing it to rest on the existence in the subliminal self of such faculties as prevision, retrocognition, and clairvoyance, for which, as he rightly says, the evidence is at present scanty. But Mr. Myers explains clearly and constantly in *Human Personality* (which was not published when Mr. Podmore wrote) that he regards Telepathy as the most fundamental and important of all transcendental faculties. For instance (Vol. I., p. 8), "In the course of this work it will be my task to show in many connections how far-reaching are the implications of this direct and supersensory communion of mind with mind. Among those implications none can be more momentous than the light thrown by this discovery upon man's intimate nature and possible survival of death." Again he says (Vol. II., p. 526) that though telepathy cannot actually prove survival, it strongly suggests it. The question depends primarily on whether it works through a physical mechanism or not, and Mr. Myers adduces many considerations tending to show that the process is essentially mental (see *e.g.* Vol. I., pp. 245-6, Vol. II., p. 195. The same view is strongly expressed in Vol. II., p. 282). The apparent unlikeness of telepathic action to the action of any known physical force is also insisted on by Mr. Balfour in his Presidential Address, quoted above (*Proceedings*, Vol. X., pp. 10-11).

In any case, it is sufficiently obvious that we have still a great deal to learn on the subject, and we can all endorse Mr. Podmore's final conclusion that the question is one of evidence: "The task before us is the patient analysis of the existing evidence, and the attempt, preferably by direct experiment, to acquire new evidence on the subject."

Alice Johnson.

*The Varieties of Religious Experience, A Study in Human Nature, being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion, delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-2, by WILLIAM JAMES (Longmans, Green & Co., London, New York, and Bombay, 1902). Pp. xii., 534.*

Psychical Research seems at length to be in a fair way of being officially connected with psychological orthodoxy. For in his latest book, which is sure to be at least as widely read as any of its predecessors, the greatest of living psychologists assigns so fundamental an importance to the influence of what the late Frederic Myers called the *Subliminal*, and uses it so freely and brilliantly to explain the psychological facts he is describing, that it seems



impossible that psychologists will be able to evade much longer the consideration either of the conception or of the evidence on which it is based. The readers of Professor James' exquisite tribute to the late President of the S.P.R. (*Proceedings*, Part XLII.) will indeed be familiar with his appreciation of the subconscious factors in mental life, but even these will probably experience some surprise at the extensive use made in the present volume of the group of conceptions with which psychical researchers have attempted to explore the dark corners of the human mind. Professor James' example does much to remove two of the chief difficulties with which the S.P.R. has had to contend in its dealings with academic psychologists, viz: (1) that of connecting its subjects with the ordinary topics of psychological concern, and (2) that of finding employment for its conceptions in normal psychology. Now it has recently been maintained by the new 'pragmatist' school of philosophers that to prove a doctrine *useful* is the first step towards proving it *true*; it supplies at least a motive for discovering and testing its 'truth,' and even if it should turn out that it ceases to be useful and tenable beyond a certain point, leaves it at least methodologically valuable and *true for certain purposes*. Hence it would be hard for us to exaggerate the importance of Professor James' proof that the doctrine of the subliminal consciousness is useful for the purpose of describing the phenomena of the religious life.

Which being premised, we may proceed to a more detailed consideration of the points in Professor James' book which seem specially relevant to the work of the S.P.R. His aim was, he tells us, an empirical inductive description of "man's religious appetites," *i.e.* of the accounts given of their religious experiences by a large number of (more or less) literary persons—institutional religions, statistics, and the sociological attitude in general being excluded—and within its limits forms an extraordinarily brilliant and immensely suggestive study of its subject. Even apart from its special bearing on Psychological Research, I do not know what recent philosophic book could be more strongly recommended to lovers of good literature.

The first obstacle in his path which Professor James has to clear away is the objection that his whole subject is entirely morbid and pathological, and that personal and intimate experiences of religious truth are merely the results of neurotic disequilibrium. In the chapter on "Religion and Neurology," Professor James gives some delightful specimens of this type of explanation (p. 10):

"Alfred believes in immortality so strongly, because his temperament is so emotional. Fanny's extraordinary conscientiousness is merely a matter of over-instigated nerves. William's melancholy about the universe is due to a bad digestion—probably his liver is torpid. Eliza's delight in her church is a symptom of her hysterical constitution. Peter would be less troubled about his soul if he would take more exercise in the open-air, etc. A more fully developed example of the same kind of reasoning is the fashion, quite common nowadays among certain writers, of criticising the religious emotions by showing a connection between them and the sexual life. Conversion is a crisis of puberty and adolescence. The macerations of Saints and the



devotion of missionaries are only instances of the parental instinct of self-sacrifice gone astray. For the hysterical nun starving for natural life Christ is but an imaginary substitute for a more earthly object of affection. Medical materialism finishes up Saint Paul by calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic. It snuffs out Saint Teresa as a hysteric, Saint Francis of Assisi as a hereditary degenerate. George Fox's discontent with the shams of his age, and his pining for spiritual veracity, it treats as a symptom of a disordered colon. Carlyle's organ-tones of misery it accounts for by a gastro-duodenal catarrh. . . . And medical materialism then thinks that the spiritual authority of all such personages is successfully undermined."

To all this the reply is simple. All these methods seek to discredit the value of a thing by appealing to its origin. But though a suspicious origin may render us cautious about a thing, it is after all with its value when it has come about that we are really concerned. A truth discovered when the blood was at 103° F. would be just as true and valuable as when it was at 98° F., and no one thinks of discrediting the products of the arts or the natural sciences "by showing up their authors' neurotic constitution." Whatever occasion a subject may give us to air our prejudices, the last criterion always is empirical, and rests on the way in which a thing works as a whole. "By their fruits ye shall know them, not by their roots" (p. 20).

The bearing of this lively discussion on the whole subject of 'psychic powers' is not far to seek. For one of the chief objections of common sense to psychic research is the suspicious character of the *personnel* concerned with it. Ghost-seers are emotional and imaginative persons whose stories need not be believed: mediums are neuropathic to the verge of insanity, and whoever believes in them is a weak-minded 'crank.' Whenever, therefore, a man of science or intellectual standing exhibits symptoms of interest in such subjects, it is time to circulate well-constructed tales of his deplorable lapse from sanity.<sup>1</sup>

To all this all who are exposed to similar charges may henceforth reply in Professor James' words. It may be very extensively true that the avowed "psychics" are persons whose mental (and even moral) health leaves a good deal to be desired. But then the social atmosphere is at present still more unfavourable to the cultivation, than to the study, of psychic powers. And the ignorance which envelopes the subject is still so dense that it needs unusual courage to take the risks which their cultivation may involve. Hence those in whom psychic powers are combined with superior and well-balanced minds, capable of efficient self-control, will naturally shrink from cultivating, or at least from divulging them. It will only be in the weaker minds that these phenomena will burst forth uncontrollably, and add to the distrust with which such powers have always been regarded. And yet all the time these powers might really be extremely valuable, and as innocuous, when properly understood and regulated, as *e.g.* musical gifts. And

<sup>1</sup> With hardly an exception all the leading members of the S.P.R. have, to my certain knowledge, been subjected to this form of martyrdom.

secondly even if psychics had the defects of their qualities and it were true that a connection between psychic temperament and insanity could be made out, similar to the alleged connection between genius and insanity, it might still be useful and we might still ask: "What then is more natural than that this temperament should introduce one to corners of the universe, which your robust Philistine type of nervous system, forever offering its biceps to be felt, thumping its breast, and thanking Heaven that it hasn't a single morbid fibre in its composition, would be sure to hide forever from its self-satisfied possessors?" (p. 25.)

