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STUDIES

IN

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

BY

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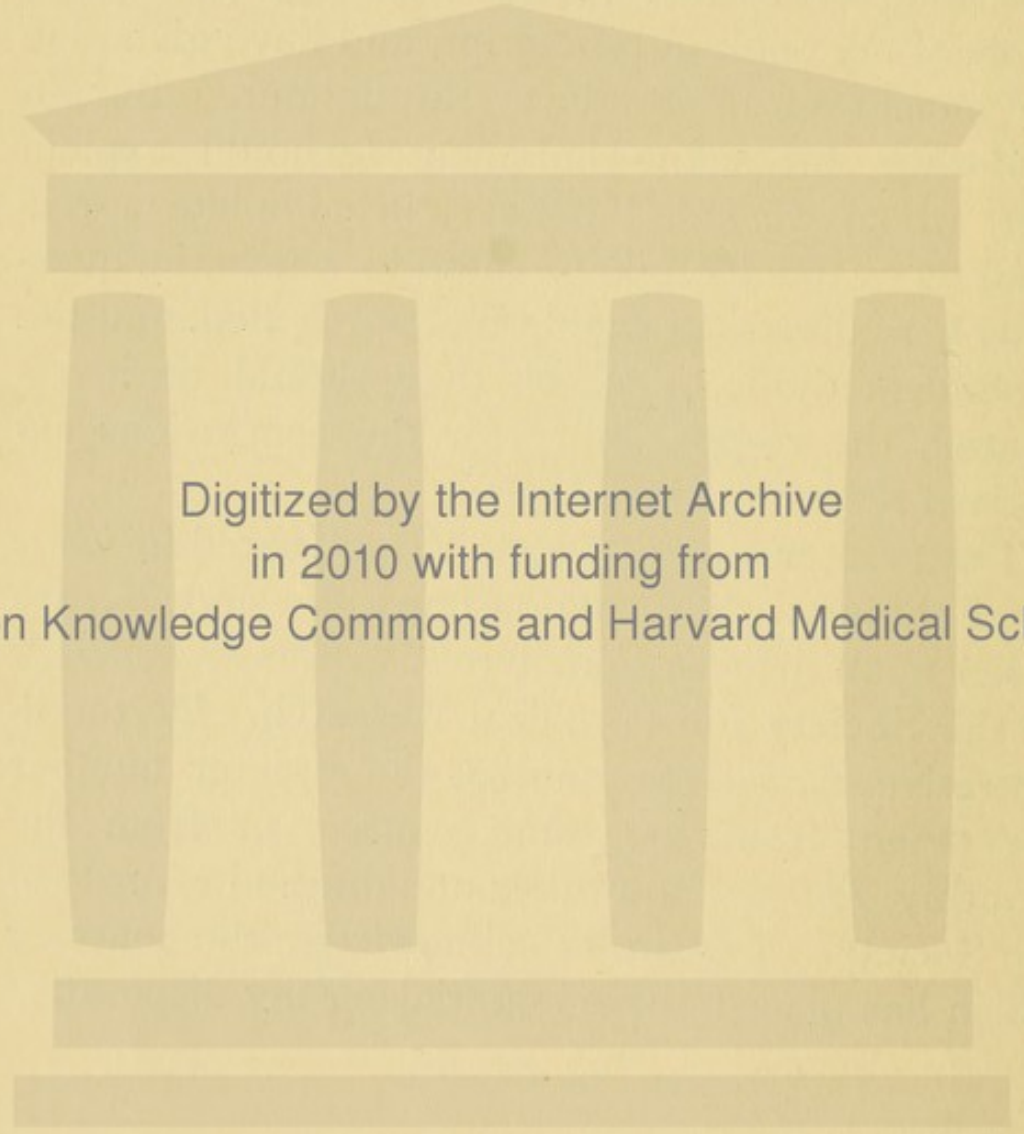
PREFACE.

I DESIRE, in the first place, to record my obligations to Professor Henry Sidgwick and Mrs. Sidgwick, who have read through nearly the whole of my book in typescript, and have given me the benefit of their advice throughout. But in rendering this acknowledgment I should explain that, whilst we are, I believe, in complete agreement as to the attitude of mind in which the questions here discussed should be approached, and the general methods by which they should be investigated, the responsibility for the conclusions expressed rests on myself alone.

The greater part of Chap. VI. appeared in *Time* for February, 1886, and Chaps. V. and X. are based upon articles contributed to the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research. Of the illustrative narratives quoted, the greater number are taken from the same source, or from the monthly *Journal* and other unpublished records of the Society. I desire to acknowledge the courtesy which has placed these materials at my disposal.

F. P.

FEBRUARY, 1897.



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STUDIES IN PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

WHEN Boswell suggested that second-sight and other mysterious manifestations might be explained by chance-coincidence, Dr. Johnson replied: "Yes, sir; but they have happened so often that mankind have agreed to think them not fortuitous." This attitude of hospitality towards the marvellous is no doubt less general than in Dr. Johnson's day. Nevertheless there are still to be found a considerable number of persons, many of them qualified by education and experience to judge of the matter, who believe in the occurrence of second sight, clairvoyance, death-wraiths, and kindred phenomena at the present day. So recently as last Christmas a leading London newspaper, in dealing with one of those mysterious outbreaks which are discussed in Chapter V. of the present book, summed up its comments on the case as follows: "The knocks

of Edithweston must be added to the already rather long list of noises probably not to be explained until our knowledge of the physical world connects it more closely with the psychical." Indeed, if we exclude those whose training in the physical sciences has given them defined, perhaps too rigidly defined, ideas of the working and limitations of natural forces, the attitude of the educated world in general will be found to have undergone but little alteration since the last century. It is no longer indeed one of active recognition, but it is almost equally far removed, if we may rely on the testimony of newspapers, novels, and our non-scientific literature generally, from contemptuous rejection. It may perhaps be described as a cross-bench mind. And there are many who have exchanged this tolerant scepticism for a definite belief founded, as they aver, on evidence hardly less cogent than that which supports many of the accepted generalisations of physical science. Twenty years ago the number of these believers was much greater and the things which they believed much more difficult of acceptance. The number of avowed Spiritualists in this country and the States at that time might be reckoned probably by tens of thousands: some spiritualistic writers claimed millions. The Theosophists, too, in their heyday formed a body of not inconsiderable proportions. And outside those who were adherents of one or other of these definite creeds, there was a large and growing body of persons who found in the reported marvels of the

séance room, in the tales of ghosts and haunted houses, of clairvoyance, of warning dreams and visions, and not least in the then unfamiliar phenomena of hypnotism, something which they could not explain, or could explain only—*ignotum per ignotius*—by a reference to "occult" forces.

Now all these beliefs, even in their most grotesque form, were avowedly founded on evidence, and on evidence which in many cases *prima facie* suggested and warranted the belief. The existence of such rational belief (I use the word without prejudging the value of the reasoning by which the belief was supported), and above all the existence of so large a body of believers, furnished, in the view of those who founded the Society for Psychical Research, sufficient justification for the examination of the marvels reported. For the uncritical rejection of the whole matter, which was the only articulate alternative to an acceptance often equally uncritical, seemed as irrational as it was certainly inconclusive. If the things alleged, or any of them, were true, it was highly important for them to be recognised and incorporated with the organised results of Science. If untrue, it was scarcely less important to inquire how they came to be accepted. The *obiter dictum* of the one party that the other party were all knaves or fools seemed hardly an adequate account of the matter, seeing that the other party included many persons of unquestioned probity and intelligence and some few men of eminence in various fields of human activity, including even the physical sciences.

Neither category, if we turn to a later date, could seem finely appropriate for such names—of those whom death has removed from our muster roll—as Balfour Stewart, Heinrich Hertz, Edmund Gurney, or Harvey Goodwin.

It was in the early months of 1882 that the Society for Psychical Research was founded, under the Presidency of Professor H. Sidgwick,[1] with aims which are thus stated in its first manifesto :

It has been widely felt that the present is an opportune time for making an organised and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, pyschical, and spiritualistic.

From the recorded testimony of many competent witnesses, past and present, including observations recently made by scientific men of eminence in various countries, there appears to be, amidst much delusion and deception, an important body of remarkable phenomena, which are *prima facie* inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis, and which, if incontestably established, would be of the highest possible value.

The task of examining such residual phenomena has often been undertaken by individual effort, but never hitherto by a scientific society organised on a sufficiently broad basis.

Six Committees were forthwith appointed to take over different parts of the wide field of inquiry, viz. :

1. An examination of the nature and extent of any influence which may be exerted by one mind upon another, apart from any generally recognised mode of perception.

[1] The other Presidents of the Society since its foundation to the present time have been Prof. Balfour Stewart, F.R.S. ; the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P., F.R.S. ; Prof. William James (of Harvard), and Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., and the President for 1896, and for the current year.

2. The study of hypnotism, and the forms of so-called mesmeric trance, with its alleged insensibility to pain ; clairvoyance, and other allied phenomena.

3. A critical revision of Reichenbach's researches with certain organisations called "sensitive," and an inquiry whether such organisations possess any power of perception beyond a highly exalted sensibility of the recognised sensory organs.

4. A careful investigation of any reports, resting on strong testimony, regarding apparitions at the moment of death, or otherwise, or regarding disturbances in houses reputed to be haunted.

5. An inquiry into the various physical phenomena commonly called Spiritualistic ; with an attempt to discover their causes and general laws.

6. The collection and collation of existing materials bearing on the history of these subjects.

In the chapters which follow, an attempt will be made to estimate the value of the work done up to the present time by the Society through its Committees, and by individual members, on the several lines of inquiry thus mapped out, and to sketch briefly the conclusions reached or indicated at the present stage.

Before I pass to this detailed examination of the results attained, a few words may fitly be said on the spirit and method of these investigations. We did not, as already said, in undertaking the inquiry assume to express any opinion beforehand on the value of the evidence to be examined. Whatever the private bias of individual members towards belief or disbelief, it cannot fairly be said that any such bias has been allowed to pervert the methods of the inquiry. To ascertain the facts of the case,

at whatever cost to established opinions and prejudices, has been the consistent aim of the Society and its workers. If some of our investigations have resulted in the detection of imposture, the discovery of unsuspected fallacies of sense and memory, and the general disintegration of some imposing structures built upon too narrow foundations; whilst others have revealed the occurrence of phenomena which neither chance nor fraud nor fallacy of sense can plausibly explain, and for which the present scientific synthesis can as yet find no place, it is pertinent to remember that the investigators were in each case the same, the methods pursued were the same, and the object in all cases was simply the discovery of the truth.

There is another not unnatural misconception of the nature of our work. Though fraud, and fraud of a particularly gross kind, is the most active force in producing some of the spurious marvels which have been the subject of our inquiries, yet fraud is on the whole neither the most prolific nor the most dangerous source of error. In our experimental work in thought-transference and the like, we have had mainly to guard against an innocent deception —and the more insidious because innocent,—the subconscious communication of information by indications too subtle to be apprehended by the normal self, but readily seized upon and interpreted by the automatic or somnambulic consciousness. And in that part of our work where experiment is precluded by the nature of the facts, and which has

consisted, therefore, mainly in obtaining and recording the testimony of others to such spontaneous phenomena as visions and apparitions, the real source of error is again the sub-conscious sophistication of the record owing to the instinctive tendency of the imagination to dramatic unity and completeness. This tendency is examined and illustrated in various parts of the book.[1] It is enough to say here that our researches have led us gradually to attach more and more importance to the effect of time on the value of testimony. Consider, for instance, the narratives of prophetic dreams dealt with in Chapter XI. The alleged coincidences—many of them of the most conclusive kind—are not wholly due to chance and probably not in any appreciable degree due to culpable negligence or exaggeration, and still less to conscious bad faith, on the part of those who have supplied us with information, often with considerable expenditure of time and trouble and at the cost of unwelcome publicity. But a careful comparison of the most recent cases with those more remote reveals an ever ascending scale of marvel, and points to a general and hitherto imperfectly appreciated mental tendency, operating with almost the inevitableness of a natural law.

There is but one more word to say here. Neither the Society nor any of my colleagues are in any way committed to the views expressed in this book. The reader should on this account pardon a certain apparent egotism in the treatment: the first person

[1] See especially Chapters V., IX., X., and XI.

singular has often been chosen deliberately, where custom would have prescribed a less direct form of statement, in order to emphasise this individual responsibility. The book then represents my individual impressions of the results of our fifteen years' work.

More than one view is possible of the general effect of the evidence. To some of my colleagues, it seems to indicate that thought can influence thought, untrammelled by the machinery of sense organs and ethereal undulations; that the human soul can, while still attached to the body, transcend the limits of space and time and the laws of the physical world; and can after the death of the body prevail to make its presence known to us here. To my thinking, the evidence is too slender and too ambiguous to bear the weight of such tremendous issues; and though I hold that there are grounds sufficient to justify telepathy as a working hypothesis, the proof of its transcendental nature is still wanting.

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUALISM AS A POPULAR MOVEMENT.

CONCURRENTLY with the immense expansion and development, during the last half century, of our knowledge of the material world, there has come a striking recrudescence in civilised countries of the old-time belief in agencies working outside and beyond physical nature. The modern revival, to go no farther back, may be said to date from the "Rochester knockings," curious raps occurring in the presence of two or three members of the Fox family living in Rochester, New York, in the year 1848. From this small beginning, the occurrence of mysterious raps betraying an intelligent source, and referred by some to the agency of spirits, by others to supernormal powers exercised unconsciously by the "Mediums," and by a few scientific men, who investigated the occurrences at the time, to voluntary "cracking" (*i. e.* partial dislocation) of the knee-joints on the part of the girls concerned, arose the whole movement of Modern Spiritualism.

The phenomena did not stop here. Within the course of the next few years, the press of the world recorded other marvels too numerous to detail.

These may be roughly classified under two main heads. (*a*) There were first the physical phenomena, such as the raps already mentioned (which shortly became the recognised mode of communication with the "spirits"); movements of furniture and small objects; playing of musical instruments without apparent contact; the appearance of so-called "materialised" spirit-forms; the levitation of the human body; "apports" of flowers and other trifles into closed rooms (regarded as proofs of the passage of matter through matter); and the handling of live coals and other burning substances with impunity. (*b*) The mental phenomena, which occurred chiefly through the agency of the medium when in a condition resembling in many respects the trance of the hypnotised subject. When thus entranced the medium would write or speak words purporting to emanate from an intelligence other than his own. Proofs would thus be given of spirit identity: descriptions of the spirit world; information on spiritual things; the inner thoughts of the inquirer would be revealed, or the medium would give particulars of remote events or distant scenes; and there were occasional excursions into the regions of prophecy, psychometry, and retrocognition, or vision of the past.

So rapidly did the belief in these marvels spread in the United States, that as early as 1854 a petition was presented to Congress, signed by some thirteen thousand persons, praying for the appointment of a scientific commission to investigate the phenomena

"now engrossing so large a share of the public attention" and "likely to produce important and lasting results permanently affecting the physical condition, mental development, and moral character of a large number of the American people." The petition was ordered to be laid upon the table, and no action was taken. The movement soon spread to Europe. Early in the 'fifties Mrs. Hayden, Daniel Dunglas Home, and other mediums came to this country from America. Shortly after, centres of propagandism grew up here, native-born mediums appeared on the scene, and journals devoted to the subject came into existence. Some twenty-five years later, in 1887, there were about one hundred newspapers dealing with the philosophy and phenomena of Spiritualism; of these about thirty were published in English (the majority of them circulating in the United States), and nearly forty in Spanish.