In his chapter on the "Reality of the Unseen" Professor James quotes cases (p. 61-2) from the *Journal of the S.P.R.* and from *Phantasms of the Living* to prove the reality of the immediate experience of an unseen presence, which appears so often to assume a specially religious form.

Into his account of "the religion of healthy-mindedness," Professor James inserts a very sympathetic description (which will doubtless be no end of a shock to many professorial pedants) of the 'mind-cure' movement, declaring it to be "the one original American contribution to philosophy." It is, of course, diametrically opposed to science, in that it assumes that things operate by personal forces and for the sake of individual ends, instead of being the results of impersonal and universal formulas. Yet both appeal to experience for verification. And the funny thing is that experience, in a measure, verifies both. Nor must this success of mind-cure be wet-blanketed by the phrase 'suggestion,' which has become merely the scientific slang for 'apperceiving' the facts. It is better to admit frankly that both are "genuine keys for unlocking the world's treasure house to him who can use either of them practically" (p. 122), and to hold that "the universe is a more many-sided affair than any sect, even the scientific sect, allows for."

Professor James adds in an interesting appendix a friend's case in which a visit to a mental healer, in spite of his disbelief, started a turn for the better in a critical condition of his health. This he explains, very much like Professor James (p. 125), as due to his "receiving telepathically and upon a mental stratum quite below the level of immediate consciousness, a healthier and more energetic attitude, receiving it from another person whose thought was directed upon me with the intention of impressing the idea of this attitude upon me." He admits that his trouble was of a nature which would be classified as nervous rather than organic, but thinks that the dividing line is an arbitrary one, as the nerves control the whole internal economy. Hence he is on the whole "inclined to think that the healing action, like the morbid one, springs from the plane of the normally unconscious mind."

It is, however, when he reaches the subject of "Conversion" that Professor James appeals most decisively to the ideas with which the labours of Myers have familiarized the readers of these *Proceedings*. Conversion is most probably connected with the possession of a *subconscious*, *subliminal*, or *transmarginal* self, in which the motives deposited by the experiences of life are incubated, and which, if very active, may even produce sudden and

seemingly inexplicable changes. "I cannot but think," he says (p. 233), "that the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that science is the discovery, first made in 1886, that, in certain subjects at least, there is not only the consciousness of the ordinary field, with its usual centre and margin, but an addition thereto in the shape of a set of memories, thoughts, and feelings which are extra-marginal and outside of the primary consciousness altogether, but yet must be classed as conscious facts of some sort, able to reveal their presence by unmistakable signs. I call this the most important step forward because, unlike the other advances which psychology has made, this discovery has revealed to us an entirely unsuspected peculiarity in the constitution of human nature. No other step forward which psychology has made can proffer any such claim as this."

From this subliminal region, then, proceed not only conversions, but all sorts of automatic "uprushes" or "explosions" of ideas elaborated outside the field of ordinary consciousness, motor impulses, obsessive ideas, unaccountable caprices, delusions, and hallucinations of hypnotic or hysterical subjects. The religious cases must in the first instance submit to formal psychological classification along with these—as indeed the religious admit, after their fashion, when they dispute as to the divine or diabolical origin of these phenomena. This classification, however, leaves untouched their value, and the question of the ultimate origin of the *beneficial* influences. It is conceivable (p. 242) that "*if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them. The hubbub of the waking life might close a door which in the dreamy Subliminal might remain ajar or open."

The "mystical" consciousness is all too familiar to ordinary men as an effect of chemicals, the sway of alcohol over mankind being "unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature" (p. 387). Thus "the drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystic consciousness," which, however, is still more powerfully stimulated by nitrous oxide. Its key-note is invariably a *reconciliation* in which all the opposites in the world are melted into unity in such a way that the higher and better species appears as itself the genus. The theoretic importance of these mystic states is (p. 423) that "they break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness based upon the understanding and the senses alone. They show it to be only one kind of consciousness. They open out the possibility of other orders of truth." And yet religious mysticism is only the better half of the subject. Side by side with it we may find in delusional insanity or paranoia a sort of *diabolical* mysticism, exhibiting the same psychological symptoms, but with a pessimistic trend, and also springing "from that great subliminal or transmarginal region of which science is beginning to admit the existence, but of which so little is really known" (p. 426).

In his last lecture Professor James finally inquires into the objective truth

underlying all this religious experience and returns to the question, reserved before, as to the ultimate source of the subliminal inspiration and of the immediate assurance it seems to give of a communion with diviner powers which effect our salvation. In the last resort the whole of religious experience seems to rest on "the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self, through which saving experiences come" (p. 515), and this "is literally and objectively true as far as it goes."

Beyond this common result of all religions we pass into the realm of hypotheses and "over-beliefs," as to which Professor James is laudably reluctant to dogmatize. But he personally believes that the infiltration of spiritual energy which the religious seem to experience is no merely subjective illusion, but a real fact. For notwithstanding the studied impersonalism of our scientific assumptions, it is only in our personal life that we comprehend real fact and transcend abstractions. If therefore the abstract point of view of Science be naturalism, then Professor James is a supernaturalist.

But supernaturalism is of two kinds, refined and universalistic, or crass and "piece-meal." The former, which has been excogitated by many of the transcendentalist theologians and philosophers of the day, repudiates, not merely miracle, but every action of the supernatural on the natural. Nothing is altered in the natural course of events by the existence of its "God" or "Absolute." Its "God" neither answers prayers, nor helps men, nor aims at ends, nor gives ground for moral hope. He is simply *a point of view*—the point of view of the Whole—and beyond affording a peculiar satisfaction to those who like to take that point of view, he makes not the slightest difference to anybody or anything. This universalistic supernaturalism, however, Professor James thinks, is practically a surrender to naturalism. We can have no use for a "God" who makes no difference: "our difficulties and our ideals are all piece-meal affairs, but the Absolute can do no piecework for us; so that all the interests which our poor souls compass raise their heads too late" (p. 522). Hence Professor James pleads for "a candid consideration of piece-meal supernaturalism" and believes that "a complete discussion of all its metaphysical bearings will show it to be the hypothesis by which the largest number of legitimate requirements are met" (p. 523).

A real God, therefore, must produce real effects, and so in our communings with the wider self "work is actually done upon our finite personality; for we are turned into new men, and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. But that which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal" (p. 516).

To identify this real power with an absolute world-ruler is, however, a very considerable over-belief. All that religious experience unequivocally testifies to is that there is *something* larger than our conscious selves, continuous with us and friendly to our ideals. "Any thing larger will do,



if only it be large enough to trust for the next step. It need not be infinite, it need not be solitary. It might conceivably even be only a larger and more godlike self, of which the present self would then be but the mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realized in it at all" (p. 525).

Professor James concludes with a promise to work out these hints of a pluralistic metaphysic in a subsequent book, which will doubtless prove as instructive as the present. Meanwhile we may add a few admiring comments to this theory of the cardinal importance for religion of subconscious inspiration. And first of all attention should be drawn to a slight change of terminology. Professor James often prefers the term *transmarginal* to *subliminal*. The reason is clear: the preposition *sub-* becomes awkward when applied to what is envisaged as a source of *higher* inspiration. It is better not to seem to beg questions by denominating it what lies *across* (*trans*) the border. Perhaps as a compromise the term *transliminal* might be found convenient.

In the second place I find myself, with all deference, unable altogether to follow Professor James in his appreciation of the mystical states of consciousness. At least I should contend strongly that whether arrived at by rational means or not, all the products of our mental life should be subjected to rational tests, and rejected if they turn out to be essentially *irrational* and unprofitable. Now, on Professor James' own showing, this objection applies strongly to almost all the mystical experiences. In point of psychological *form* their nearest congeners are to be found in drunkenness and insanity. As regards psychological *content* they are quite unstable and insecure. Even though for the moment the mystic's assurance may seem ineffably to surpass the confidence to be attained by the slow methods of ordinary reasoning, yet it is subject to eclipses as sudden and inexplicable as the effulgences with which it dazzled the soul. Professor James must surely have come across some of the cases (of which the poet Cowper is a well-known literary example) in which the conviction of being "damned" alternated with that of being "saved," or where the experience of mystical vision did not preclude a subsequent lapse into agnosticism and disbelief.<sup>1</sup> For these reasons to a critically-minded mystic the question of the cognitive value of his psychical experiences must be a great puzzle, and *a fortiori* they must seem dubious to non-mystics. Regarded logically their revelations are pervaded by hopeless contradictions, as when the highest knowledge is described as the negation of knowledge, and the highest consciousness as the extinction of self-consciousness (cp. p. 401). And Professor James' generosity surely reaches an extreme when he quotes a dreary farrago of absolute nonsense to show that "many mystical scriptures are indeed little more than musical compositions" (p. 421).

Metaphysically again mysticism seems to point in the wrong direction.

<sup>1</sup>The answers to the Questionnaire of the American Branch contain several such documents.



Professor James admits that the theoretic drift of "classical religious mysticism is in the direction of an enervating pantheistic monism and a peculiarly flabby optimism." Both of these doctrines I agree with Professor James in regarding as false, and both could be substantiated, if at all, only by rigorously rational demonstration. The mystics content themselves with affirming them on grounds so unintelligible that they can only add contempt to the dislike for them one had previously entertained. Finally, from a practical and moral point of view, the fruits of mysticism seem to be mainly evil. It seems to be an even chance that the 'religious' mystic will set himself wholly above morality; and even if he does not in this respect imitate his alcohol-imbibing and drug-inhaling *confrères*, his ecstasies produce nothing of value for practical life. Judged, therefore, by the "pragmatist" standards of Professor James, mysticism, wherever it crops up, in Hinduism, in Buddhism, in Neoplatonism, in Catholicism, in Whitemania, must be pronounced worthless as such and devoid of rational authority over us. Even the theoretic gain of mysticism, viz. the knowledge that the ordinary consciousness does not exhaust the whole of experience, may be obtained more simply from the facts of dream, trance, etc. The important question as to all such states is not as to their existence, but as to their practical value and rational significance.

Lastly as regards the value of the "transmarginal self" for the purpose of psychological explanation. *I cannot see that, apart from psychical research, it has any.* If it merely meant negatively that the mainsprings of our mental life were not to be found in consciousness, and implied that everything beyond was unknowable, it would not advance science. It would merely add one to the technical phrases whereby baffled philosophers and theologians have tried to glaze over their failures to satisfy our demands for knowledge. And it would deserve to be cast on the metaphysical rubbish-heap together with the 'Unknowables' and 'Absolutes' of other 'thinkers.' But Professor James clearly means his "transmarginal" to be something more, to be *a field for scientific research* (p. 511), in which our Society would have a prescriptive claim to a prominent part. What the transmarginal really is is what we have to find out. And just in proportion as our research is successful, it is evident that what was beyond the margin will be included in it, that the soul will extend her borders, and that our whole consciousness will be augmented and glorified by the assimilation of what is now "subconscious."

The practical value of Professor James' confession of faith in the reality of our spiritual intercourse with higher powers I take to be very similar. Regarded as a mere personal 'over-belief' it is of course psychologically interesting, but its logical value is slight. The true import of the doctrine however lies in the suggestion it conveys that such personal religious experiences are not insusceptible of scientific treatment. They are now declared to be worthy of scientific attention, and through them the light of psychology may find access to the preserves of theological dogma. By turning so much of a theologian Professor James may prevail on theologians

to turn psychologists. And so in the end it may come about that, as I once suggested with reference to a similar plea of Mr. Andrew Lang's, theology will be rendered an experimental science, and as such recover the hold over the human mind which it now appears to have lost.

In taking leave of Professor James' fascinating lectures I must remark on what will seem to many a very curious fact, viz., the almost total omission of the topic of immortality from a description of religious feelings. Professor James' record as a psychical researcher and lecturer on *Human Immortality* is too well known to allow one to put this down to prejudice or aversion. To me it seems rather like an unsolicited confirmation of the view that immortality, whatever it may have been in the past, is not now an important object of desire. However, as I am at present engaged in a statistical inquiry into the real character and extent of this traditional craving, I can confine my remarks to the little Professor James does say in his *Postscript*. Having spoken of the necessity that a real God must make a difference, he goes on to say (p. 524) that the first difference such a God should make would be personal immortality. But it seems to him a point secondary to an eternal caring for our ideals. It is however "eminently a case for facts to testify. Facts, I think, are yet lacking to prove 'spirit-return,' though I have the highest respect for the patient labours of Messrs. Myers, Hodgson, and Hyslop, and am somewhat impressed by their favourable conclusions."

This interesting pronouncement of so great and sympathetic an authority indicates perhaps how far calmly dispassionate science is disposed to go in the present state of the evidence; and though it may seem but little to the more sanguine, I would bid them remember (1) that Professor James has himself explained how a "will to believe" is justified in cases of this sort, and how faith may legitimately outstrip knowledge, provided always that "faith" leads to "works" which confirm it; and (2) that proof is essentially cumulative, and that comparatively little more of the sort of evidence we have already succeeded in getting recorded might complete the proof sufficiently to shift the 'burden of proof' on to those who as yet will to disbelieve. There is plenty of scope, therefore, for energetic exertion both in improving the evidence and in disposing the social atmosphere more favourably towards its investigation.

F. C. S. SCHILLER.

*Le Temple Enseveli*, by MAURICE MAETERLINCK (Paris, 1902. Bibliothèque-Charpentier. 3 fr. 50).

This book consists of six chapters, entitled respectively "Justice," "The Evolution of Mystery," "The Kingdom of Matter," "The Past," "Chance," and "The Future." It is with the last two only that psychical research has any particular concern.

After citing various exceptionally lucky and unlucky careers, the author concludes that, every possible attempt having been made to explain such obstinately repeated runs of luck by known physical and moral causes, there

yet remains over and above no inconsiderable number of episodes in such lives which can only be attributed to the impenetrable will of an unknown though real power, call it Luck, Fate, Destiny, or what we will. But by whatever name we call it, this mysterious power is neither God nor Destiny ; it is not external to ourselves, but within us.