Shortly before the time that Spiritualism as thus described was spreading over the civilised world, two or three English medical men—Braid in Manchester, Esdaile in Calcutta, Elliotson and others in London—had been investigating the phenomena of hypnotism, or, as it was then more commonly styled, mesmerism. The important discovery, however, of chloroform as an anæsthetic in 1847, and its rapidly increasing usefulness, drew away the attention of the medical world from the remarkable results achieved, by Esdaile especially, in the performance of surgical operations under "mesmeric"

anæsthesia; whilst the extravagances of the more ignorant practitioners of the art brought the whole subject into disrepute; until some fifteen or twenty years later the work of Liebeault and Bernheim at Nancy, of Charcot at the Salpêtrière, and sporadic inquiries like those of Heidenhain at Breslau, again called the attention of the scientific world to the matter.

The Spiritualists for their part gladly adopted as their own a subject which was thus contemptuously rejected by medical men. They found, not unreasonably, in the phenomena of the hypnotic trance much to support and illustrate their own views of the spontaneous mediumistic trance; and, less reasonably, in the process of hypnotic healing proof of spirit intervention. Again, the numerous stories of the Double, or *Döppelganger;* of apparitions at the time of death, and of strange things seen and heard in "haunted houses," which had for many centuries received an intermittent and Nicodemus-like belief not amongst the unlearned alone, were all pressed into the service of the new faith. The Spiritualist even found support and corroboration of his belief in the records of mediæval witchcraft and the traditions of ancient magic.

Meanwhile the alleged physical phenomena of Spiritualism naturally attracted from time to time the notice of men of science. Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Mr. Cromwell Varley, Dr. Huggins, and other competent persons published accounts of remarkable manifestations witnessed by themselves.

A Committee, which included many well-known doctors and barristers, was appointed by the London Dialectical Society in 1869, for the purpose of investigating the subject. The Committee reported in 1870 to the effect that, in addition to taking a great deal of oral and written evidence on the subject, they had formed themselves into sub-committees for the purpose of practical investigation, and that a large majority of the members had themselves witnessed "several phases of the phenomena without the aid or presence of any professional medium." The Committee concluded that, "taking into consideration the high character and great intelligence of many of the witnesses to the more extraordinary facts, the extent to which their testimony is supported by the reports of the sub-committees, and the absence of any proof of imposture or delusion as regards a large portion of the phenomena; and further, having regard to the exceptional character of the phenomena, the large number of persons in every grade of society and over the whole civilised world who are more or less influenced by a belief in their supernatural origin, and to the fact that no philosophical explanation of them has yet been arrived at, they deem it incumbent upon them to state their conviction that the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received." [1]

Mr. Crookes during the years 1870-74 conducted various investigations with Miss Cook, D. D. Home,

[1] *Report on Spiritualism*, London, 1871, Longmans, pp. 5, 6.

and others, some of the results of which were published at the time in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* and elsewhere, and subsequently in a collected form under the title *Researches in Spiritualism.*[1] Mr. Crookes testifies to having witnessed, amongst other phenomena, the occurrence of inexplicable sounds; the alteration of the weight of bodies; the movement of chairs, tables and other heavy objects, and the playing of musical instruments without contact or connection of any kind; the levitation of human beings; the appearance of strange luminous substances; the appearance of hands apparently not attached to any body; writing not produced by human agency; the appearance of a materialised spirit-form, of which he succeeded in obtaining photographs.

Professor W. F. Barrett, at the meeting of the British Association, at Glasgow, in 1876, read a paper on "Some Phenomena Associated with Abnormal Conditions of Mind." In this paper he described, amongst other phenomena which he had himself witnessed, the occurrence in broad daylight of raps and other sounds exhibiting intelligence, in the presence of a young child, and under circumstances which seemed to put trickery out of the question. The paper provoked a good deal of discussion at the time, and the popular interest in it was heightened by the fact that a few days later there appeared in the *Times* a letter signed by Professor Ray Lankester and Dr. H. B. Donkin,

[1] London, J. Burns, 1875.

giving an account of two visits which they had paid to the medium Slade, whose performances had been referred to at the British Association meeting. They claimed to have detected Slade in writing on the slate, at a time when he supposed himself secure from observation, a message which purported to come from the spirit world.

Again, in 1877-78, J. C. F. Zöllner, Professor of Astronomy at Leipsic, held several sittings with this same medium, Slade, for the purpose of investigating the phenomena. At some of these sittings, Zöllner was assisted by his colleagues of the same university, Professors Scheibner and Fechner, and by the veteran Professor Wilhelm P. Weber. Amongst the chief phenomena which Professor Zöllner claims to have witnessed, were the following: Writing was produced on slates without the agency of anyone present. Coins, unknown to anyone present and enclosed in a securely fastened box, were correctly described; the same coins were subsequently extracted from the box and bits of slate-pencil substituted, the fastenings of the box remaining intact. Knots were tied in an endless cord, *i. e.* knots, such as would in normal circumstances have required the end of the cord to be passed through the loop of the knot, were tied when the free ends were sealed together and under observation throughout the experiment. A small table disappeared and as suddenly re-appeared in broad daylight. Abnormal lights and abnormal shadows were observed. In these phenomena, or

some of them, Zöllner found experimental confirmation of his hypothesis of a fourth dimension of space,—a dimension which should stand to the known dimensions of cubic space, height, length, and breadth, in the same relation which height now bears to the two dimensions of plane space. Given the fourth dimension, the existence of which is mathematically foreshadowed, Zöllner pointed out that, to a man or a spirit endowed with the capacity of dealing with it, the abstraction of objects from a closed box, the knotting of an endless cord, or the removal into invisibility of a solid object would be tasks of no special difficulty.[1]

Of investigators without special training, but possessed of education, literary faculty, and general ability, two deserve special mention,—Mr. Stainton Moses and Serjeant Cox. Writing under the pseudonym of *M. A. Oxon*, Mr. Moses, himself a medium of very remarkable powers, has published accounts of numerous manifestations occurring in his presence, attested sometimes by himself, more frequently, when he himself was entranced and unconscious, by a circle of intimate friends. These phenomena ranged from the occurrence of raps, musical sounds, and curious lights, to the movement of objects of furniture and "levitation" of the medium himself, the "materialisation" of liquid scent and of jewels, and the introduction of solid objects

[1] See *Transcendental Physics*, an abridged translation by C. C. Massey, London, 1880.

The idea of space of various dimensions has been well worked out in an amusing little book called *Flatland*, published by Seeley & Co. in 1884.

into a closed room. On the mental side they included much inspirational (automatic) writing, some evidence of thought-transference and clairvoyance, and communications which, purporting to come from deceased persons, furnished many and striking proofs of the genuineness of their claims.[1]

In 1875 there was founded in London, under the presidency of the late Serjeant Cox, the Psychological Society, "for the promotion of Psychological Science in all its branches. Its object the investigation of all the forces, organic and intelligent, that move and direct the material mechanism of man." As a matter of fact, the main subjects of the Society's investigations at its periodical meetings were the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, ghosts, clairvoyance, and kindred subjects. Serjeant Cox himself was a witness to many of the marvels produced by D. D. Home, and other members of the Society added their quota of wonders. But the chief interest of Serjeant Cox's work lay in his attempt to give articulate expression to the current metaphysics of the Spiritualists, and at the same time to explain the phenomena, without having recourse to disembodied spirits, by means of a force latent in the human organism.

But while scientific men were content, for the most part, with recording the facts which they had

[1] See his articles in *Human Nature* for 1874, pp. 47, 161, etc.; also *Spirit Identity*, *Psychography*, and other works published in London from 1874 onwards; and the posthumous papers and diaries edited by Mr. Myers and published in the *Proc. of the S. P. R.* volumes ix. and xi.

See also below, Chapter III., and Appendix to Chapter IV.

observed, or believed themselves to have observed, and waiting for the explanation, and Serjeant Cox and his adherents attributed the phenomena to psychic force radiating from the finger ends, or to the enlarged sensory powers of the psychic body, the mass of Spiritualists failed to find satisfaction in either attitude. As the peasant referred the movement of the steam-engine to the only motive force with which he was acquainted, and supposed that there were horses inside, so the Spiritualists, recognising, as they thought, in the phenomena the manifestations of will and intelligence not apparently those of any person visibly present, invoked the agency of the spirits of the dead. We can hardly call this belief an hypothesis or an explanation; it seems indeed at its outset to have been little more than the instinctive utterance of primæval animism. Later, when this explanation had become stereotyped, and had affected the attitude even of honest "mediums," causing them to claim for their most trivial automatic utterances an external inspiration, it became difficult even for intelligent students to free themselves from the prevailing belief—a belief so widely attested by the phenomena themselves. Hence it comes that, notwithstanding the sporadic labours of men of science or common-sense, and the existence here and there of Psychological and Spiritualistic Evidence Societies, and the multiplication of Research Committees, and test séances, the general character of the movement was essentially non-scientific.

It was almost from the commencement a religious movement, expressing itself in America in Camp meetings, and in this country in Sunday services, trance addresses, and inspirational teaching. The hypothesis of spirit agency saved its devotees from a good deal of hard thinking. It was so easy to explain the hallucinations of delirium as spiritual entities; the marvels of automatic writing or speaking as due to external inspiration; the ordinary platform performance of thought-reading by means of a code, and indeed conjuring tricks in general, as proofs of abnormal psychic powers; to discern spirit intervention even in the legerdemain of a renegade medium who took to "exposing" Spiritualism; to explain the results of mesmeric healing as due to spirit helpers. Serjeant Cox adduced the hallucinatory feeling of a missing limb in proof of a spiritual body; and a writer in the *Spiritualist*,[1] "not yet convinced of the spiritualistic theory," could even pronounce the after-images produced by gazing at a straw hat to be "independent of any known human agency." From all which it may be gathered that the conscientious Spiritualist when on marvels bent did not display a frugal mind!

The attitude of Spiritualists in general, then, was that of persons who had been more or less thrown off their balance by sudden exposure to experiences of a novel and surprising kind. Being for the most part ignorant of even the rudiments of natural

[1] Sept. 20, 1878.

science, they had accepted almost without question the only explanation which appeared on a superficial examination adequate to explain the facts; and had then exalted this explanation to the dignity of a religious tenet. Such a mental attitude was likely to be more conducive to beatific contemplation than to laborious analysis. The activities of the convert naturally took the form of missionary enterprise rather than of scientific investigation; and the séance room became not a laboratory but a propagandist institution. From such an attitude little sympathy was to be expected for disinterested scepticism. For most Spiritualists the time for inquiry into the foundations of their belief, if it had ever been, had long since gone by. And whilst there were at all times a few men of education and intelligence who never shut their eyes to new facts or new interpretations of old ones, these men in no sense directed the movement. Spiritualism was a democratic birth of the land of democracy, and Spiritualists in general had made up their minds that these things—the movements of tables, the apparitions of the séance room, the inspirational addresses poured forth weekly in a hundred lecture halls—were the work of spirits. Nor was it only the satisfaction of the religious instinct and the inertia of faith grown habitual which benumbed the spirit of inquiry. Vanity was with most a powerful auxiliary. To persons who had built themselves a new faith and had posed as prophets, perhaps also as martyrs, in the domestic

circle and beyond it, on the strength of signs and marvels specially vouchsafed to them, it would have been a painful, often an unendurable shock, to have their signs and wonders explained as the result of clumsy fraud. Hence those who detected trickery of any kind met with scant sympathy. It was obscurely felt that they were malicious or ignorant persons who had gone out of their way to assail the new Revelation, and to make innocent people uncomfortable and even, perhaps, ridiculous.

Even when those who exposed the fraud were themselves believers, their reception was scarcely more favourable. Thus, in September, 1878, a group of Dutch Spiritualists detected the mediums, Williams and Rita, in flagrant trickery at Amsterdam. The exposure was complete. At a dark séance, a figure purporting to be a materialised spirit-form named "Charlie" showed his face by the light of a spirit lamp. One of the circle, whose suspicions had been aroused at a previous sitting, grasped "Charlie" and found himself holding Rita by the coat collar. After a sharp struggle a light was obtained, the two mediums were baffled in an attempt to escape from the house, and their persons were searched. Upon Rita were found a false beard, several large handkerchiefs, and a small circular bottle of phosphorised oil,—the raw material of "Charlie" and his spirit lamp. On Williams were found also a beard, much used, several yards of dirty muslin, handkerchiefs, a bottle of phosphorised oil, and a bottle of scent,—objects familiar

in happier circumstances to the eye of faith as the bearded mariner "John King," with turban, lamp, and spirit perfume. In Williams's handbag were found a small tube filled with minute pieces of slate-pencil, and a piece of notched whalebone,—the instruments employed for writing on closed slates.

A full account of the exposure was published in the *Spiritualist* newspaper of Sept. 20, 1878. In a cautious article the Editor pointed out that "the spirits who produced physical manifestations are sometimes far from being saints, and in some cases are not averse to aiding and abetting their medium in imposture. Indeed when genuine mediums swindle the general public by turning 'exposers,' and showing real manifestations as impostures, the spirits still help them." He goes on to remind his readers that the medium is liable to fall into trances at all times, and suggests that spirits occasionally bring muslin themselves to the séance room. Later[1] he surmises that the mediums were probably "under some strong control," and were not responsible for their actions, on the night of the exposure. A Spiritualist of much experience, writing on the fiasco,[2] suggests as an alternative to the supposition of trickery on the part of the mediums, either that the materialised spirits had brought in the muslin and other articles to clothe their nakedness withal, or that some member of the circle had secretly introduced them, in order to injure the mediums. He adds that spirits habitually bring

[1] Sept. 27th.

[2] *Spiritualist*, 1st Nov., 1878.

material garments to clothe themselves in, and usually take them away again; but that on this occasion "the spirit had to vanish so quickly that it had no time to dematerialise the muslin." The same writer adds that he had just had a most successful séance with Williams under "test" conditions. The value of this evidence may be inferred from the fact that the circle of five persons who "tested" Williams included two professional mediums, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Fletcher. Another Spiritualist writes that a materialised spirit on one occasion informed him, in answer to his question, that the clothes that she—the spirit—was then wearing came from the medium's wardrobe. And yet another suggests that the best way to ascertain the truth about the recent fiasco would be to consult—"John King!" So, when in January, 1880, Mrs. Corner[1] was seized in similar circumstances when personating a spirit by Sir G. Sitwell and Mr. Carl von Buch, the Editor of the *Spiritualist* points out that "grasping one of the forms and finding it to be the medium proves nothing."[2] Mr. Stainton Moses expressed the opinion that "such methods of inquiry would often land a man in a fallacy, and that there were powers and phenomena which were not amenable to such rude and ready methods of investigation"[3]; while the Editor of *Spiritual Notes* has "no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that on the occasion of the recent

[1] Miss Cook. [2] Jan. 16, 1880.

[3] *Spiritual Notes*, Feb. (a monthly paper), 1880.

seizure Mrs. Corner was completely guiltless of deception."[1] Moreover, Mrs. Corner's character as a genuine medium was vindicated on this occasion with unexampled rapidity, by means of a successful séance held, on the evening of the exposure, at the house and in the presence of another professional medium, the same Mrs. Fletcher.

In the year 1882 there appeared in the Spiritualist journal *Light*[2] an account, by a gentleman of some scientific pretensions, of a séance held under "test" conditions, with Miss Wood of Newcastle as medium; in which two remarkable materialised spirit-forms were described as having walked about the room, one of which—the child form of a little Indian girl called Pocha—touched and even kissed some of the sitters. Now *Light* was the recognised organ of the chief Spiritualist organisation, "The British National Association of Spiritualists," and numbered at this time among its contributors and supporters the great majority of such educated Spiritualists as there were in this country, including many names well known in the larger world of art, science, and politics. It so happened that I had myself attended a séance with the same medium, held under the same "test" conditions, which, briefly, were as follows: Miss Wood was placed in a cupboard, the door of which had been removed and the entry secured by passing a continuous cord through eye-headed screws, placed at short intervals along the sides, top, and bottom of the door-

[1] Feb., 1880. [2] July 29th.

way,—the result being a kind of irregular network, with meshes whose sides varied from five to ten inches in measurement. This arrangement was designed to prevent Miss Wood from leaving the cupboard or "cabinet." A thick curtain was drawn over the doorway, but at an angle, so as to leave a considerable space between the network and curtain. The lights were lowered, and after a short interval occupied by singing, two figures—a woman and "Pocha," the aforesaid little Indian girl—emerged separately from the curtain and moved about in the semi-darkness. The figures did not in my presence appear together, nor did either of them touch the sitters. After the sitting was concluded I examined the network, and found by actual trial that it was quite easy to creep in and out without injuring the meshes. I accordingly wrote to *Light*,[1] communicating my discovery, and pointing out that, when once the medium had come through the network, it would have been quite easy for her, with the aid of a little drapery, to produce all the phenomena which had been observed. The taller of the two figures, on this hypothesis, would be Miss Wood standing upright, the shorter, Miss Wood on her knees. The singing would effectually drown any noise made by the medium in creeping through the network: the presence and position of the curtain would hide her movements during the operation: whilst the more than semi-darkness would render detection difficult.

[1] Aug. 19, 1882.

The letter was intended, not as a demonstration that fraud had been committed, but as a protest against the assumption that, under the given conditions, fraud was impossible. It met with a somewhat surprising reception. The next three numbers of the paper contained nine lengthy letters—selected, as the Editor explained, out of a much larger number, some of them too personal for publication—from indignant Spiritualists. Not one of the writers recognised that temperate criticism of the kind employed was legitimate and even helpful. Some, indeed, disputed the possibility of the "tests" being evaded in the manner I described. But the majority thought it a sufficient answer to describe similar phenomena obtained, also "under test conditions," at other times and in other circumstances. One writer even maintained that to take any precaution against fraud was superfluous and unphilosophical. By all my action was condemned. The correspondence was cut short in a dramatic fashion. The last of the letters appeared in *Light* for Sept. 9th. The issue of the following week contained a letter from a Spiritualist narrating that, at a séance held at his house a few days previously, Miss Wood had been detected in flagrant imposture. A member of the circle had ventured to do what I had not done. He had seized the child form of "Pocha," and found himself holding Miss Wood, on her knees, partially undressed, and covered with muslin, which she unsuccessfully endeavoured to conceal about her person. The next number of *Light* was

filled with letters, not in reprobation, but in defence of Miss Wood. A main feature of the defence, as before, was the description of marvellous phenomena at previous séances. Various alternative explanations of the exposure, as in the case of Williams and Rita, were suggested: that the sitters had made a mistake; that the gentleman who seized the medium had brought in the muslin himself; that Miss Wood was possessed by an evil spirit on the occasion in question; and finally, that, the materialised form being constructed out of the physical body of the medium, when the form is seized and can no longer return to the medium, the spirits, in order to secure the medium from serious injury, are obliged to bring the body to the form. They coalesce, and the inquirer who began by seizing a spirit finds that his grasp has closed upon a frame of flesh and blood. This last theory, it should be explained, claimed no mortal source; it was propounded on the authority of a spirit, who had communicated it to the correspondent.—Miss Wood continued to give "test" séances.

In the early part of the year 1884, there was published in *Light*, and subsequently republished in the form of a pamphlet, under the title *Spiritualism at Home*, an account of certain singular manifestations in the house of a capable man of business and prominent Spiritualist. According to the writer, the manifestations had been going on for some months, his servant being the medium. Fires were lit, and the breakfast table laid, by unseen agen-

cies; spirit-writings were found on walls and ceilings, in locked receptacles, or produced on marked paper at séances. The writings so produced were in many languages,—English, German, old French, Latin, Greek. The handwriting was in many cases so small as to defy human imitation. Last and most stupendous marvel of all, Saadi, a poet of ancient Persia, appeared in this domestic circle, and was even seen by two of its members, who described him as having "black hair, with a dark flowing beard, penetrating eyes and a lovely face." Saadi was good enough to communicate, by means of direct writing, several long pieces of poetry in English, translations of his own poems. He also gave a brief account of his life, with dates and other particulars.

The opportunity was given to me to investigate such of these marvellous occurrences as lent themselves to investigation. I could not, indeed, be a witness to the laying of the breakfast, the lighting of fires, or the performance of other humble domestic offices by the invisible agencies, since the action of the human eye was found to be inimical to such phenomena, which took place, even in the presence of the master of the house, only when his back happened to be turned. But the writings on the ceiling and the walls I did see, and I noted a remarkable peculiarity about them. When the writing occurred on the woodwork of the doorway or on other spots accessible to a person of ordinary stature mounted on a chair, the letters were regu-

larly formed and of normal size. When the writing occurred on a high ceiling, the writing was much larger, and the letters straggling and irregular, as might be the case if the writing had chanced to have been formed by a maid-servant standing in uncertain poise on a step-ladder, or armed with pencil attached to a broomstick. I was also shown the exact spot where the spirit-writings were wont to appear in a locked secretaire, and found it not difficult to push a piece of paper through the chink in the flap and cause it to fall on the same spot. Indeed the master of the house unwittingly gave important testimony as to the value of this particular "test." Aware of the difficulty of getting the exact test sought, he nevertheless ventured to ask the spirits to write on a manuscript which he locked up in the secretaire aforesaid. The "test" given was some writing on another piece of paper subsequently introduced into the secretaire, and found in the position above described. "I seldom get exactly what I seek," he writes in reference to this incident, "but something equally satisfactory in the way of proof."[1] The "direct spirit-writing" of superhuman fineness was of such a nature that any educated person with a little time and patience could produce with ease writing smaller and not less legible. The Latin and Greek had many mistakes; even some of the letters in the Greek being incorrectly formed, and accents and breathings omitted.

[1] *Light*, 1884, p. 244.

But the most startling phenomenon of all—the poetry of Saadi—remained to be accounted for. Whilst puzzling over the problem, a friend placed in my hands Part VI. of *Chambers's Repository of Instructive and Amusing Tracts*, a once popular and widely circulated series. From an article on "Persian Poetry in the Past" were derived all the translations of Persian poetry quoted by the spirit Saadi, and all the particulars of his life and death which he had vouchsafed to give to this nineteenth-century domestic circle. It seemed hardly worth while to revisit earth after so many centuries only to furnish information which was accessible to any English schoolboy. But there were some interesting variations in the spirit poetry, indicating an imperfect understanding of his subject on the part of their author. Moreover, Saadi, in the seclusion of this quiet suburban household, had ventured to claim as his own a poem written by somebody else. But even this feat was surpassed by another Persian spirit, called Wamik, who gave himself out as Saadi's friend, and communicated as his own no less than eighteen lines of poetry, signed Wamik Zerdusht, adding the interesting information, "Wamik was burnt to death at Abyssinia; he lived in this life before 636." Here was indeed news from the spirit world, for, according to Sir W. Jones,[1] Wamik was no friend of Saadi, had written no poetry, and had no claim to the name Zerdusht, having in fact never lived at all. For "Wa-

[1] Quoted in the tract referred to.

mik" was the imaginary hero of the poem to which the spirit had subscribed his name.

All this and much more I communicated in a series of letters to *Light*.[1] The editor of that periodical expressed his opinion that my "difficulties" (*i. e.*, in accepting these spiritual revelations) "arose wholly and solely from the incomplete and hasty investigation" which I had accorded to the phenomena. But the rest of the poems of Saadi and his friend Wamik, and all the things that they did, are printed in a handsome octavo volume of some three hundred pages, illustrated with facsimiles of the spirit-writings on doors and ceilings, entitled *Spirit Workers in the Home Circle*.[2]

Such then was the temper in which the physical miracles were accepted. And the same childlike faith marked the attitude of Spiritualists in general to the mental phenomena of trance-speaking and the like. But between these is a broad distinction to be drawn. Whilst there is little room to doubt that the great majority—at any rate—of the so-called physical manifestations were due to deliberate and preconcerted fraud, such phenomena as trance-speaking, automatic writing, and the visions seen at séances, were probably in many cases the genuine outcome of states more or less abnormal. A party of schoolboys, thrilled by the marvels described in the pages of *The Medium and Daybreak*, held in the autumn of 1873 a séance,—a dark

[1] January, February, and March, 1885.

[2] London, Fisher Unwin, 1887.

séance, since darkness was enjoined as one of the conditions favourable for spirit communion,—at which one of their number passed into a trance, undoubtedly genuine, and wrote two or three stanzas of indifferent poetry, purporting to proceed from Thomas Campbell. The suspicions of diabolical intervention, aroused in the first instance by the awful facility with which the entranced subject wrote *Spiegelschrift*[1]—as who should say the Lord's Prayer backwards—were confirmed by the later discovery that the spirit of the poet had made a mistake of some twenty years in the date of his death. None of the party could be persuaded to sit again. But the attitude of unquestioning acceptance, which was perhaps natural and pardonable in a party of schoolboys, remained the attitude of the majority of Spiritualists throughout their lives. The self-induced trance, into which the "clairvoyant" medium habitually fell during the séance, was always for them a spiritual state; his somnambulic babblings in this condition, the utterance of spirits,—the old Indian chief, Shaggy Bear, the great medicine-man, Owassoo, and all their tribe; his automatic writings were dictated by spirit guides. Some recited poetry when in this condition; there is still extant the "Farewell to Earth" of Edgar Allan Poe, and many other verses of the kind, which the world will doubtless not unwillingly let die. But perhaps the commonest form of automatic utterance was the in-

[1] Looking-glass writing.

spirational address or sermon. In many cases, no doubt, these addresses were actually composed and delivered in a state of somnambulism, or at least without the conscious co-operation of the speaker. But there is rarely anything in the matter of the discourse which should lead us to look for inspiration beyond the speaker's own mind. The gifted Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan-Richmond was an adept in this kind, and held crowded audiences of Spiritualists spell-bound Sunday after Sunday by her somewhat flatulent eloquence. To this class belong also some of the writings of Mr. Stainton Moses, produced under the direction of "Imperator" and a syndicate of spirit guides.

There were many other books of the kind, appealing for the most part to a less cultured audience than that reached by "Imperator," and certainly making larger claims on the reader's credulity. Such, for example, is *Hafed, Prince of Persia, his experiences in Earth Life and Spirit Life, being spirit communications received through Mr. David Duguid, the Glasgow trance-painting medium: with an appendix containing communications from the spirit artists Ruysdael and Steen.*[1] The book is illustrated by facsimiles of various drawings and writings, "the direct work of the spirits." There are pictures of Hafed, Prince of Persia, himself, of Christian martyrs and rampant lions, of an ancient Egyptian séance with a fully materialised spirit-form; together with much sur-

[1] London, J. Burns, 1876.

prising information about the spirit world, the nature of man, and the solar system.

Frequently no doubt the machinery of the trance was deliberately assumed, and the inspirational speaker or writer borrowed his matter when he had not the wit to invent it. There used at one time to appear on various Sunday platforms a trance-orator named Lambelle. In December, 1878, Mr. Lambelle delivered in the Ladbroke Hall two discourses on the nature of the spirit world and cognate subjects. Mr. St. George Stock, who attended the lecture, showed by the damning evidence of parallel passages,[1] that both discourses were lifted wholesale,—not merely the substance, but the actual words,—from a volume of sermons by a Swedenborgian minister. Mr. Lambelle in his defence could do no better than impute bad faith to his critic. A more audacious apology was offered by another Spiritualist for the occurrence of parallel passages in an inspired discourse and a printed book, both describing the appearance of a celestial city. The literal and verbal similarity of the two descriptions was held to prove nothing more than the fidelity of two independent witnesses in describing the same spiritual scene. It is probable that such thefts were not infrequent, and were practised with greater impunity because Spiritualists as a body were not addicted to outside literature.

At this point we may profitably pause in order to glance at the philosophic and religious concep-

[1] *Spiritualist*, 27 Dec., 1878 and 10 Jan., 1879.

tions which underlay the Spiritualist movement. Of its metaphysics, probably the most complete account is to be found in *The Mechanism of Man, an Answer to the Question "What am I?"*[1] two volumes in which Serjeant Cox dealt with the phenomena of Spiritualism, and founded upon them a system of what he termed Psychology, but which would perhaps be more correctly described as Transcendental Physiology. The scientific and metaphysical speculations in the book are of little value, except as reflecting, with more accuracy than a book written by a stronger thinker might have done, the floating ideas then and apparently still held by Spiritualists on the nature of the soul and of the spiritual beings with whom they believed themselves to be in communication. Serjeant Cox himself, indeed, as already said, attributed the phenomena in which he believed, not to the agency of disincarnate spirits, but to the extra-corporeal action of the human soul. But in formulating his theories he avails himself of current spiritualistic metaphysics, and his book constitutes the most systematic expression of those metaphysics. Briefly his theory is, that the man consists of two parts—Body and Soul. The Soul, or Spirit, is like the body in shape, like it in parts and magnitude, and, like it, is also material. "Spirit" says Serjeant Cox, "is not and cannot be immaterial"; and again, "if the Soul is a refined Body (and it must be that

[1] London, Longmans & Co. This book, published in 1876, was a new edition, greatly expanded, of an earlier work on the same lines.

or nothing)." But though material, the Soul is not grossly material; "its substance is vastly more refined than the thinnest gas with which we are acquainted," finer, indeed, possibly than the substance of a comet's tail. Moreover, it is superior to the body in many ways. In it inhere will and intelligence. It does not disintegrate with the death of the body. It is exempt from gravity, and has the power, in certain circumstances, of conferring a like exemption on bodies with which it associates itself. It can flow through visible, or, as Cox calls it, "molecular" matter, as water through a sponge. (The analogy is characteristically superficial; Cox's theory requires that the constituent parts of the Soul, or Psychic Body, should be relatively fixed, but it is of course in virtue of its molecules having no definite position in relation to each other that water can flow through a porous solid.) The Soul would further have enlarged powers of perception, still apparently dependent, however, on aërial or ethereal undulations. In proof of the theory Serjeant Cox appeals to spiritualistic phenomena at large: to the occurrence of apparitions (again characteristically slurring over the difficulty of the clothes), and to the sensations felt by a patient who has recently lost a limb, referred by him to the missing member.