Beneath our conscious existence, which owes obedience to our reason and will, lies a deeper existence, stretching both into an immemorial past and into a limitless future. M. Maeterlinck calls this existence "*la vie inconsciente*," "*l'être inconscient*," or "*l'inconscient*," but since it is but what we have learnt to call the subliminal consciousness or the subconscious self (albeit in a glorified form), and since, too, it is with the immense range of its activities and with its occasional inrushes into the normal consciousness that the writer is particularly occupied, it will make for clearness if we render the French terms by "subconsciousness" or some similar expression.

M. Maeterlinck knocks down "the Gods" (as he calls them) only to set up in their stead the subconscious self, which he endows with almost divine attributes. It is the veritable Ego, pre-existent, universal, and "probably immortal." (We like the "probably.") It inhabits another plane of existence, where Time and Space are not. For it there is no far or near, neither past nor future, nor resistance of matter. It is omniscient and omnipotent ; and it may not be too much, perhaps, to speak of its active principle as the essential fluid, the ultra-violet rays of Life. Yet, although it is probably the common possession of all men, it does not speak to the intelligent or normal consciousness of all either with equal clearness or frequency.

But what has this subconscious self to do with, or how can it be held responsible for, the good or bad luck that may attend a human life ? M. Maeterlinck answers the question in this way : "An event, propitious or disastrous, proceeding from the depths of the great eternal laws, rises up on our path and bars it completely. There it looms, immovable, fatal, unshakable. With us it has no concern, it is not there for us. Its *raison d'être* is in itself and for itself alone. Us it simply does not know. It is we who draw near it, we who, once within the range of its influence, must flee from it or face it, circumvent or cross it. I will suppose it to be an unlucky event : a shipwreck, a fire, a thunderbolt, or death, disease, accident, or suffering in a somewhat unusual form. It waits, invisible, blind, indifferent, a thing complete, unchangeable, but as yet potential. It exists in its entirety, but only in the future ; while for us, whose senses adapted to the service of our intelligence and our consciousness are so made that they perceive things only successively in time, it is still as though it did not exist.

"For the sake of greater precision, let us imagine the event in question to be a shipwreck. The ship that needs must be lost has not yet left port ; the rock or the wreckage that will split her in twain is sleeping peacefully beneath the waves ; or the storm, that will not break before the month is out, slumbers beyond our ken in the hidden places of the heavens. Nor-

mally, if the fiat had not gone forth, and if the catastrophe had not already taken place in the future, fifty passengers come from five or six different countries would have embarked. But the ship bears clearly on her the brand of fate. Perish she certainly must. And so, for months, perhaps for years before, a mysterious selection has been at work among the travellers who ought otherwise to have started together on the same day. Possibly out of the original fifty twenty only embark when the time comes to weigh anchor. Perhaps not even a single one of the fifty obeys the call of circumstances which would have necessitated his departure had the future disaster not been in existence, and, may be, their places have been taken by twenty or thirty others in whom the voice of chance does not speak with the same strength. But with this imaginary case before us—which is merely a more striking illustration of what is constantly happening within the narrower range of every-day life—is it not more natural to suppose, instead of having recourse to far-off shadowy gods, that it is our subconscious self which acts and decides? It knows, it must know, it must see the catastrophe, for neither Time nor Space exists for it, and the catastrophe is taking place at the very moment beneath its eyes, even as it is taking place beneath the eyes of the Eternal Forces. How it gives forewarning of the coming evil matters little. Out of thirty travellers who receive warning, two or three will have had an actual presentiment of the danger; these are they in whom the subconsciousness has freer play, and reaches more readily the primary strata, obscure though they be, of the intelligent consciousness. The rest will have no misgivings, they will rail at inexplicable delays and obstacles, they will do their utmost to arrive in time, but start they will not. Some of them will fall ill, miss their way, change their plans, meet with some trivial adventure, or a quarrel, a flirtation, a lazy or an absent-minded fit will detain them in spite of themselves. Others of them, again, will never have dreamed of embarking on the predestined ship, although logically and fatally she was the only one that they ought to have chosen.

“In the case of the majority, these efforts of the subconsciousness to save them are carried out at depths so great that it will never occur to them that they owe their life to their good luck, and they will believe in all good faith that they never had any intention of boarding the vessel that the Powers of the Sea had marked for their own.”

As for the unlucky, they must not imagine that the universe is hostile to them, but rather they should blame their own subconscious selves. “Their unconscious soul,” says Maeterlinck, “their unconscious soul does not do its duty.” And he goes on to ask: “Is it (*i.e.* the inefficient subconsciousness) more awkward or less attentive? Does it sleep in despair in the depths of a prison more closely barred than others? Can no act of will stir it from so deadly a slumber?” Apparently, in M. Maeterlinck’s opinion, the case is not hopeless. Either the supraliminal consciousness (which answers to what the author calls “*la vie intelligente*,” or “*la volonté et l’intelligence*”) develops a sufficient receptivity, or the subconsciousness a sufficient attentiveness to the needs of its junior partner. To sum up, then, good luck depends upon an



effective, bad luck on a defective intercommunication between the conscious and the subconscious strata.

The reception which this bold and novel theory is likely to meet with from orthodox philosophy can hardly be favourable ; but students of the *S.P.R. Proceedings* and *Journal*, and those especially who have felt the force of Mr. Myers' papers on the subliminal consciousness will not be too ready to dismiss it offhand as pure mysticism. In any case it is only possible to do justice to M. Maeterlinck's conception if we consider it apart from his ill-chosen illustrations of shipwrecks, railway accidents, fires, etc., and indeed apart from all disasters which may depend, in part at least, on human agency ; and if we apply it to the cases of such calamities only as may be regarded as practically unaffected by man's intervention, *e.g.* a volcanic eruption. In cases of the latter class it is logically conceivable that the subliminal self may act, in some such way as he suggests, by simply preventing the person from getting within range of any particular natural catastrophe. Any supposed power of prevision, however, implies that the future is already fixed and is not to be influenced by human will. Hence the theory is self-contradictory, if applied to cases where the thing to be avoided may be either caused or modified through voluntary human action.

But apart from this fundamental confusion of thought, which—as will be seen from the extracts quoted—pervades the whole argument, it is chiefly when we come to consider the way in which the case is presented, and the exaggerated claims put forward on behalf of the subconscious self that we psychical researchers, with our prejudice for plain well-attested facts, are likely to part company with M. Maeterlinck. On what grounds of fact he relies, if indeed he pretends to proffer any facts at all, it is not easy to say. He would seem to have evolved his doctrine out of his own inner consciousness, unhampered by any details of evidence, and then to have thrown in a few generalized facts as an after-thought. He quotes no authorities ; he makes no acknowledgment of the labours of those who have ploddingly explored the psychological fields in which he himself runs riot. It is true that he cites the experiences of a friend, but they are vague and unconvincing ; and in a foot-note to p. 261 he makes some remarkable statements, which, if true, would indeed lend strong support to his conclusions, but unfortunately there is no reason to attach any credibility to these statements. It is worth while to translate almost in full this foot-note, because it contains practically the only attempt at positive evidence in support of the previsionary and premonitory powers with which M. Maeterlinck endows "the unconscious soul." The note runs thus : "It is indeed a common occurrence and worthy of note that in the case of great catastrophes the number of victims is usually infinitely smaller than on the most reasonable calculation of probabilities one would have been led to apprehend. At the last minute a fortuitous and exceptional circumstance has almost always kept away half and sometimes two-thirds of the people menaced by the as yet in-