Lest it should be thought that Serjeant Cox is not a sufficiently representative exponent of spiritualist beliefs, the testimony of Dr. Hare, the American Spiritualist, shall be added. He tells us

in his book on *Spirit Manifestations*,[1] that he was informed, by the spirits, that spirits differed from one another in density, and that they have a fluid circulating through an arterial and venous system which is subject to a respiratory process. So material, according to his information, are the spirits and their surroundings that the spiritual spheres of Jupiter can be seen through a telescope, —being, indeed, what are known as the bands of that planet. So Mr. Cromwell Varley[2] speaks of thought as being "solid," and explains the clothes of apparitions on this hypothesis. And Mr. Hockley[3] expresses his belief that the things seen in a crystal are objective, being the ghosts or spiritual counterparts of real objects.

Such, in brief, is the philosophy, originally, no doubt, borrowed, and marred in the borrowing, from Swedenborg, and through him from yet older mystics, which more or less explicitly underlies the belief of the Spiritualists. Its exponents are not, of course, at all times consistent. There come to most occasional misgivings that the phenomena of will and consciousness may not be wholly explained by postulating one or more ethereal bodies each inside the other, like the ivory balls of Chinese carving. But, in general, materialism in two worlds fairly represents the cosmical scheme of these latter-day mystics.

[1] New York, 1855.
[2] *Dialectical Report*, p. 172.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 187.

Trance-speaking and -writing have played an important part in the history of Spiritualism as a religious movement. The inspired writings of Mr. Stainton Moses form the gospel of modern English Spiritualism. Indeed, Mr. Stainton Moses in his own person was the foremost champion in this country of the doctrine of Spiritualism properly so called; the system of philosophy which ascribed the phenomena in general to the agency of spirits of dead men and women, and believed in the advent, under spirit guidance, of a world-wide religion. It is hardly necessary for our present purpose to enter upon any detailed account of these religious doctrines. The curious inquirers can consult *Spirit Teachings*, by Mr. Stainton Moses.[1] The book consists of detached essays and answers to questions propounded by Mr. Moses himself. Both essays and answers purport to be inspired by certain spirit guides, who veiled their individuality under such titles as Imperator, Rector, Doctor, and so on, and to be written automatically through the medium's unconscious hand.

An earlier book on the same lines is Dr. Hare's *Spirit Manifestations and Doctrine of the Spirit-world respecting Heaven, Hell, Morality, and God*, already referred to. Dr. Hare narrates that he had received many communications respecting these high subjects from his father, sister, and brother, but feeling a reluctance at publishing matter of

[1] A Posthumous edition published in 1894 by E. W. Allen, 4 Ave Maria Lane, E. C.

such importance, "solely on the authority of his relations," he summoned a Convocation of Worthies of the Spirit World, to meet at an appointed hour, "at the dwelling of the excellent medium employed." To this Convocation, which fortunately included the spirit of George Washington, together with those of Benjamin Franklin, Isaac Newton, and Byron, he propounded a series of sixty-four questions, the answers to which were found amply to corroborate the information previously received from less distinguished sources.

But Spiritualism has had almost as many prophets as followers. Andrew Jackson Davis, known as the Poughkeepsie Seer, has published some twenty or thirty volumes of a Harmonial Philosophy, which had and has its adherents chiefly in America. A some-time friend and fellow-worker with Davis, the poet and prophet, Thomas Lake Harris, has had an even wider influence. Separating from Davis very early in his career, Harris founded a religion of his own, in which the Inner Breathing, Esoteric meaning of the Scriptures, Sortes Biblicæ, Celestial consorts, and many other mysteries played a part. He founded a community in the States, and exercised a profound influence on many minds in this country, the late Laurence Oliphant and his wife being perhaps his best known disciples.

The doctine of re-incarnation, originally no doubt borrowed from the East, was imported into their belief by many Spiritualists. At first this doctrine

seems to have found its adherents chiefly in France, but it was not long before it corrupted the primitive simplicity of the Anglo-American creed. It received its most potent development in the teachings of that vigorous offshoot of the spiritualist movement, the Theosophical Society. This society was founded in New York in 1876, with Colonel Olcott as its figure-head, by the master-mind of the late Madame Blavatsky. Several noted Spiritualists were among its original members, and it soon gained numerous recruits from the same source, as well as from the outside. The Theosophists taught not only the doctrine of re-incarnation, but the existence and intervention of elementary or non-human spirits, to whose aimless freaks many of the familiar phenomena of spiritualism were to be referred. In his opening address Colonel Olcott holds out to the society the hope that "by simple chemical appliances" there may be shortly exhibited to them "the races of beings which, invisible to our eyes, people the elements." "What," continues he, "will the Spiritualists say when through the column of saturated vapour flit the dreadful shapes of beings whom in their blindness they have in a thousand cases revered and babbled to as the returning shades of their relatives and friends."[1] Re-incarnation and the "astral" or elemental spirits formed, with other mysteries, parts of the gospel preached in London, in or about the year 1880, by the joint authors of *The Perfect Way*; and there

[1] *Human Nature*, 1876, p. 166.

were Hermetic Societies, and Christo-Theosophical Societies, and many others. No opinion or delusion was too monstrous to find its adherents. I have been told on excellent authority tales of witchcraft in modern times such as the author of *Sadducismus Triumphatus* would have excused himself from believing. A person of my acquaintance vaunted that he could demonstrate that the earth was flat, and that he had learnt the art of preserving his body forever from senile decay. Natural death, resulting from ossification of the tissues, could be averted by giving the body little material out of which to form bone, and providing a sufficiency of acids to carry off any of the earthy salts which might find their way in. Hence a diet consisting exclusively of flesh meat and fruits was indicated as the means to preserve the body from death, save by accident or disease. I have met a lady who claimed to have already put on her immortal body—prepared, however, by a different process; whilst her husband was willing to sell the secret of immortality for the ridiculous sum of £100, or less, according to the measure of his client's faith or fortunes.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM.

THE preceding chapter will have made it clear that the testimony to Spiritualistic manifestations may without malice be described as more copious than cogent. There were Spiritualists not a few who would be capable of testifying, if their prepossessions happened to point that way, that they had seen the cow jump over the moon; and would refer for corroborative evidence to the archives of the nursery. But, as already indicated, in the voluminous literature of the subject there were to be found a few records deserving of attention, whether from the striking nature of the phenomena observed, from the circumstances under which the observations were made, or from the character and position of the witnesses. It is proposed in this chapter to present a brief summary of the best evidence of this type. In making the selection I have been guided not merely by the published opinions of the best-known Spiritualists, but by the verdict of such external critics as Mrs. Henry Sidgwick and Mr. F. W. H. Myers. By the opinion of those—whether within or without the movement—who are best qualified to judge, the selection of

evidence here given would, I feel confident, be accepted as representative. Other evidence, equal in importance to that furnished, for instance, by the experiments of MM. de Gasparin and Thury, there may be ; but assuredly there is none better, none in my judgment equal in value to that afforded by Mr. Crookes's observations.

Experiments of MM. Thury and de Gasparin.

In the autumn of 1853 the Count Agénor de Gasparin carried on a series of experiments in which he claimed to have observed movements of tables and other heavy objects not due to ordinary physical agencies. His results were published in the following year, under the title *Des Tables Tournantes, du Surnaturel en général et des Esprits.* M. de Gasparin avowedly wrote not as a man of science but as a theologian. He had been concerned at the interpretation put on these alleged physical phenomena by Spiritualists in America and elsewhere, and he laboured to prove, in the interests of revealed religion, that the movements, though real, were not to be attributed to the agency of spirits of the dead, but rather to some force emanating from the human organism and under the control of the will. It seems likely that prepossessions of the kind which M. de Gasparin admits would not in themselves tend seriously to affect his judgment in the matter, since it would have served his purpose as well or better had he been able to trace all the movements observed to

fraud. But the phenomena recorded were also attested by a friend, M. Thury, a professor at the Academy of Geneva, and a member of the "Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle."

It is from Professor Thury's pamphlet,[1] in which he gives an account of the phenomena observed by himself, as well as from the abridged edition of de Gasparin's work, published in London in 1889, that the following description is taken. M. de Gasparin's circle consisted of from six to twelve persons, of whom Thury was frequently one. The remainder included several servants and three children. The chief physical manifestations fall under two heads: (1) movements of objects with contact, which could not apparently have been effected by normal means, and (2) movements without contact.

(1) Of the first class the experiment regarded as most crucial was made with a table constructed on the principle of a weighing machine. The apparatus was apparently designed by Thury, and is minutely described by him. It consisted of a round table, some thirty-three inches in diameter, supported on one end of a beam or lever whose centre rested on a tripod stand, the weight of the table being counterbalanced by a scale with weights hanging on the other arm of the beam. A single leg projected from the under side of the table, and just touched the ground. This leg did not support the table; it was apparently designed simply to prevent any movement of the table in a downward

[1] *Des Tables Tournantes*, Geneva, 1855.

direction. When equilibrium was established, it was clearly impossible for any pressure of the fingers on the upper surface of the table—which was polished but not varnished—to effect a movement of the table in an upward direction. Nevertheless, when the weights in the scale were gradually diminished, so as to *increase* the weight of the table, upward movements of the latter were observed. In one case the movement indicated a force of 4.27 kilograms, which, divided amongst the six operators, gave, as M. Thury pointed out, an average upward pull of .71 (about 1½ pounds) for each operator.

(2) At a later stage movements without contact were observed. At first, as de Gasparin describes, these took the form of the continued rotation of a table which had begun to rotate with the operators' hands placed upon it. Recognising, however, that the mere continuation of a movement originally started by mechanical means was open to other explanations than that suggested by him, he tried for, and succeeded, as he believed, in obtaining movements initiated without contact. The hands of all present were linked together above the table, in order to form a closed circuit for the conduction of the "psychic fluid"; and in order still further to guard against possible contact with the table, the upper surface was occasionally dusted over with flour by means of a vine sprinkler. M. Thury gives the following account of some experiments of this kind which he himself observed.

"La table sur laquelle se faisaient les essais dont j'ai été témoin, a 82 centimètres de diamètre, et pèse 14 kilogrammes. Une force tangentielle moyenne de 2 kil., pouvant s'élever à 3 kil., suivant les inégalités du plancher, appliquée au bord du plateau, est nécessaire pour donner au meuble un mouvement de rotation. Le nombre des personnes qui agissent sur cette table est en général de dix.

"Pour nous assurer de l'absence de tout contact, nous plaçions notre œil à la hauteur du plateau, de manière à voir le jour entre les doigts et la surface de la table : les doigts se maintenaient à un demi-pouce environ au-dessus du plateau. En général, deux personnes observaient à la fois. Par exemple, M. Edmond Boissier observait les pieds de la table, tandis que je surveillais le plateau ; puis nous changions de rôle. Quelquefois deux personnes se plaçaient aux extrémites d'un même diamètre, l'une vis-à-vis de l'autre, pour surveiller le plateau. Et, à bien des reprises, nous avons vu la table se mettre en mouvement, sans qu'il nous fût possible de surprendre le moindre attouchement des doigts. D'après mes calculs (voyez la note deuxième à la fin de ce mémoire), il faudrait au moins le frôlement de 100 doigts ou la pression légère de 30, ou deux mains agissant volontairement et avec fraude, pour expliquer mécaniquement les mouvements que nous avons observés ; or pour nous une telle supposition n'est décidément pas admissible." [1]

MM. de Gasparin and Thury claim, it will be seen, on the strength of elaborate calculations as to the amount of force which could be exerted by the pressure of one or two fingers, or even a hand, *on the surface* of the table, that the phenomena observed could not have been due to fraud. De Gasparin further points out that the table could not have been moved by pressure of the chest of any person present without almost certain detection,

[1] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 15, 16.

and Thury, as has been shown, watched the foot of the table as well as its surface. But it seems clear that these precautions were insufficient against fraud. If neither the feet nor the hands of the sitters could be employed, the knees could apparently have been used without much risk, and Thury clearly could not watch both the upper and under surfaces simultaneously. On the whole, though the experiments were conducted with care, and with a laudable desire not to exaggerate the importance of the facts observed, the experimenters do not appear to have sufficiently realised the possibilities of fraud; and their results add little to the evidence for action of a psychic, or, as Thury has preferred to name it, "ectenic" force.

Experiments of Dr. Hare.

In 1855 Dr. Robert Hare, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, communicated to the American Association for the Advancement of Science an account of some experiments conducted by himself with various mediums.[1] In some of these an apparatus was used on the same model as that employed later by Mr. Crookes (see below, p. 55). A board four feet long was supported on a rod as a fulcrum about a foot from one end, the other end being attached by a hook to a spring balance. A glass vessel filled with water was placed on the board

[1] See *Experimental Investigations*, etc., by Robert Hare, M.D. New York, 1855.

near the fulcrum, between it and the hook of the balance; a wire gauze cup, attached to an independent support, and not touching the vase at any point, was then inserted into the water and the medium placed his hand inside the cup. In this position the only possible force which he could exert by normal means, assuming that he did not touch any part of the apparatus, was that due to the slight displacement of water by his submerged fingers—a few ounces at most. Nevertheless the balance showed an appreciable downward pull, amounting on one occasion to as much as 18 lbs. Dr. Hare mentions that on one occasion Mr. Kennedy, and on another Professor Henry were present at the experiment; but he does not say whether any other person was in the room, nor does he state whether any precaution was taken to exclude fraud. But whatever weight we should feel ourselves justified, in the absence of fuller details, in attaching to these experiments if they stood alone, is considerably discounted by his account of some other experiments conducted at about the same time with another apparatus of his own invention. A dial, with the letters of the alphabet round its circumference, was attached to a table in such a way that any lateral movement of the table would cause the dial to rotate, and bring the different letters under the pointer. Through this device words and coherent messages were spelt out, the medium sitting at the table behind the dial in such a position that she could not see

its face. Dr. Hare took elaborate precautions to prevent the medium from effecting the movements of the dial by pressure of her hand upon the table. But from the description and the illustration given in his book, it would have been apparently quite easy for her to move the table with her knees or other parts of the body, and such movements would probably have escaped detection, unless special and continuous observation were directed to defeat the fraud. But Dr. Hare does not seem to have realised the possibility of fraud of this kind; and the character of the book generally, consisting as it does largely of dissertations on theology and cosmology, founded on spirit revelations, is not such as to inspire confidence in his judgment. It seems clear, therefore, that these experiments add little to the evidence for a new force.

Experiments of the Dialectical Society.

In 1871, as already mentioned, the Committee of the London Dialectical Society published their report on Spiritualism. It was claimed that two of the Sub-committees appointed for experimental investigation had obtained direct evidence of the occurrence of super-normal manifestations. Sub-committee No. 1 reported that they had frequently observed movements of tables without contact:—

"On one occasion when eleven members of your Sub-committee had been sitting around one of the dining-tables above described [a heavy mahogany dining-table in the private house

of a member of the Committee] for forty minutes, and various motions and sounds had occurred, they, by way of test, turned the backs of their chairs to the table, at about nine inches from it. They all then knelt upon their chairs, placing their arms upon the backs thereof. In this position their feet were, of course, turned away from the table, and by no possibility could be placed under it or touch the floor. The hands of each person were extended over the table at about four inches from the surface. Contact, therefore, with any part of the table could not take place without detection. In less than a minute the table, untouched, moved *four* times, at first about *five* inches to one side, then about *twelve* inches to the opposite side, and then, in like manner, four inches and six inches respectively.

The hands of all present were next placed on the backs of their chairs, and about a foot from the table, which again moved as before, *five* times, over spaces varying from four to six inches. Then all the chairs were removed twelve inches [*sic*] from the table and each person knelt on his chair as before, this time, however, folding his hands behind his back, his body being thus about eighteen inches from the table, and having the back of the chair between himself and the table. The table again moved four times in various directions. In the course of this conclusive experiment and in less than half an hour, the table thus moved, without contact, or possibility of contact, with any person present, thirteen times, the movements being in different directions, and some of them according to the request of various members of your Sub-committee.

"The table was then carefully examined, turned upside down, and taken to pieces, but nothing was discovered to account for the phenomena. The experiment was conducted throughout in the full light of gas, above the table." [1]

[1] *Report*, pp. 10, 11. The account in the text is taken from the Report of the Sub-committee. The account of the same séance as given in the official minutes of the Sub-committee (presumably a contemporary document) presents various differences, of which the more important are: (1) That only eight persons are entered as being present. (2) That the gas was turned up higher, "so as to give abundance of light," after the first eight movements,

In the detailed reports of the séances other similar phenomena occurring under the same conditions are recorded. The names of the Sub-committee are not given, but it is stated that no professional medium was employed; "the mediumship being that of members of your Sub-committee, persons of good social position and unimpeachable integrity, having no pecuniary object to secure and nothing to gain by deception."[1]

The second Sub-committee, which sat also without professional mediums, reported, amongst other phenomena, the frequent occurrence of raps of an inexplicable nature, and showing an intelligent origin.

Evidence of the Master of Lindsay.

Many persons of position gave to the Committee, orally or in writing, descriptions of marvels observed by them. Amongst the most remarkable evidence was that tendered by the Master of Lindsay, now the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F. R. S. He testified to having seen Home float about the room. He had also "frequently" seen Home's body elongated, on one occasion by as much as eleven inches, and on another by seventeen inches. The extent of the elongation was measured by placing Home against the wall

from which it may be inferred that there was not "full light" throughout the experiments. (3) That the second series is stated to have consisted of *four* movements, not five as in the text. (4) That the actual number of separate movements in the last series is not stated.

[1] *Ib.*, p. 8.

and marking on it the height to which his elongated body extended. The manifestation seems to have taken place in a good light, and it is recorded that on the first occasion Lord Adare (now Lord Dunraven) placed his foot on Home's instep, one hand on Home's shoulder, and the other on his side. Lord Lindsay's account of another manifestation can best be given in his own words:

"I have frequently seen Home when in a trance go to the fire and take out large red-hot coals, and carry them about in his hands, put them inside his shirt, etc. Eight times I myself have held a red-hot coal in my hands without injury, when it scorched my face on raising my hand. Once, I wished to see if they really would burn, and I said so, and touched a coal with the middle finger of my right hand, and I got a blister as large as a sixpence; I instantly asked him to give me the coal and I held the part that burnt me, in the middle of my hand, for three or four minutes, without the least inconvenience.

"A few weeks ago I was at a séance with eight others. Of these, seven held a red-hot coal without pain, and the two others could not bear the approach of it." [1]

Two years later (1871), he thus describes in detail an instance of levitation to which he had referred in his evidence before the Committee:

"I was sitting with Mr. Home and Lord Adare and a cousin of his. During the sitting, Mr. Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about seven feet six inches, and there was not the slightest foothold between them, nor was there more than a twelve-inch projection

[1] Pp. 208–9.

to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on. We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in the air outside our window. The moon was shining full into the room ; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window sill, and Home's feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room feet foremost and sat down."

"Lord Adare then went into the next room to look at the window from which he had been carried. It was raised about eighteen inches, and he expressed his wonder how Mr. Home had been taken through so narrow an aperture. Home said, still entranced, 'I will show you,' and then with his back to the window he leaned back and was shot out of the aperture, head first, with the body rigid, and then returned quite quietly. The window is about seventy feet from the ground."[1]

It should be added that Lord Adare and the cousin referred to, Captain C. Wynne, have given independent corroboration of Lord Lindsay's account of this incident.[2]

Experiments of Mr. Crookes.

But the experiments of Mr. Crookes with the same medium, Daniel Dunglas Home, constitute unquestionably the most important body of evidence for the operation of a new physical force. Mr. Crookes's training as a chemist and physicist had rendered him specially qualified for the investigation. And his researches with Home appear throughout to have been conducted with due pre-

[1] P. 214.

[2] See *Life of D. D. Home*, London, Trübner & Co., 1886, p. 307, and *Journal, S.P.R.*, August, 1889, p. 108.

cautions, and in circumstances specially favourable to the prevention or detection of fraud. The séances took place in Mr. Crookes's own house, or in that of some friend; the sitters were all known to him personally, and for the most part regular attendants; the room was on most occasions well lighted, so that the movements of the medium could be under continuous observation; and Home himself appears, unlike other mediums, to have offered every facility for the investigation. Full notes of what occurred, with a careful statement of the conditions and the names of the sitters, were taken at the time.[1]

The experiments took place for the most part in the years 1870–73, and Mr. Crookes, in publishing some of his notes in 1889, claims that "certain of Home's phenomena fall quite outside the category of marvels producible by sleight of hand or prepared apparatus" and "prove to my mind the operation of that 'new force' in whose existence I still firmly believe."[2]

If we pass over such manifestations as could without serious difficulty be explained by trickery, such as movements of various small objects, movements of articles of furniture in a dim light, the occurrence of raps and other sounds; and such

[1] Notes of some of these séances are published in the *Proceedings, S.P.R.*, vol. vi., pp. 98-127. The account in the text is taken partly from this source, partly from Mr. Crookes's articles in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* and elsewhere, republished in 1874 (J. Burns, London), under the title *Researches in Spiritualism*.

[2] *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, vi., p. 99.

other occurrences as can be attributed to sensory hallucination or self-deception—mysterious lights, spirit hands, or phantom forms seen by one or two of the sitters,—we find the remainder of the phenomena group themselves under four heads. One or two instances of each group will be quoted.

(1) *Alteration in the Weight of Bodies.*—The most convincing series of experiments under this head was conducted by means of a machine constructed by Mr. Crookes on the lines of that previously employed by Dr. Hare in the United States. The vase of water in these experiments was placed immediately over the fulcrum, a position in which it was practically impossible for the medium by any normal exercise of force to affect the balance, and a perforated copper vessel firmly supported on an independent iron stand was inserted in the water. Under such conditions there would be observed a sensible downward pull on the balance when Home's hand was inserted in the water. Sometimes indeed an effect was produced without contact at all. Thus, on one occasion, the automatic register showed a pull, when the light was dim, of nine pounds, and again, when the light was turned up, of two pounds. Both Home's hands were held throughout this experiment, and in the second case he was at some distance from the balance, and was not even in contact with the table, on which one end of the board rested.

2. *Movements of Objects without Contact.*—One of the commonest manifestations under this head was

the playing of an accordion, held by Home in one hand, the other hand being on the table, and the feet remaining under observation and motionless. On one occasion the accordion continued playing in the hands of one of the sitters after Home had ceased to touch it. On other occasions the instrument played when Home's hands and feet were held; and remained suspended in the air without visible support.[1]

At one sitting, held on the 21st June, 1871, there was lying on the table a lath about 2 feet long and 1½ inches wide, covered with white paper. "It was plainly visible to all." The position of the sitters had just been changed, and a message had been given, "Hands off the table and all joined." Then the narrative continues:

"Presently the end of the lath, pointing toward Mr. Walter Crookes, rose up in the air to the height of about 10 inches. The other end then rose up to a height of about 5 inches, and the lath then floated about for more than a minute in this position, suspended in the air, with no visible means of support. It moved sideways and waved gently up and down, just like a piece of wood on the top of small waves of the sea. The lower end then gently sank till it touched the table and the other end then followed.

"Whilst we were speaking about this wonderful exhibition of force, the lath began to move again, and rising up as it did at first, it waved about in a somewhat similar manner. The startling novelty of this movement having now worn off, we were all enabled to follow its motions with more accuracy. Mr. Home was sitting away from the table at least three feet from the lath all this time; he was apparently quite motionless,

[1] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 113, 118, etc.

and his hands were tightly grasped, his right by Mrs. Wr. Crookes and his left by Mrs. Wm. Crookes. Any movement by his feet was impossible, as, owing to the large cage [1] being under the table, his legs were not able to be put beneath, but were visible to those on each side of him. All the others had hold of hands." [2]

3. *Levitation of Mr. Home.*—At a sitting held on the 30th July, 1871, when the gas had been turned out, and the room was illuminated by three spirit lamps, Mr. Home was levitated. He had been standing up and the accordion had been playing a tune when held at arm's length in one hand. He then let go of the accordion, which moved off and continued to play in the air.

"Mr. Home then walked to the open space in the room between Mrs. I.'s chair and the sideboard, and stood there quite upright and quiet. He then said, 'I 'm rising, I 'm rising'; when we all saw him rise from the ground slowly to a height of about six inches, remain there for about 10 seconds, and then slowly descend. From my position I could not see his feet, but I distinctly saw his head, projected against the opposite wall, rise up, and Mr. Wr. Crookes, who was sitting near where Mr. Home was, said that his feet were in the air. There was no stool or other thing near which could have aided him. Moreover the movement was a smooth, continuous glide upwards.

"Whilst this was going on we heard the accordion fall heavily to the ground. It had been suspended in the air behind the chair where Mr. Home had been sitting. When it fell, Mr. Home was about 10 feet from it." [3]

A phenomenon of the same kind occurred at a séance held on April 21, 1872. A message had just been given, "Try less light."

[1] An upright cylinder of about two feet in diameter used in these tests to isolate the accordion. [2] Pp. 111–112. [3] P. 119.

"Mr. Home then nearly disappeared under the table in a curious attitude, then he was (still in his chair) wheeled out from under the table still in the same attitude, his feet out in front, off the ground. He was then sitting almost horizontally, his shoulders resting on his chair.

"He asked Mrs. Wr. Crookes to remove the chair from under him, as it was not supporting him. He was then seen to be sitting in the air supported by nothing visible.

"Then Mr. Home rested the extreme top of his head on a chair, and his feet on the sofa. He said he felt supported in the middle very comfortably. The chair then moved away of its own accord and Mr. Home rested flat over the floor behind Mrs. Wr. Crookes." [1]

4. *Handling of Hot Coals and Other Objects.*— Mr. Crookes on several occasions saw Home handling hot coals, apparently without inconvenience. Two such instances are described as follows. In the first case, two out of four lighted candles had been put out shortly before the "fire test" was given.

"Mr. Home again went to the fire, and, after stirring the hot coal about with his hand, took out a red-hot piece nearly as big as an orange, and, putting it on his right hand, covered it over with his left hand so as to almost completely enclose it, and then blew into the small furnace thus extemporised until the lump of charcoal was nearly white-hot, and then drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal and licking round his fingers; he fell on his knees, looked up in a reverent manner, held up the coal in front, and said: 'Is not God good? Are not His laws wonderful?'" [2]

The second account is taken from a contemporaneous letter written by Mr. Crookes to Mrs. Honeywood. The nature of the light is not stated.

[1] P. 126.

[2] Pp. 103, 104.

"At Mr. Home's request, whilst he was entranced, I went with him to the fireplace in the back drawing-room. He said, 'We want you to notice particularly what Dan is doing.' Accordingly I stood close to the fire, and stooped down to it when he put his hands in.

. . . . . .

"Mr. Home then waved the handkerchief about in the air two or three times, held it above his head and then folded it up and laid it on his hand like a cushion; putting his other hand into the fire, he took out a large lump of cinder red-hot at the lower part, and placed the red part on the handkerchief. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been in a blaze. In about half a minute, he took it off the handkerchief with his hand, saying, 'As the power is not strong, if we leave the coal longer it will burn.' He then put it on his hand and brought it to the table in the front room, where all but myself had remained seated."

5. *Materialisation.*—Similar phenomena to those above described Mr. Crookes had also observed with other mediums; but the facilities for observation appear to have been greater with Home than with others. But there is one manifestation which Mr. Crookes seems not to have witnessed in Home's presence,—the appearance of materialised spirit forms. In some articles which were written in the early part of 1874 and republished in "*Researches in Spiritualism*, he describes some séances, held mostly at his house in London, with Miss Cook as medium, in which a spirit form named "Katie" appeared. The materialised spirit walked about amongst the sitters, and allowed herself to be handled, and even photographed.

Mr. Crookes thus describes the first occasion on which he saw "Katie" and Miss Cook at the same

time, and thus obtained "absolute proof" that "Katie" was what she claimed to be, a spirit form. The séance was held on the 29th March, 1874, in a house at Hackney, not Mr. Crookes's own. At Katie's request the gas was turned out and Mr. Crookes, carrying a phosphorus lamp, went into the dark room which was used for a cabinet,

"and felt about for Miss Cook. I found her crouching on the floor. Kneeling down, I let air enter the lamp, and by its light I saw the young lady dressed in black velvet, as she had been in the early part of the evening, and to all appearance perfectly senseless. She did not move when I took her hand and held the light quite close to her face, but continued quietly breathing. Raising the lamp, I looked around and saw Katie standing close behind Miss Cook. She was robed in flowing white drapery, as we had seen her previously during the séance. Holding one of Miss Cook's hands in mine, and still kneeling, I passed the lamp up and down so as to illuminate Katie's whole figure, and satisfied myself thoroughly that I was really looking at the veritable Katie whom I had clasped in my arms a few minutes before, and not at the phantasm of a disordered brain. She did not speak, but moved her head and smiled in recognition. Three separate times did I carefully examine Miss Cook crouching before me, to be sure that the hand I held was that of a living woman, and three separate times did I turn the lamp to Katie and examine her with steadfast scrutiny, until I had no doubt whatever of her objective reality." [1]

Mr. Crookes gives many details of Katie's personal appearance, and of the differences in complexion, height, and dress observed in Miss Cook. In a later article he describes the photographing of Katie. The séances took place at Mr. Crookes's

[1] *Researches in Spiritualism*, pp. 106, 107.

house, and Miss Cook herself was frequently staying in the house at the time, sometimes remaining for a week together. The library was used as a dark cabinet, and a curtain was suspended over the doorway communicating between it and the laboratory, where Mr. Crookes and his friends were seated. When all was ready Katie would come from behind the curtain into the laboratory, which was illuminated by electric light. Five cameras were focused simultaneously on the spirit form. In all, forty-four negatives were taken.

But the time at length came for Katie to take her departure. The closing séance is thus described. Having given some final directions, which were taken down in shorthand, for the future guidance of the circle and the protection of Miss Cook,

"Katie invited me in to the cabinet with her, and allowed me to remain there to the end. After closing the curtain she conversed with me for some time, and then walked across the room to where Miss Cook was lying senseless on the floor. Stooping over her, Katie touched her and said: 'Wake up, Florrie, wake up! I must leave you now.' Miss Cook then woke and tearfully entreated Katie to stay a little time longer. 'My dear, I can't; my work is done. God bless you,' Katie replied, and then continued speaking to Miss Cook. For several minutes the two were conversing with each other, till at last Miss Cook's tears prevented her speaking. Following Katie's instructions I then came forward to support Miss Cook, who was falling on to the floor sobbing hysterically. I looked round, but the white-robed Katie had gone. As soon as Miss Cook was sufficiently calmed a light was procured and I led her out of the cabinet." [1]

[1] *Researches*, p. 111.