visible danger. A steamer which founders has generally many fewer passengers on board than she would have had had she not been doomed to sink. Two trains that run into collision, an express which falls over a precipice, and so on, carry fewer passengers than on days when nothing happens to them. The collapse of a bridge most frequently occurs, quite contrary to what one would expect, just after the crowd has left it. Unfortunately there is not the same immunity in the case of fires in theatres and other places of public assembly. But here, as we know, it is not the fire, but rather the presence of an affrighted and maddened crowd which constitutes the chief danger. On the other hand, an explosion of fire-damp takes place as a rule when there are considerably fewer miners at work in the mine than there ought to be in the regular course. In the same way a powder or a cartridge factory, etc., generally explodes at a time when the majority of the workmen, who otherwise would have inevitably perished, have gone away from the works for some trifling, though providential, reason or other. So true is this fact that the almost constant observation of it has resulted in a sort of familiar stock phrase. Any day we may read in the newspapers under the items of general news sentences like this: 'A catastrophe which might have had terrible consequences, thanks to such and such a circumstance was happily confined to . . . etc.' Or, again: 'One shudders to think that, had the same accident happened a minute sooner, when all the workmen, or all the passengers, . . . etc.'"

On this flimsy foundation of newspaper snippets M. Maeterlinck would seem to have built his theoretic edifice. The futility of the examples quoted in this foot-note is really too obvious to be worth exposing. Certainly, if one troubled oneself as little as the author to produce substantial evidence, or made as little allowance for mere coincidence, it would not be difficult to make out a case for the existence of a malevolent deity, whose special function was to cause ships and trains to be wrecked, boilers to burst, theatres to burn at moments which promised the largest haul of human victims. Had M. Maeterlinck deigned to consult anything so prosaic as the railway annals of his own country, he would have found in the extraordinary frequency of accidents to trains crammed with holiday folk on Belgian *jours de fête* some facts which will not square with his fancies. Our own researches do seem to point to the possible exemption of the subconscious self from spatial limitations, but so far they have contributed little towards rendering probable this larger claim of freedom from the limitations of time which M. Maeterlinck unhesitatingly makes for it; and before such a claim can be considered, better evidence must be forthcoming than the vague statements of this *naïve* foot-note—statements which could be verified or refuted only by means of a world-wide and utterly impracticable census extending over many years.

But not content with the paucity and poverty of the positive evidence at his disposal, M. Maeterlinck, in the last chapter of the book, *L'Avenir*, is candid enough to produce evidence which, so far as it goes, is un-

favourable to the possession by the subconscious self of that very faculty of prevision on which his whole theory rests.

In this chapter he describes various visits paid by himself or his friends to clairvoyants, fortune-tellers, mediums, palmists, etc., in Paris. The results went to show that, whereas there was evidence of the subconscious mind being able to get at past or present facts which were or might have been within the knowledge of the sitter or others, there was an entire failure to foresee and foretell the Future. And this, so far as it goes, is in accordance with the results at present arrived at by the S.P.R. Of all the evidence in favour of supernormal faculties hitherto collected by the Society, the weakest by far both in quantity and quality is the evidence for prevision.

This failure to bring forward any original or borrowed evidence of value is all the more disappointing in the author of *La Vie des Abeilles*, who in that delightful work displayed not only a gift for original scientific research, but also the power of appreciating and marshalling the scientific observations of others.

To this criticism, if he chanced to read it, the author might perhaps reply in the words of Symmachus, "*uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum*," and that there are methods other than those of the S.P.R. for arriving at the truth. True enough: but what is objectionable is the attempt to combine two methods, the intuitive-mystic with the scientific. M. Maeterliuck should have contented himself with making his intuitive guesses at truth and not at the same time have tried to bolster them up with slipshod pseudo-scientific generalisations.

Notwithstanding these defects, the reader cannot but feel that the whole book is not only suggestive, but deeply interesting as the record both of the development and of what are probably the "over-beliefs" (to use Professor William James' phrase) of an agnostic mind of wide culture and refined sensibility.

*Le Temple Enseveli* has been translated into English by Mr. Alfred Sutro. I have not seen the translation, but the *Times* reviewer, while noting the omission of the whole of the last chapter, "L'Avenir," and of some passages in the first chapter, "La Justice," considers that the translator has done his work adequately.

J. G. PIDDINGTON.

*Une Sorcière au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Marie-Anne de la Ville, 1680-1725.* Avec une préface de PIERRE DE SÉGUR. Par CH. DE COYNART. Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1902. Price (not stated), 3 fr. 50.

The police *dossiers* relating to Marie-Anne and her associates were docketed "*Affaire des faux sorciers*," and it is perhaps a pity that M. de Coynart did not adopt this title for his book: for Marie-Anne was not a sorceress at all, but an utter fraud (which many sorceresses were not); and also, although Marie-Anne is the central figure of the "band"

whose exploits form the subject of this work, she neither brought together the members of it in the first instance, nor are her dupes scarcely, if at all, less interesting than herself.

It would be useless to attempt to give within the limits of a brief review more than the merest outline of the contents of M. de Coynart's book. Such, however, as like to wander along the by-paths of history, and such as appreciate the merit of a scrupulously *documenté* revival of some obscure episode of past days, will be well repaid if they consult the full narrative.

M. de Coynart's treatment is primarily historical, and only secondarily and incidentally psychological: yet the adventures of Marie-Anne and her friends afford points of psychological interest deserving of our attention. In order to appreciate them, it will be necessary to give a summary—the barest possible, be it understood—of the events recorded by the author.

Marie-Anne de la Ville, born at Bordeaux in 1680, was the daughter of a local lawyer of some social position but of little or no fortune. Her mother died when she was eighteen months old, and this early loss was perhaps responsible for her subsequent depravity. When only nine years old, she discovered in an uncle's library several occult books, from which she learned the traditional forms of incantation, and many other things not calculated to have the best effect on the brain of an imaginative child. Of a good spirit named Jassemin, who figured in one of these mystic works, she had a hallucinatory vision; and that the hallucination was genuine she always maintained, nor need her word be doubted on this point. At eleven years of age she was sent to the Convent of the *Visitation du faubourg Saint-Antoine* at Paris, where for eight years she remained. Here she probably came into contact with Mme. Guyon, the Quietist, and to this supposed association M. de Coynart attributes in part her later developments; but the inference seems rather unfair to the worthy Mme. Guyon, and Marie-Anne's early acquaintance with occultism sufficiently explains the attraction which the subject had for her in her maturer years.

What happened to her after leaving the convent is not precisely known, but she seems to have been at large in Paris, and what that meant in the 18th century is better imagined than described. When next she is heard of, she had joined a band of treasure-seekers, which, though led by an inferior police-officer named Divot, was composed of members drawn from a mixture of social classes from nearly the highest to nearly the lowest. One of the most important, by reason of his sacred calling, was a Prior, by name Pinel; the presence and offices of a priest being held indispensable to the successful raising of the devil. Marie-Anne soon became the mistress of the Prior, and, but for short intervals when her more than easy morals led her to seek a change, remained so during the three years of adventure which followed; but it is only fair to the Prior to add that the *liaison* was none of his seeking, and that far from being in collusion with Marie-Anne, he was utterly her dupe, and further-

more her staunchest friend,—a most pathetic figure, more worthy of pity than of condemnation or contempt.