In February, 1875, Mr. Crookes, assisted by Dr. Huggins and others, held a séance with another medium, Mrs. Fay. The medium was seated in Mr. Crookes's library, and her hands grasped two wires attached to a battery, her body being thus made to complete an electric circuit. A galvanometer, which flashed light on to a graduated scale, was placed in the adjoining room, in a position where the scale was clearly visible to the circle of experimenters. Under these conditions, whilst the light remained steady on the scale, showing that the resistance was practically uniform, a bell was rung and a musical box was wound up in the library; a hand was shown at the curtain which hung over the doorway; and a book and a library ladder were pushed through the opening. Finally there was a slight noise, the circuit was broken, and the medium was discovered in a fainting condition.[1]

Experiences of Mr. Stainton Moses.

But one of the most persistent and continuous, and in some respects most remarkable, series of spiritual manifestations was furnished through the mediumship of Mr. Stainton Moses. Mr. Moses, born in 1839, was educated at Bedford and Exeter College, Oxford, and began life as a clergyman in the Church of England. He was also a frequent contributor to the Press. In 1871 he became a

[1] *Medium and Daybreak*, March 12, 1875.

Master at University College School, and retained that position until about three years before his death in 1892. His attention was first seriously directed to the subject of Spiritualism in the spring of 1872. He at once began to hold séances with two or three intimate friends, of whom the most constant attendants were Dr. and Mrs. Stanhope Speer. The séances were generally held in the dark; and Mr. Moses himself was entranced for a great part of them, during the progress of the most striking phenomena. Nevertheless, partly from his recollection of what occurred when he was in his normal state, partly from what was told him by the other members of the small circle, he compiled detailed accounts of the various manifestations, which formed the basis during his lifetime of various articles and books, and from which, since his death, a selection has been published by Mr. Myers, under the heading, *Experiences of W. Stainton Moses.*[1] Dr. and Mrs. Speer also took brief contemporaneous notes of the séances; and for the purposes of the present work I shall by preference quote from their notes, as given in the articles referred to in our *Proceedings*, rather than from the more detailed accounts written by Mr. Moses himself.

Manifestations of the most surprising kind were obtained almost at once and continued in full force until the end of 1874, after which period sittings for physical phenomena appear to have been

[1] In *Proceedings, S. P. R.* (ix., pp. 245–353, and xi., pp. 24–113).

held less frequently, until 1880, from which time no more manifestations of this kind occurred.

Musical Sounds.—Raps and musical sounds, as they were the earliest, were also amongst the most frequent and characteristic phenomena observed through Stainton Moses' mediumship. Mrs. Speer records the occurrence of raps and tilts of the table as early as June, 1872. Later the raps became louder, answered questions, and communicated information. Sometimes, especially at the earlier séances, the noises appear to have been of quite startling intensity. Dr. Speer writes of extraordinary metallic blows, tremendous raps imitating and exceeding those which he could make with a percussion hammer; and sounds as of a heavy tread walking about, which shook objects in the room. Later the musical sounds developed in frequency and variety. Mrs. Speer describes them in September, 1874, assigning each sound to a separate spirit, as resembling the notes of a harp, tambourine, double bass, high notes played on a small harp, instruments of three or four strings played by two ancient Egyptian spirits, a seven-stringed instrument played by a third Egyptian spirit, Roophal, once a priest in the temple of Osiris; the sound of a drum, of a china plate struck with a hammer, and a sweet tinkling sound like a clear bell, named by the sitters "fairy bells." A blast as from a trumpet was heard on one occasion, also playing on a piano.

Lights.—The following is the description given by Dr. Speer of lights observed at a séance held on 31st December, 1872:

"A column of light about seven feet high was seen to move round the room, and about two feet to right of the column was a large glowing mass of light. The column of light I placed my hand upon, as seen on the wall. High barometer, 30; dark. During the time Imperator was entrancing the medium, and conversing with us through him, we saw a large bright cross of light behind the medium's head, rays surrounding it; after this it culminated into a beautiful line of light of great brilliancy, reaching several feet high, and moving from side to side. Behind this column of light on the floor was a bright cluster of lights in oblong shape. These remained for more than half an hour, and upon asking Imperator the meaning of the lights, he said the pillar of light was himself; the bright light behind him, his attendant, and the numerous lights seen in the room belonged to the band. The light around the medium's head showed his great spiritual power."[1]

At a séance held on June 21, 1873, Dr. Speer records that between thirty and forty spirit lights appeared, many of them as large as large oranges. Apparently they did not appear simultaneously, as it is mentioned that "they succeeded each other with great rapidity" (*ib.*, p. 313). At another time fifteen great lights are reported, "varying from the size of an orange to that of a shaddock" (*ib.*, p. 231). Dr. Speer's notes of a séance on June 23, 1872, are as follows:

"We had this day fitted up a cabinet by opening the door of the bath-room, and hanging in front of it a heavy curtain with a square aperture. Mr. M. sat in this cabinet upon a reclining chair. Large lights soon appeared, and did so about fifty times. They emerged from the aperture, and came into the room, casting reflections upon objects. Some were so large and bright as to show the whole of the lintels and door-posts. They came very close to the table upon which our hands were placed." (*Ib.*, p. 313.)

[1] *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, p. 297.

The lights are minutely described, on some occasions as being of various forms approximating to the circular, sometimes with an indistinct outline and a bright nucleus; the colour a pale greenish-blue. On one occasion one of these lights knocked several times on the table, producing a noise such as would be made by a hard substance. Sometimes hands, and even an arm, were seen holding the lights. Some of the larger lights were covered with drapery, which Dr. Speer was allowed to feel, and which he describes as distinct and tangible material, resembling India muslin.

Scents were a frequent and characteristic form of manifestation at Mr. Moses' séances. In his notes of June, 1873, Dr. Speer frequently mentions the introduction of scents, chiefly rose and verbena; sometimes a shower of liquid scent, sometimes a column of cold scented air. In July of the same year, heliotrope and jasmine scents were showered down. On August 1st, the scent of sandalwood "was freely scattered, and on my asking for more, we heard a sound like a prolonged wh-sh, and then a quantity was actually squirted in my face." In November, 1874, it is recorded that wet scent, of verbena and sandalwood, oozed several times during the day from the crown of Mr. Moses' head.[1] Dr. Speer mentions that some of this spirit perfume which was showered down at their séances was preserved and bottled. But he does not seem to have had the curiosity to analyse it.

[1] *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, xi., p. 59.

Direct Spirit-Writing was frequently obtained. Dr. Speer thus describes one occasion :

"March 25th (1873). The best and minutest spirit-writing (direct) yet obtained, and signed by four spirits, viz. : Imperator, Rector, Doctor, and Prudens. N. B.—The paper was carefully examined by us all immediately before extinguishing the lights, and I myself kicked the pencil away from the paper. The writing was *undermost*."

On another occasion (January 5, 1874) Charles Louis Napoleon Buonaparte announced his presence by raps. The face of the dead Emperor was seen and described by the medium, but by no other members of the circle. The spirit was requested to write on a marked sheet of paper, and at the close of the séance his initials C. L. N. B. were found written in a firm, bold hand.[1]

Introduction of Objects.—It frequently happened that articles made their appearance in the séance room—the doors of which were of course closed—which had apparently been brought from other parts of the house. Amongst the objects so introduced at various times, as recorded by Dr. Speer, were a blue enamel cross, a pair of Sévres salad tongs, a candlestick, a chamois horn, a silver salver, flowers, a biscuit, gravel, large stones, etc. On May 9, 1873, when the séance was held at Dr. Speer's house, a bookmarker was brought downstairs from Dr. and Mrs. Speer's bedroom ; and on the 14th two other objects were brought downstairs from a box in the bedroom. On October 14th, in

[1] *Ib.*, xi., p. 32.

the same year, at a sitting at Dr. Speer's house, a silver fruit-knife was brought from a workbox in the dining-room, a marble statuette from the spare bedroom, and a snuffbox from the chimney-piece of Dr. Speer's dressing-room. At the close of a sitting on September 14, 1873, Mrs. Speer records that a small heap of seed pearls was found in front of each of the sitters.

Mr. Moses mentions that, in addition to pearls, a ruby, sapphire, emerald, moonstone, and other gems were brought; also two small cameos, which were cut by the spirit "Mentor" during the séance, and found at its conclusion amid the debris of the shell.

Formation of a Cross in Daylight.—This phenomenon is thus described by Dr. Speer.

"On Sunday morning, August 18, 1872, my wife and family, and the Rev. W. Moses, who had only arrived on Friday night, went to St. George's Church, Douglas, Isle of Man. On returning, the latter went into his bedroom, and immediately came out and called me to witness the manner in which, during his absence, certain articles of toilet, etc., to wit, a writing-case, a fly-book, and a pocket note-book, had been systematically placed on the centre of the bed. We at once noticed the crucial appearance exhibited, and hazarded a guess as to the intention thereof. We left the room and shortly after returned, when we found that a skull-cap, lying on the chest of drawers, had been placed on the bedpost, while the clerical white collar which Mr. M. had removed not many minutes before had been placed like a halo around the upper portion of the developing cross. (It should here be noticed that our expressed surmises as to the design apparently in progress were confirmed by various loud distinct raps on the footboard.) We again left the room for a time, and found that now the

lower limb of the cross had been lengthened by the addition of two ivory-backed clothes-brushes. We descended to dinner, having locked the door and taken the key with us. After dinner, and while sitting round the table at dessert, the conversation naturally (on the children leaving) reverted to these extraordinary proceedings, when immediately manifestations commenced all around Mr. Moses—raps on the table, thuds on the floor, raps, loud and repeated, on the back of his chair. A tune played on the table with my fingers was accurately imitated, the table with all on it was moved out of its place, and everything shaken. This was put a stop to by request, but the milder phenomena persisted, and, it may be said once for all, continued till 9 P.M. Mr. M. suggested that I should go up to his room again. I did so, and found on *unlocking* the door that two paper-knives had been placed like rays to the right and left of the cross-bar of the cross. I again locked the door, put the key in my pocket, and came downstairs. In about half-an-hour we returned, and found that two additional articles had been appended. We again left and locked the door, and on return after another half-hour the cross had been fully developed into halo and rays, while the skull-cap had been placed above all as in a crown."[1]

Dr. Speer adds that, before the articles were restored to their proper position, paper and pencil were placed on the bed, and a written message received from the spirit performers.

Levitation of Mr. Moses.—The only full account of this phenomenon is that given by Mr. Moses himself. He thus describes an incident of the kind.

"One day (August 30, 1872) the little organ was violently thrown down in a distant corner of the room, and I felt my chair drawn back from the table and turned into the corner near which I sat. It was so placed that my face was turned away from the circle to the angle made by the two walls. In

[1] *Ib.*, ix., p. 265.

this position the chair was raised from the floor to a distance of, I should judge, twelve or fourteen inches. My feet touched the top of the skirting-board, which would be about twelve inches in height. The chair remained suspended for a few moments, and I then felt myself going from it, higher and higher, with a very slow and easy movement. I had no sense of discomfort, nor of apprehension. I was perfectly conscious of what was being done, and described the process to those who were sitting at the table. The movement was very steady, and occupied what seemed a long time before it was completed. I was close to the wall, so close that I was able to put a pencil firmly against my chest, and to mark the spot opposite to me on the wall-paper. That mark, when measured afterwards, was found to be rather more than six feet from the floor, and, from its position, it was clear that my head must have been in the very corner of the room, close to the ceiling. I do not think that I was in any way entranced. I was perfectly clear in my mind, quite alive to what was being done, and fully conscious of the curious phenomenon. I felt no pressure on any part of my body, only a sensation as of being in a lift, whilst objects seemed to be passing away from below me. I remember a slight difficulty in breathing, and a sensation of fulness in the chest, with a general feeling of being lighter than the atmosphere. I was lowered down quite gently, and placed in the chair, which had settled in its old position. The measurements and observations were taken immediately, and the marks which I had made with my pencil were noted. My voice was said at the time to sound as if from the corner of the room, close to the ceiling." [1]

The only record of a levitation given by Dr. Speer is contained in a brief note of a séance held on December 3, 1872.

"Séance downstairs at large round table. Manifestations slow, some complaining of same; the table suddenly tilted up with considerable force, and oscillated at a great angle.

[1] *Human Nature*, 1874, pp. 172, 173. *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, ix., p. 261.

This occurred several times. Mr. M. was moved about, and floated twice, and a large dining-room chair was placed on the table. I, sitting in a large, heavy arm-chair, was for the first time distinctly moved."

Mrs. Speer adds that the séance was held by firelight.

It should be added that several of the phenomena above described as occurring in the presence of Mr. Stainton Moses were observed, and have been attested, by other witnesses, amongst whom are Mr. F.W. Percival, Mr. Charlton T. Speer, and Miss Constance R. Speer.

Experiments of Professor Zöllner.

In 1877–8, as already mentioned, Professor Zöllner, of Leipsic, assisted occasionally by his colleagues, Professors Scheibner and Fechner, and Professor Wilhelm P. Weber, held a series of sittings with the medium Slade. It would be impossible within due limits to describe all the phenomena which Zöllner claims to have observed in Slade's presence. These included direct spirit-writing on closed slates; the production of abnormal lights and shadows; the impression of a naked foot, smaller than Slade's, on a smoked paper; showers of a fluid supposed to be water, which wetted the observers; the sudden apparition of smoke and fire; movements of objects of various kinds; and the introduction of objects from outside the room. It is to be regretted that they did not include the

conversion of dextro-rotatory tartaric acid into lævo-rotatory racemic acid. Zöllner, who attached some theoretical importance to this particular experiment, had prepared a tube full of concentrated tartaric acid, in connection with a polariscope, and introduced it to Slade's notice at one of the earliest sittings of the series. But the conversation, as remarked by Zöllner, took another turn, and the racemic acid was never produced.[1]

But some of the most remarkable experiences, those, in fact, on which Zöllner's theory of four-dimensional space mainly rested, must be recorded in full.

(1) During Slade's first visit to Leipsic in December, 1877, Zöllner had placed some coins—a five-mark piece and two smaller coins—in two small cardboard boxes, which had been securely fastened by gluing strip upon strip of paper round the sides. During Slade's second visit, at a séance held in May, 1878, these boxes were placed upon the table, Zöllner having first satisfied himself by shaking them that the coins were still inside. Zöllner had not himself recorded the dates and other particulars of the enclosed coins. In the course of the séance a five-mark piece and two smaller coins (a ten pfennige and a two pfennige) successively made their appearance on the slate held under the table. One of the two cardboard boxes on the table when opened was found to be empty, the other contained only two small pieces of slate-pencil, resembling

[1] *Transcendental Physics*, pp. 50, 51 (English edition).

those which had shortly before been placed on the slate.

(2) At another sitting, held on May 9, 1878, Zöllner was alone with Slade, in his usual sitting room. Two wooden rings about four inches in diameter, which had figured at previous séances, together with a band cut out of bladder, were strung on to a piece of catgut, and were sealed with Zöllner's own seal. It was hoped that the wooden rings, which were cut out of the solid wood, the one of ash, the other of alder, would be found interlaced—a most satisfactory proof of super-normal force. The rings hung on the catgut below the table, Zöllner keeping his hands on the sealed ends of the catgut which lay on the surface of the table. A rattling sound was heard at a small round table which stood in the room. The séance was then closed, and the table was examined. It was a small round table with a single leg supported on three feet, and a fixed top. Encircling the leg were found the two rings. It was inferred by Zöllner that they reached this position by abnormal means, since to have placed them there by ordinary methods it would have been necessary to remove either the feet or the top of the table.

(3) A phenomenon obtained on the 17th December, 1877, was the production of knots in an endless cord. Zöllner had on the previous evening taken a couple of pieces of new hempen cord. He had sealed the free ends of each piece on to a piece of cardboard. As shown in an illustration in Zöll-

ner's book, one of these cords was found at the end of the séance to have four knots in it, such as could only have been formed normally by passing the free end of the cord through a loop. The following is Zöllner's description of the experiment:

"I myself selected one of the four sealed cords, and in order never to lose sight of it, before we sat down at the table I hung it around my neck—the seal in front always within my sight. During the séance, as previously stated, I constantly kept the seal—remaining unaltered—before me on the table. Mr. Slade's hands remained *all the time* in sight; with the left he often touched his forehead, complaining of painful sensations. The portion of the string hanging down rested on my lap,—out of my sight it is true,—but Mr. Slade's hands *always* remained visible to me. I particularly noticed that Mr. Slade's hands were not withdrawn or changed in position. He himself appeared to be perfectly passive, so that we cannot advance the assertion of his having tied those knots by his *conscious* will, but only that they, under these detailed circumstances, were formed *in his presence* without *visible contact*, and in a room illuminated by bright daylight."[1]

(4) Another phenomenon is thus described. The small round table previously referred to stood near the table at which Zöllner was sitting alone with Slade, and on the side farthest from Zöllner, in such a position that only its top could be seen. Presently the table oscillated:

"The motions very soon became greater, and the whole table approaching the card-table laid itself under the latter, with its three feet turned towards me. Neither I nor, as it seemed, Mr. Slade, knew how the phenomenon would develop, since during the space of a minute which now elapsed, nothing

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 17–18.

whatever occurred. Slade was about to take slate and pencil to ask his 'spirits' whether we had anything still to expect, when I wished to take a nearer view of the position of the round table, lying, as I supposed, under the card-table. To my and Slade's great astonishment we found the space beneath the card-table completely empty, nor were we able to find in all the rest of the room that table which only a minute before was present to our senses. In the expectation of its reappearance we sat again at the card-table, Slade close to me, at the same angle of the table opposite that near which the round table had stood before. We might have sat about five or six minutes in intense expectation of what should come, when suddenly Slade again asserted that he saw lights in the air; although I, as usual, could perceive nothing whatever of the kind, I yet followed involuntarily with my gaze the directions to which Slade turned his head, during all which time our hands remained constantly on the table resting on each other [übereinander liegend]. Under the table my left leg was almost continually touching Slade's right in its whole extent, which was quite without design and owing to our proximity at the same corner of the table. Looking up in the air eagerly and astonished in different directions, Slade asked me if I did not perceive the great lights. I answered decidedly in the negative; but as I turned my head, following Slade's gaze up to the ceiling of the room behind my back, I suddenly observed, at the height of about five feet, the hitherto invisible table, with its legs turned upwards, very quickly floating down in the air upon the top of the card-table. This took place at half-past eleven on the morning of the 6th May, 1878." [1]

In any attempt to estimate the value of the evidence for super-normal agency derived from the observations of Zöllner and his colleagues, it must not be forgotten that Slade had already been detected in fraud on at least one occasion; and that the mani-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 90–91.

festation which formed his chief stock-in-trade in this country—slate-writing—has been again and again produced, under similar and even more exacting conditions, by pure legerdemain (see Chapter IV.). Moreover, the performances described by Zöllner are such as would not seriously task the powers of an expert conjurer. (1) The little cardboard boxes, from which the coins were extracted, had been prepared and sealed some months before the experiment actually took place ; and we cannot say that Slade had not had ample opportunity for preparing other boxes like them and effecting a substitution. The same criticism applies to (3), the production of knots in an endless cord. In his detailed account of the experiment, indeed, Zöllner does not mention that the experiment had been tried on previous occasions and had failed. But that this was the case appears, as Mrs. Sidgwick has shown, from an incidental reference in another part of his voluminous book (*Abhandlungen*, vol. ii., p. 1191) as to the difficulty he experienced in making the spirits understand what kind of knots he required, and to the production in the first instance of knots of another kind.[1] It seems probable that the explanation of the feat with the wooden rings was also of this kind, *i. e.*, that two counterfeit rings were threaded on the leg of the table before the sitting commenced, and that Slade, in the course of the séance, found an opportunity to remove the original pair of rings, threaded on

[1] See Mrs. Sidgwick's article in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv., p. 65, footnote.

the catgut, and to substitute another catgut. It will be noticed that at this sitting, as also at the sitting described in (4), Zöllner was alone with Slade. In his account of the séance, the only reference which Zöllner makes to the small table on which the rings were found after the séance is as follows: "The small round table, already referred to, was placed shortly after our entry into the room in the position shown in the picture." From which it may be inferred that Zöllner did not himself before the séance touch or examine the table. In experiment (4) the artifice by which Slade distracted Zöllner's attention from the reappearing table is too obvious to call for comment.

In face of Zöllner's own description and unconscious admissions, it hardly seems necessary to discuss the question whether or not he was, at the time of the experiments, suffering from incipient mental derangement. That he was labouring under strong emotional excitement; that he was possessed with the idea of obtaining experimental verification for his hypothesis of four-dimensional space; that he was quite ignorant of any of the devices of conjurers; and that he accepted Slade's phenomena in the spirit in which they were offered —all this is evident from his own narrative. As regards the corroborative testimony of Professors Fechner, Scheibner, and Weber, Professor G. S. Fullerton, who visited Germany, on behalf of the Seybert Commission, in 1886, had interviews with all three gentlemen on the subject; and learnt from

their own lips that the first two, at any rate, though disposed to think that what they saw could not be attributed to jugglery, were not convinced of any supernormal agency in the matter; and that they both suffered from defective eyesight, and relied more upon Zöllner's powers of observation than their own. Professor Weber, indeed, maintained his belief in the phenomena as genuine; but in weighing his testimony it should be borne in mind that he was seventy-four years old at the time, and entirely ignorant, by his own admission, of the possibilities of jugglery.[1]

Such then was the position at this time. On the one hand, as shown in the last chapter, was an important social or even religious movement of an international character, which claimed a considerable number of more or less credulous adherents, and was based on certain alleged occurrences, which in many cases were unquestionably due to deliberate and systematic imposture. On the other hand, there was a small body of men whose opinions and testimony in any matter could not be lightly disregarded, who believed in and testified of their own experience to things which seemed, and perhaps still seem, inexplicable by any known cause. It was not easy to dismiss the whole subject as unworthy of investigation. The explanation of the facts recorded by Mr. Crookes and others does not lie on the surface. It may be that these facts will

[1] *Preliminary Report of the Seybert Commission on Spiritualism*, pp. 104–114.

ultimately find their explanation in causes neither remote nor unfamiliar. But certainly no one at that time, and perhaps no one now, is in a position to affirm, with such certainty as we bring to the other affairs of life, what the explanation may be. And whatever may be thought of the phenomena, it remains a palpable fact that there were tens, perhaps even hundreds, of thousands[1] in this and other civilised countries, who had adopted a particular interpretation of these phenomena; that their conduct was influenced, their lives shaped, their aspirations determined, by that interpretation. The extraordinary growth of the movement, the number of its adherents, and their fidelity through evil and good report, made Spiritualism an important historical fact. If the beliefs and ideas of this large body of men and women were indeed based on fraud and delusion, it became a matter of some social importance to expose the deception. And it is clear that nothing short of a systematic and organised effort was likely to accomplish what was required. We have seen in what temper occasional revelations of fraud were received, not merely by the untrained Spiritualist, but by those who, in virtue of their education and position, might claim to be the leaders of the movement. So long as it was possible to appeal to unexplained marvels in the past, so long was it easy to most minds to regard each successive exposure of trickery as an isolated

[1] Mr. Crookes wrote, in 1871, that Spiritualism "numbers its adherents by millions."—*Researches in Spiritualism*, p. 33.

incident. It was manifest indeed that the mediums had not suffered irretrievably, either in purse or reputation, from repeated exposures. Their business had, no doubt, met with a slight check in the interval between 1876 and 1882, but this was partly due to the rival attractions of Theosophy and the thaumaturgic feats of Madame Blavatsky, which had drawn off some of their wealthier and more cultured patrons. The Spiritualist newspapers still recorded, though not, perhaps, with the same prodigal abundance as of old, accounts of marvellous manifestations witnessed at séances. In short, at this period Spiritualism and Theosophy between them could probably reckon at least as many and as influential adherents as at any time since the commencement of the movement in 1848.

CHAPTER IV.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE S. P. R.

IN the interval between 1878, the year of Zöllner's experiments with Slade, and 1882, when the Society for Psychical Research was founded, no physical manifestations occurred worthy to be recorded. D. D. Home had retired into private life some years before. Mr. Moses' physical phenomena had ceased in 1880 or thereabouts. Slade was, indeed, willing, it was understood, to give sittings, but was prevented from coming to England by reason of the legal proceedings which Professor Lankester had instituted against him in 1876, and which were still pending. Mrs. Fay, Miss Florence Cook (Mrs. Corner), and other noted mediums of an earlier generation had withdrawn or were shortly to withdraw themselves from a career which had proved more hazardous than lucrative. Perhaps they heard Dr. Hodgson and the new generation knocking at the door. There were still, indeed, phenomena of a kind. Eglinton continued to give slate-writing performances for some years; and both he and other physical mediums exhibited materialisations—sometimes in surprising variety—at dark séances. Indeed, dark

séances for materialisations, though now much more difficult of access to those who have given no pledges of fidelity, have continued down to the present time. And from time to time exposures occur of the same old methods of fraud, followed by the same intrepid apologetics from the stalwart Spiritualist. Thus, to take two of the most recent cases, in October, 1894, Mrs. Mellon (*née* Fairlamb) was seized in Sydney, N. S. W., when personating the spirit form of a little black girl, "Cissie." Mrs. Mellon was discovered on her knees, with her feet bare, white muslin drapery round her shoulders, and a black mask on her face. In the cabinet were found a false beard and other properties. At about the same time Mrs. Williams was exposed in Paris, by the Duke de Medina Pomar and others. The medium in this latter case was found masquerading, in more or less appropriate dress, as the spirit of a man.

In 1882, however, though the physical phenomena of Spiritualism were certainly less startling and less abundant than they had been some years previously, there seemed still no reason to doubt that there would be ample material for investigation. Indeed Professor H. Sidgwick, in the course of his first Presidential address to the nascent Society, delivered at Willis's Rooms in July, 1882, after explaining that the Society would by preference turn its attention to physical phenomena occurring in private circles, thought himself justified in assuming the existence of a mass of evidence

of this kind. Mr. Sidgwick went on to express the hope that the occurrence of such phenomena would be more rapidly and extensively communicated to the representatives of the Society for impartial investigation. That hope was not destined to be realised. In the fifteen years which have elapsed, whilst few opportunities have been afforded to the Society's representatives for continuous investigation of any sort, no positive results have been obtained worthy of record. All Spiritualist manifestations appear indeed to have become less frequent, not only in private circles but with professional mediums. The Spiritualist newspapers no longer teem with records of marvellous séances. There has been little to encourage the Society to investigate the performances of professional mediums. Two series of séances have, indeed, been held with Mr. Eglinton, and a few with Mrs. Jencken, but the results were inconclusive where they were not actually suggestive of fraud.

The latest experiences of the S. P. R. in this direction can hardly be said to constitute an exception. In 1893, the attention of the Society was called to the phenomena observed in the presence of an Italian peasant-woman, Eusapia Palladino. The phenomena had been attested by many persons of scientific distinction, including Professor Brofferio, M. Schiaparelli, Director of the Astronomical Observatory in Milan, Professor Lombroso, and Professor C. Richet. The two former, with other members of a Committee of Investigation which

sat at Milan in 1892, had signed a report expressing their conviction that some of the things witnessed could not be attributed to normal agency. Professor Richet, though attaching great weight to the phenomena which he had observed, expressed his opinion that complete proof of abnormal agency was wanting. In particular, M. Richet held that the manner in which Eusapia's hands were held during the dark séances was suspicious. He writes:

"During the experiments, Eusapia generally has the right and the left hand held differently: on one side her whole hand is firmly held; on the other side, instead of having her hand held by the person next her, she merely places her hand on his, but touches his hand with all five fingers, so that he can feel quite distinctly whether it is the right or the left hand with which he is in contact.

"This is what follows: at the moment when the manifestations are about to begin, the hand which is not being held, but which is lightly placed on the hand of the person on that side (for the sake of simplicity we will suppose that it is Eusapia's right hand, though it is in fact sometimes the right, sometimes the left),—the right hand, then, becomes very unsteady, and begins to move about so rapidly that it is impossible to follow its movements: it shifts about every moment, and for the mere fraction of a second it is not felt at all; then it is felt again, and one could swear that it is the right hand."[1]

In the summer of 1894 Professor Richet invited Professor Lodge, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Dr. Ochoro-

[1] *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, Jan.-Feb., 1893. See also a criticism of the articles in the *Annales*, by the present writer, in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. ix., pp. 218–225.

wicz, and one or two others, to join him in investigating the powers claimed by Eusapia Palladino. The phenomena observed, when Eusapia's hands and feet were believed to be secured, and other precautions had been taken to prevent physical intervention on her part, consisted mainly of the movements of articles of furniture at a certain distance from the circle; the lifting of a heavy table from the ground; the movement of smaller objects from one part of the room to another; the sounding of notes on musical instruments; and grasps and touches felt by the experimenters on various parts of their persons. The séances for the most part took place in a very subdued light, so that the proof of Eusapia's non-intervention rested mainly, though not entirely, on the secure holding of her hands. Nevertheless, the phenomena were so impressive that Professor Lodge and others expressed the conviction that some of the things observed could not be accounted for by any known agency.

When, however, accounts of these experiments and of the conclusions arrived at were printed in the *Journal* of the Society, Dr. Hodgson immediately challenged the accuracy of the observations, mainly on the ground that it did not appear that Eusapia's hands had been held in such a way as to make fraud impossible. Finally, in the summer of 1895, another series of sittings was held with Eusapia in this country. Very early in the series suspicious movements on the medium's part were

observed. Later, Dr. Hodgson himself joined the circle; and it was conclusively shown that Eusapia was availing herself of the peculiar method of "holding," previously described by Professor Richet, to get one hand free, and then execute the movements observed. Briefly, her method is to begin by allowing one hand to be firmly held by the sitter on one side (say the left), and to let the fingers of the other, the right hand, rest on the hand of the sitter on the other side. Then, in the course of the rapid spasmodic movements referred to by Professor Richet, she approximates the hands of the sitters on either side of her, until they are so near together that one of Eusapia's hands (the left) will do duty for two—being grasped by one of the sitters' hands and resting its fingers on the hand of the other sitter. The desired "phenomenon" is then brought about, and the right hand restored to its former position. Other devices of a similar kind were observed or inferred; and probably there are yet others which have escaped detection.