The band had been in existence some seven or eight years before Marie-Anne joined it, and in spite of the unbroken failure of its operations, the ardour of its members had not been damped, nor had hopes of ultimate success been abandoned. The belief was then, as in past centuries, largely prevalent among all ranks of society that not only the natural virgin treasure of the earth but also treasure left hidden by man was guarded by demons: and the aim of the band of treasure-seekers was to conjure the demon guardians to deliver up their hoards either simply in obedience to irresistible incantations, or in exchange for human souls. Marie-Anne soon became the leader of the company and the prime mover in their expeditions, because she claimed knowledge of the traditional incantations and *modus operandi*, in which the other members were admittedly not adepts.

It would be outside the scope of this review to narrate the various and fruitless expeditions undertaken by the company at Marie-Anne's instigation, or to describe in detail how in face of repeated insuccess she managed to retain the confidence and support of her companions, how she literally worked the oracle to provide herself with creature-comforts at the expense of her associates and particularly of the Prior (ruined financially as well as morally by his infatuation), how she varied the monotony of treasure-hunting with interludes of spirit communications and simple physical phenomena, and how, in short, she ran through an extensive *répertoire* of mediumistic tricks and humbugged the whole party consistently and successfully for a period of three years. The curious reader must be referred to the book itself, where the story is told fully and attractively, with great lucidity and some humour.

Three points, however, merit a longer reference: (a) *Some instances of illusion and hallucination.* Four members of the band together with Marie-Anne were engaged on a treasure-hunt at D'Arcueil. While Marie-Anne was (or was supposed to be) performing her lengthy incantations, the others by way of passing the time until her return from the scene of operations were dining in a neighbouring inn. Two hours passed, and the four diners, wondering at the delay, set out to see how the soothsayer was progressing; when, to quote the official record of the Prior Pinel's evidence before M. d'Argenson, they saw "a man on horseback, enveloped in a red cloak (although the weather was very fine). He was about half a league distant from the said Marie-Anne, but when the Prior and the others drew a little nearer to her, they were surprised to see the horseman by the side of her, although a moment before he had been very far away from her. This threw them into such a state of astonishment that they lay on the ground in order not to see him, being convinced that the horseman was the Spirit, who was going to maltreat her because they had had the temerity to watch her in spite of her having forbidden them to do so." Marie-Anne must have witnessed her



companions' fright, and guessed the cause of it: for when she rejoined them her face and head were "covered with bruises," and her head-dress was gone. Of course the Evil Spirit had thus wreaked his wrath on her because the others had "broken the conditions" (to use a modern phrase), and of course the horseman in the red cloak was none other than the Evil Spirit himself. Another member of the party, M. de Brederodes, gives a highly coloured account of the same scene, but the relatively sober narrative of the Prior probably comes nearer to representing the mean hallucinatory experience as shared by the four percipients.

Now, in her examination before M. d'Argenson, Marie-Anne declared that no such horseman had come near her. A real horseman there may well have been, who was seen in the distance by the others and not by Marie-Anne, but her sharp eyes would not have failed to notice him had he really come near her. And as there was nothing to be lost or gained by denying the story of her comrades, Marie-Anne's version is more easily accepted than the miraculously rapid movements of the mysterious man on horseback.

On another occasion at Arcueil Marie-Anne had made her companions stand in a line with their noses turned to a wall, while she with a lighted wax-taper in her hand was going through her usual performances. The incantations finished, she caught hold of a branch of an overhanging tree, and shook it with all her might in order to extinguish the taper. Her dupes described this incident to M. d'Argenson as follows: "A great blast of wind, extraordinary for so calm a night, suddenly arose and shook the branches and put out Marie-Anne's taper."

Once the Prior believed he had heard the Spirit prescribe certain remedies for Marie-Anne, whereas Marie-Anne stated to M. d'Argenson that she had merely asked for the remedies "*sans contrefaire sa voix.*"

Another time Pinel and the others said they had seen the Spirit in the guise of a tall man. Marie-Anne, however, when this episode was touched on in her cross-examination declared that *she* had seen nothing. It must not be supposed that these four instances exhaust the list, for there were plenty more. The followers of Marie-Anne lived in an atmosphere of hallucination; and so strained was their state of expectancy, that any trivial incident might at any moment be translated by their fancy into a miraculous event.

(b) *The uncritical attitude of the band.*

No member of the regular band, nor any of the outsiders who occasionally witnessed Marie-Anne's performances suspected her *bona fides*, two unimportant exceptions apart,—unimportant because, although one individual, a novice, said he thought the whole thing was a trick, and another, equally new to the phenomena, mildly suggested that the Spirit's voice was only Marie-Anne's disguised,—both very soon convinced themselves of the genuineness of the sorceress' powers. This almost complete absence of suspicion was due, no doubt, in part to Mlle. de la Ville's cleverness; but unless we remember to transport ourselves back into an age when



belief in magic yet widely obtained, we shall be in danger of unduly exaggerating her powers of deception.

Nowadays people do not believe in the supernatural without, at least, first obtaining some evidential facts (or what they consider to be such) in order to dispel their *a priori* scepticism. But to the *a priori* credulity of Marie-Anne's times such cautious preliminaries would have seemed uncalled for, and to have questioned the reality of the interference of evil spirits in human affairs would have appeared almost as ridiculous, at least to the average man, as it would have not so many years earlier to doubt that the sun moved round the earth.

(c) *The examination and confession of Marie-Anne.*

Divot turned informer, with the result that Marie-Anne was arrested in February, 1703. At the time of her arrest she was found to have "*une espèce de sifflet*" in her throat. Thanks to malingering, which quite took in the young officer sent to convey her to Paris, it was not until August that she was lodged in the Bastille: whither she had been preceded by seventeen of her accomplices, or rather dupes.

The enquiry was conducted by the celebrated M. d'Argenson in person, and lasted nearly four months. All the prisoners, except M. de Brederodes, were found guilty and were severely punished: Marie-Anne, the chief culprit, being sentenced to imprisonment for life and to a perpetual diet of bread and water. She was imprisoned in the *Hôpital*, now called the *Salpêtrière*; and it is permissible to fancy that had she flourished in a happier hour, she might have figured among a crowd of sister *détraquées* as a patient, instead of as a prisoner, within the self-same walls.

Should any reader in the course of perusing the veracious history of Marie-Anne de la Ville suspect that M. de Coynart has painted his heroine with too black a brush, and that amidst all the admitted fraud there may have been glimmerings of genuine psychic power, his hopes of a possible partial rehabilitation of the sorceress' character will be rudely dashed when he reaches the last chapter but one, which deals with her examination before M. d'Argenson. Her avowal of fraud was complete: and such reservations as she did attempt to make were concerned not with her pretended magic but with her relations with the Prior Pinel. The woman in her was still capable of a sense of shame, if the charlatan was not.

The chief interest of her examination lies in the answers, in which are directly stated, or from which can be inferred, the motives of her fraud. They may be summarised as follows:

(1) She honestly believed, at least at first, in her magical incantations; and if towards the end of three years she did lose, or began to lose, faith in them, the general tone of her replies to M. d'Argenson's questions seems to imply that it was only in the efficacy of the particular incantations to which her acquaintance happened to be limited, and not in the general possibility of summoning and gaining ascendancy over evil spirits, that she had lost confidence.

(2) She believed in the truth of the stories of buried treasures.

(3) She resolutely maintained her conviction that the apparition of the angel Jassemin, which she had experienced in childhood, was "a real thing."

(4) She admitted that she had often pretended to call up and converse with the spirit merely to please (*satisfaire*) her companions.

(5) She denied that money was her object, and declared that she frequently went through her tricks for the mere fun of laughing in her sleeve at the credulity of her followers.

Mr. H. G. Wells has made the pleasure of gulling the credulous the dominant note in the character of the fraudulent medium that he has portrayed in his *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. But for such a motive to be more than fitfully operative demands the possession by the charlatan of a larger degree of intelligent cynicism than would seem to have been consistent with the unthinking Bohemianism of Mlle. de la Ville. It was one among several motives, no doubt, as perhaps it may be in the case of all charlatans, but it was not the dominant one.

Love of money, in spite of her denial, was certainly an incentive, though not, perhaps, one of the strongest; for Mlle. de la Ville could easily have turned her wits and her looks to more profitable account than to duping an impecunious Prior, and it was only rarely that a well-to-do person joined the band, and then but for a short time. In so far as she had hoped at first to possess herself of treasure by magic arts, money was her object; but, in spite of one or two shady episodes, she must be acquitted of having primarily aimed at extracting money from her companions.

It is easy enough to conjecture other motives besides those which Marie-Anne admitted, but I believe that *the essential motive lay in her own credulity*. If she had not originally believed that spirits of evil could be evoked from the nether world and subdued by magical rites, her career might not indeed have proved less criminal, but it would not have taken the particular direction which it did.

We are usually content to assume that the practice of fraudulent mediumship is due to a love of money, or of notoriety, or of deception, but we might do well to add another motive to the list, namely, the belief, or at least the expectation, held by a medium at the outset of his career, that if he perform the necessary ceremonies and follow the recognised procedure, supernormal phenomena will follow in due course.

Some lines from the introductory chapter may serve to conclude this review of M. de Coynart's book: "Dealing though it does for the most part with very obscure individuals, this history shows to what depths of credulity persons of all ranks and not wanting in intelligence can descend. Though this truth will be borne out by a narrative based throughout on authentic documents, it evidently does not follow that all marvels can therefore be explained away. But, at least, this history will demonstrate what great precautions we must all of us take to protect ourselves from the workings of our own imagination or from the suggestions of others."

J. G. PIDDINGTON.

*Deuxième Congrès International de l'Hypnotisme Experimental et Therapeutique. Comptes Rendus* (320 pp., large 8vo. Vigot Frères, Paris, 1902. 10 frs.).

This volume contains a report of the Congress held in Paris in August, 1900, under the presidency of Professor Raymond and Dr. Jules Voisin of the Salpêtrière. It is edited by Dr. Bérillon and Dr. Farez, and is well printed and got up with 56 illustrations and diagrams.

About forty physicians and jurists interested in the subject attended the Congress, representing all parts of the world, and papers were contributed by several members who were unable to appear in person. The papers deal with hypnotism from the psychological as well as from the purely medical point of view. Among the most important is that by Dr. Bérillon giving the history of hypnotism. In this he does full justice to James Braid, whom he considers the founder of the scientific and modern school, though it is, he says, to Liébeault of Nancy that we owe the practical recognition of the value of hypnotic treatment.

It is not easy at this time to say anything new on the subject, but Dr. Oscar Vogt of Berlin, and Drs. Paul Farez and Félix Régnauld of Paris contribute papers on the value of hypnotism in psychological investigations. Dr. Farez gives illustrations showing how the working of the subconscious self may be rendered manifest in the hypnotic state. For instance, a girl aged 25 who was obsessed by the thought that she must throw herself out of the window, explained when hypnotised that the idea arose from her having seen such an accident portrayed in an illustrated paper, though she had no memory of it in her waking state. Recognition of the cause enabled Dr. Farez to cure the obsession by counter-suggestion. He tells a somewhat disconcerting story of a dramatic author who allowed himself to be frequently hypnotised by his wife, who at last was able to throw him into profound hypnosis by touching the nape of his neck, and to change his ordinary sleep into hypnotic trance. She made use of this power to dictate his conduct to him. For instance, on one occasion M. X. found himself unable to walk up the stairs leading to a friend's rooms, and thought that he was becoming paralysed. In alarm he went to Dr. Farez, who hypnotised him and discovered that the wife had out of jealousy suggested the physical inability to visit the friend she objected to. If Mmc. X. had gone a little further and suggested to her husband that no one but herself could hypnotise him, it would have been difficult to overcome her undue influence.

Dr. Régnauld endeavours to explain by the light of the most recent discoveries in psychology and neurology how hypnosis assists the action of suggestion. He argues that in the waking state a sensation sets up a centripetal nerve current which excites corresponding psychic cells in the brain cortex, and these he terms "centres of sentiment." These centres represent sentiments and ideas, and transmit the impulses to the motor

neurons. It is the neuron which vibrates the most which induces the responsive action.

In profound hypnosis, Dr. Régnauld thinks, the suggested sensation acts so powerfully on the psychic cell or centre of sentiment that only one idea is aroused and, therefore, free choice in conduct is prevented. This is only another way of expressing Bernheim's contention that hypnotism enables the operator to stimulate or suppress a function by acting on its cerebral centre through the suggested idea.

Several physicians including Tokarsky of Moscow, de Jong of the Hague, Lloyd Tuckey of London, Stadelmann of Wurtzburg, contributed papers on the treatment of drunkenness by hypnotism; and the general experience was of an encouraging nature. Bérillon attached much importance to the creation of a "psychic centre of inhibition" which he brings about by suggesting to the hypnotised patient that he is unable to convey a glass containing alcohol to his mouth. At the same time he is made to hold a glass in his hand and shown how he is paralysed when he attempts to raise it to his lips. By repetition the suggestion becomes, as it were, a fixed idea which effectually prevents indulgence.

Other papers deal with hypnotism and medical jurisprudence (Dr. v. Schrenck-Notzing of Munich has made this latter subject quite his own); the regulation of the practice of hypnotism by the State; the relation of hypnosis to ordinary sleep, etc.

CHAS. LLOYD TUCKEY, M.D.

*Will Power, How to Acquire and Strengthen*, by RICHARD J. EBBARD. (London, 1902. pp. 275. 8vo. The Modern Medical Publishing Co.)

This is one of many books published lately on the subject of will power and it is a fair example of its class. The theory of the subliminal self, so ably worked out by Mr. Myers and other members of the S.P.R., is largely responsible for the prominence given to the subject, but the followers go much further than the pioneers would consider authorised by facts. According to Ebbard and his school the subconscious self is not only omniscient but also omnipotent, and has only to be properly trained and suitably evoked to cure all the ills which afflict the human body and mind. Herr Ebbard is a profound believer in the Nancy school of hypnotism, but he considers hypnosis unnecessary. He gives elaborate tables for self-treatment by suggestion, and he advocates this being carried out at night while waiting for sleep. At this time, he argues, it is possible to so influence the mind by repetition of a phrase as to make it a dominant idea and the determining influence on function and conduct.

The book contains much good advice, and many of the directions given are based on sound common sense. The author mixes up a good many other things with his psychic treatment, so that a patient studying it might feel a good deal puzzled, and feel inclined to consult Herr



Ebbard—a not unwished-for result, perhaps. Several patent and quack remedies are vaunted and altogether one is reminded of the saying attributed to Talleyrand that appropriate incantations and arsenic will kill sheep.

CHAS. LLOYD TUCKEY, M.D.

*Have You a Strong Will?* By C. G. LELAND. (Second and Enlarged Edition. pp. 284. 8vo. Philip Welby, London, 1902.)

A book by the veteran author of *The Breitmann Ballads* commands respectful attention, and when Mr. Leland assures us that his memory has improved since his seventieth birthday by following out the rules he explains in his book, we are bound to believe him, and to acknowledge the value of the lesson he teaches.

The case of another "Grand Old Man," the late Dr. Brown Séquard, the famous neurologist of Paris, however, occurs to one's mind, and how he thought he had discovered the elixir of life and could renew his own youth and energy by its use.

Mr. Leland discourses in his pleasant style on the different systems of artificial memory, which are all, he says, based on association of ideas; and then he comes to his own system, which he terms *direct* memory. Briefly, this consists of cultivating the memory, and so gradually strengthening it, by learning extracts and things by heart at bedtime with careful attention and the strong wish to understand and remember them. By degrees, the author says, the memory becomes so strengthened that one is able to remember without difficulty anything learnt in this manner, the subconscious self being thus educated. Not only is memory improved, but character can be formed and vicious tendencies can be amended. Mr. Leland says he began to practise on himself, willing that he should be able to work all the next day without fatigue. In this way he acquired confidence and facility, which, he adds, is marvellous in a man of his age. It will be very interesting if some of the members of the S.P.R. will carry out the author's suggestions and let us know the result. A person who can never remember dates or figures might begin by impressing a few of these on his mind the last thing before going to sleep, and gradually increase the task until the normal faculty was acquired or even surpassed.

CHAS. LLOYD TUCKEY, M.D.

*Christian Science, Medicine, and Occultism*, by ALBERT MOLL, M.D. (London: Rebman Ltd., 1902. pp. 47. 8vo. Price 6d.)

Dr. Moll is well known as a writer on hypnotism and allied subjects, and is a prominent physician in Berlin. In this paper he gives an account of his investigation of Christian Science in Germany and also in the United States. He writes from the standpoint of an educated physician,



but with an open mind. He admits the cures which Mrs. Eddy and her followers often effect, but he is convinced that these are only possible in functional and nervous maladies. Dr. Moll quotes the offer of an American physician who expresses his readiness to pay \$1000 to any one who can produce a single case of malignant disease cured by Christian Science. He is an uncompromising opponent of Spiritualism, the phenomena of which he thinks are always produced by fraud and deception. He quotes several gross cases which have occurred in Berlin, and he seems to have been very unfortunate in his investigations.

Members of the S.P.R. will think Dr. Moll wanting in a sense of fairness and proportion in his conclusions, and in his classing together "animal-magnetism, table-moving, telepathy, spirit-rapping, materialisation, and fire-walking." He says he has never, during the many years he has made occultism a particular study, come across a single phenomenon which was not "open to explanation by forces known to reputable science."

Dr. Moll shows the serious risk run in treating all diseases as the outcome of morbid imagination, and how in such a disease as appendicitis, when a successful issue depends upon early and correct diagnosis, time may be lost and life endangered by treating the symptoms as trivial and neglecting to call in a doctor. He thinks that spiritualists and Christian scientists are generally sworn enemies to the regular school of medicine, are often strict vegetarians or enthusiastic homœopaths, and generally persons of unstable mental equilibrium. Dr. Moll gives a long list of spiritualistic and occult societies existing in Berlin, and he thinks that Germany and other countries are suffering from a psychical epidemic.

CHAS. LLOYD TUCKEY, M.D.

*Zur Psychologie und Pathologie sogenannter occulter Phänomene.* Von DR. MED. C. G. JUNG. (Leipzig: O. Mutze, 1902, 8vo. pp. 122.)

In this little work Dr. Jung, who is Assistant Medical Officer of the Psychiatrische Klinik at Zurich, discusses two cases which came under his own observation. The first, very briefly related, is a case of hallucinatory attacks followed by amnesia in a patient who suffered apparently from overwork. The author justly remarks that [some of the leading cases on which the psychologist commonly relies are little better than anecdotes, and no more reliable than anecdotes usually are. It is a useful work to replace these travellers' tales by modern examples which have been submitted to careful study and analysis.

The second case is of more interest from the point of view of psychical research. The subject, a female medium of sixteen years of age, developed a mystical system of natural science in the course of her trances. The development of her "controls" is carefully traced, but unfortunately no details are given on one point of great interest. It is stated (p. 24) that

she was able to personate remarkably well dead relatives and even persons who had merely been described to her. Experiments in personation are obviously complementary to Professor Hyslop's experiments in identification, and it is a matter for regret that the author did not see the importance of such observations. There seems to have been nothing beyond secondary personality in the trances. Among other phenomena *glossolalie* was occasionally observed ; the language was unmistakably a modified French.

N. W. THOMAS.

*The Mind of Man*, by GUSTAV SPILLER. (Swan Sonnenschein, London, 1902, 8vo. pp. xiv. 552.)

Mr. Spiller has come to the conclusion that psychology is amazingly backward and in this book sets forth the results of his efforts to advance it. We learn in the preface that it is the outcome of the application of the experimental method ; the author professes to have built up his fabric by introspection ; he reviews incidentally the literature of normal psychology. We can hardly be surprised that a writer who regards the science of psychology as up to the present non-existent deals hardly with psychical research and spiritualism (he does not distinguish between them), and as a matter of fact, his view seems to be that the whole thing is a superstition. He says : "How are we to account for members of learned societies seriously maintaining the objectivity of these pretences [of the Spiritualists] ? The less said on the subject the better." And again : "There is no science of spiritism . . . after the short experimental stage come undiluted dogma and reckless speculation. Professors Wallace, Crookes, Lodge and James illustrate what I am saying. Only the last of these is a psychologist and he has never written anything bulky on the subject." After Mr. Spiller's unqualified condemnation of psychologists, as "philosophers, *i.e.* those who have settled doctrines to begin with," it is a little difficult to see on what grounds he thinks that psychologists are best fitted to investigate spiritism. It is still less clear why no psychologist can be an authority until he has written something bulky on the subject. Again it is difficult to suppose that Mr. Spiller means anything by accusing Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Crookes of reckless speculation after a short experimental stage. If they have published nothing bulky, they have not indulged in reckless speculation. Mr. Spiller's view that the whole thing is a superstition makes his attitude towards Sir W. Crookes's experiments rather enigmatic ; he regards them as "interesting." If the whole thing is fraudulent, one might suppose that experiments could only be interesting in proportion as the experimenter was deceived. If there is an objective basis, on the other hand, it is rather hard on members of learned societies that they may not say so without being regarded as superstitious. More inexplicable still is Mr. Spiller's statement that "competent persons" should examine the whole subject. Mr. Spiller is quite sure that it is all humbug ; this being so, one does

not quite see what his competent person is to do. The remainder of the work is not quite so revolutionary as Mr. Spiller imagines. The line he takes is not always very clear and he would probably have been more effective if he had confined himself to a narrower field.

N. W. THOMAS.

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(JANUARY, 1903.)

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