Dr. Hodgson's conclusion is that the whole of the phenomena produced in Eusapia's presence from first to last have been due to fraud. On the other side, it is urged that at some of the sittings held in the summer of 1894 the suspicious circumstances observed in this country were not present; that Eusapia's hands and feet were held in such a manner as to prevent trickery of the kind detected subsequently; and that even with a hand or a foot

free some of the feats recorded in 1894 were beyond her physical powers. Moreover, immediately after she left England, a group of French experimenters, who had been fully informed of the fraudulent performances detected in this country, obtained through Eusapia's mediumship phenomena which they regarded as beyond suspicion.[1]

But if, just when an organised and systematic investigation on a scale not inadequate to the importance of the subject was for the first time about to be made, the phenomena which were to be investigated unhappily ceased to occur, the Society has been able to accumulate evidence of another kind bearing upon the question of the supposed psychic force.

Mrs. Sidgwick's Experiences.

In May, 1886, Mrs. Henry Sidgwick communicated to the Society the results of her personal investigations into the physical phenomena of Spiritualism.[2] In the period since 1874, when her experiments began, Mrs. Sidgwick here records, in addition to isolated séances on various occasions, several series of sittings more or less prolonged with eight different mediums. In one case the

[1] For an account of these later experiments see the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* for Jan. and Feb., '96. From the account there given it would not appear that the experimenters had profited by the experiences of previous investigations. The séances were still held in a very subdued light; Eusapia's feet were "controlled" by being placed *on* the feet of the investigators, and her left hand remained in contact with, but not held by, the sitter on that side.

[2] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv., pp. 45 *et seqq.*

phenomena were indubitably attributable to fraud alone; the performer being so unskilful that his movements, in spite of the partial darkness, could be followed without difficulty. In the other cases, the mediums were never indeed detected in the act of cheating—a result mainly due to the fact that Mrs. Sidgwick held herself bound by an implied understanding with the medium not to seize the spirit form or otherwise violate the conditions imposed. But the phenomena observed were at best inconclusive, and most commonly indicated fraud of a sufficiently obvious kind. For when, in the course of the earlier séances, the conditions were such as to admit of phenomena being produced fraudulently, phenomena occurred. When, with riper experience, additional precautions were taken to make fraud impossible, the phenomena either ceased altogether, or occurred only during a temporary relaxation of the precautions.

Thus, at the séances with Mrs. Jencken the rappings ceased when her feet were placed in Mrs. Sidgwick's lap; or when she was clasped round the knees. Mrs. Eva Fay was able to move various objects when her hands were tied behind her back in a method prescribed by herself. When a simpler and more secure fastening had been adopted, the other conditions remaining unaltered, nothing occurred. At some séances with Williams,

"only one manifestation of any importance took place, and that was the transference of a chimney ornament from the mantelpiece to the table, which happened at the very moment

when Mr. Sidgwick jumped up to meet a late arriving member of the circle, and in doing so let go of the medium's hand, so that the solitary phenomenon coincided with a solitary opportunity for performing it by natural means."[1]

But the most important series of experiments was held with Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb (Mrs. Mellon), at first with both mediums together and later with each separately. In the course of this prolonged series many singular manifestations occurred; but in every such case some flaw in the precautions taken was discovered which rendered it physically possible for the results to have been produced by normal means. Thus on one occasion when Miss Fairlamb (this time alone) had been fastened in the "cabinet" by leather straps round waist and ankles, an undoubtedly material figure came to the doorway and allowed itself to be handled. But an inspection after the séance shewed that the waist fastening was insecure, and experiment proved that the figure had advanced into the room so far, and no farther, as a woman tied by the ankle alone could have reached. On another occasion, Miss Fairlamb was placed in a hammock suspended in the cabinet, and attached to a spring balance. Nothing noteworthy occurred until one night, when, after the séance had begun, Miss Wood went for a few minutes into the cabinet "to give power." Her mission proved so successful that on her return to the circle a human form emerged from the cabinet, and gave satisfact-

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 56.

ory proof of its materiality. The weight in the hammock meanwhile went down to 60 lbs. Here, indeed,—since the material form seen was too far from the hammock to have been able to affect its weight, and there was nothing in the cabinet which could have been placed in the hammock,—seemed clear proof of that manifestation referred to by Spiritualists as the "materialisation" of a spirit form by withdrawing substance from the body of the medium. Unfortunately Mrs. Sidgwick records

"that after the séance I asked leave to search Miss Fairlamb. This she sharply and decidedly declined. She was reminded that she had agreed to be searched, but she said that was before not after the séance. This refusal produced an unfavourable impression on us, and left the evidence at best inconclusive. It was not impossible, though rather remarkable, that the amount of weight required should have been brought in to the cabinet by Miss Wood when she went in "to give power," and the idea that extra weight had been carried by the girls was rather supported by the fact that they had that day come in a cab instead of walking, as I believe they usually did." [1]

In another series of séances Miss Wood was placed, head and all, in a long bag of white net, the end of the bag being brought *outside* the cabinet and there secured. The record runs: "We held five séances in this way with no result, and then the 'spirits,' through Miss Wood, told us to give up that test." In the later séances, when less stringent tests were employed, the phenomena reappeared.

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 52.

Mrs. Sidgwick's paper is valuable as containing the record of a long series of accurate observations, by an observer so impartial that after twelve years of ill success she was able, in 1886, to write: "I at present think it more probable than not that such things [the physical phenomena of Spiritualism] occasionally occur." [1]

Reichenbach's Phenomena.

Baron Karl von Reichenbach, in the last generation, described in great detail phenomena observed by him in certain subjects whom he called sensitives. These phenomena have been generally accepted by Spiritualists, many of whom have been able to confirm Reichenbach's observations from their own experience. The things attested are, chiefly, luminous emanations from magnets, crystals, the human body, and other substances; and anomalous sensations of temperature, bodily pain, and various nervous symptoms, produced by the contact or neighbourhood of magnets, certain metals, and crystalline bodies.

The subject seemed of sufficient importance to justify the Society in its early days in appointing a Committee for investigation. For this purpose a powerful electro-magnet, excited by the current from eight large (10- by 6-inch plates) Smee cells, led through a commutator, was set up in a dark room. Strict precautions were taken to secure absolute darkness in the room set apart for the ex-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv., p. 74.

periments. After careful and repeated trials on the various members of the Committee, and on forty-five other subjects of both sexes, and of ages between sixteen and sixty, only three persons professed to see luminous appearances from the electro-magnet. This in itself is a very meagre result compared with the wealth of observations which Reichenbach claims to have obtained. But even the testimony of these three witnesses is of little value as confirming Reichenbach's results. There is no reason indeed to doubt the good faith of the observers. But there was no proof that the luminous appearances which they saw were in any sense objective; nor is it easy to see how such proof could be obtained. It is true that they professed themselves ignorant whether the current was turned on or not. But indications of the switching on or off might have been received unconsciously, either from the "magnetic tick" of the iron core, or from the faint click of the commutator in the adjoining room; or, if we have to admit a new agency, by thought-transference from the minds of the experimenters. On the whole, the results of the Committee's researches indicate that the phenomena described by Reichenbach were purely subjective; that they were in fact faint hallucinations, due in most cases, it is probable, to direct verbal suggestion.

Spirit Photography.

Spirit photographs have frequently been adduced as convincing evidence of supernormal agency. In

1891, in reply to a challenge from Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Mrs. H. Sidgwick published the results of a critical examination into the evidence for their production.[1] In that paper Mrs. Sidgwick shows that of the four best-known professional spirit photographers, three—Mumler, Hudson, and Buguet—had been convicted of producing such photographs fraudulently; and that many of the circumstances attending the production of spirit photographs by the fourth — Parkes — were such as strongly to suggest fraud. The exposure of Buguet was very complete. Prosecuted by the French Government in 1875, he admitted that all his spirit photographs were fraudulent, and produced in court a box of dummy figures which represented the spirits. These figures, when suitably draped, were photographed on the plate by double exposure.[2] Mrs. Sidgwick further shows that much of the evidence forthcoming from private sources lay under some suspicion of fraud, and was in any case quite insufficient to justify the conclusions drawn from it by Spiritualists.

Since, therefore, fraud has been repeatedly detected in connection with so-called spirit photography; and since it would be reasonable to infer, from the complicated nature of photographic processes, and the opportunities offered at each stage for trickery, that fraud would in many more cases escape detection, the proof of the genuineness of a spirit photo-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vii., pp. 268–289.

[2] *Procès des Spirites*, par Mme. Leymarie. Paris, 1875.

graph must in the last resort be sought in internal evidence. It can be further shown, however, that the vaunted "recognition" of spirit photographs affords by no means a satisfactory proof of their genuineness. The witnesses see in fact what they wish or expect to see. Thus, one lady, *after a quarter of an hour's examination*, recognised in a photograph the likeness of her mother-in-law.[1] Frequently the photographs required, not only prolonged scrutiny and a little touching up, but a family consultation, before the desired image could be "recognised." Most of such spirit photographs as I have seen contain, indeed, little more than the cloudy suggestion of a face, the details to be filled in by each witness at his pleasure. Sometimes, no doubt, as in a photograph by Buguet which lies before me as I write, the "spirit" has been truly focused, and the features are clearly marked. But in this particular case, unfortunately, the recognition is too complete. On the one hand, it was claimed as the likeness of a M. Ed. Poiret, dead some twelve years previously; on the other, as the picture of M. Raymond's father-in-law, "still alive at D——, and much annoyed at being sold about as a spirit before his time." A photograph by Mumler,[2] in which Mrs. Lincoln was the sitter, shows a very faint, but recognisable likeness of the late President in the background. But clearly, if Mumler had found out who his sitter was, there would have been little difficulty in producing a photograph of Abraham

[1] *Human Nature*, 1875, p. 20. [2] *Human Nature*, 1874, p. 513.

Lincoln. In another well-known case, Mr. Stainton Moses, when in bed in London, was photographed by Buguet in Paris.[1] The spirit face on the plate is faint but fairly recognisable. But Buguet had photographed Stainton Moses in the previous July, and could have had no difficulty in reproducing his likeness on the plate. The evidential value of the case rests, therefore, almost entirely on the assumption of Buguet's ignorance of the particular form desired. It may be added that, as is the case with other phenomena, no satisfactory spirit photographs appear to have been produced since 1882, or, indeed, for some years previously. A small circle of investigators did, indeed, in 1894–95 hold a series of séances for the purpose of obtaining spirit photographs with Duguid, sometime the chosen instrument for the revelations of Hafed, Prince of Persia. But the results obtained were not such as to encourage further investigation in this direction.

Slate Writing.

The manifestation of direct spirit-writing on slates first came into prominence in this country in 1876, through the mediumship of "Dr." Slade. It is true that Slade was very early in his career detected in the act of cheating by Professor Lankester; but the Spiritualists had no difficulty in believing Slade's own account of the matter; and slate writing by spirits remained one of the stock marvels of mediumship. A séance with Slade in the summer of 1876

[1] *Human Nature*, 1875, p. 97, and *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vii., p. 287.

impressed me at the time with the conviction that the writing was produced by some abnormal agency. Even when fuller experience had taught me to distrust mediumistic marvels generally, the things witnessed with Slade for long remained inexplicable. In the same year, Mrs. Henry Sidgwick had a series of about ten sittings with Slade, and in her contemporary report she records her opinion "that the phenomena are due to trickery."[1] Later, this form of manifestation became a common one in the mediumship of W. Eglinton. Many striking accounts appeared in the Spiritualist journals of séances with this medium. Thus in *Light* of October 16, 1886, the testimony of about a hundred observers, amongst them many persons of intellectual distinction, is quoted as endorsing the genuineness of the phenomena. The things reported, both of Slade and Eglinton, included writing on slates watched by the sitters and sometimes supplied by them; answers to questions written down and not shown to the medium; answers to mental questions: the receipt of long communications relevant to the conversation of the moment; and, occasionally, the reproduction of words from the given page of a book chosen by the sitter. The sittings took place in broad daylight; and many of the witnesses reported that they were permitted to bring their own slates, to mark the slate used, to tie or even lock the double slates, to hold them above the table, and to take other necessary precautions against fraud.

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv, p. 56.

Amongst those who had sittings with Eglinton, in 1884, were two members of the S. P. R., Dr. R. Hodgson and the late Mr. S. J. Davey. The effect produced on the former was unfavourable; but Mr. Davey was very soon convinced of the genuine character of the phenomena, and in contemporary reports of séances,[1] he writes that, "to those persons who have given any time at all to the study of psychological subjects, the idea of trickery or jugglery in slate-writing communications is quite out of the question"; and again, speaking of the precautions used, "not to test Mr. Eglinton's honesty (for of that all who know him are assured)." In the course of the following year, a number of persons, members of the Society and others, had sittings with Eglinton, and sent reports to the Society. Most of the witnesses were completely baffled by what they saw and some expressed their conviction that the phenomena could not be due to trickery. Their reports were printed in the *Journal* for June, 1886, with a critical comment by Mrs. Sidgwick, who at the same time took occasion to point out that Eglinton had in at least two instances been detected in the fraudulent production of other Spiritualistic marvels.

In the *Journal* for August of the same year there appeared a paper by Mr. Angelo J. Lewis ("Professor Hoffmann"), a well-known amateur conjurer, criticising the reports in detail, and pointing out some of the numerous suspicious features

[1] *Light* July 12 and October 25, 1884, quoted in *Journal, S. P. R.*, 1886, pp. 436, 437.

in the séances and the opportunities for jugglery afforded. Later, Professor Carvill Lewis was able, by feigning to divert his attention at the critical moment, to watch Eglinton's movements in the act of writing the "Spirit messages": and Dr. Hodgson and Mr. F. G. Netherclift, the well-known expert, shewed by a detailed comparison that the "Spirit messages" were produced by the same hand as Eglinton's ordinary writing. Dr. Hodgson further undertook an exhaustive analysis of the reports in the *Journal*. He shewed that the reports of the same sittings by different observers revealed almost invariably important discrepancies. Incidents recorded by one witness would be reported by another as occurring at a different time, or omitted altogether. There was, further, evidence that many incidents had passed from the recollection of both sitters before the conclusion of the séance. Dr. Hodgson found the same liability to error in himself, but, recognising it, was able to guard against its consequences. He mentions incidentally that he spent fourteen hours in writing out his notes of a single slate-writing séance. Probably most of the accounts which he criticised were written in less than a tenth of the time. In his own words:

"The source of error which I desire in particular to press upon the reader's notice is the perishability, the exceeding transience, the fading feebleness, the evanescence beyond recall, of certain impressions which nevertheless did enter the domain of consciousness, and did in their due place form part of the stream of impetuous waking thought.

"It is, moreover, not simply and merely that many events, which did obtain at the sitting some share of perception, thus lapse completely from the realm of ordinary recollection. The consequence may indeed be that we meet with a blank or a chaos in traversing the particular field of remembrance from which the events have lapsed; but this will often be filled with some conjectured events which rapidly become attached to the adjacent parts, and form, in conjunction with them, a consolidated but fallacious fragment in memory. On the other hand, the consequence may be that the edges of the *lacunæ* close up—events originally separated by a considerable interval are now *remembered* vividly in immediate juxtaposition, and there is no trace of the piecing."[1]

Dr. Hodgson thus distinguishes four main kinds of error in records of this kind—viz.: omission, interpolation, transposition, and substitution. It is hardly necessary to point out that the incident omitted or misrepresented contained, as a rule, the key to the trick. It is due to Eglinton's reputation as a conjurer to state that he generally succeeded in inducing the witnesses to describe the "phenomenon," not as it really happened, but as he wished it to appear to have happened. Thus, to give only a few instances, it was proved that Eglinton habitually found an occasion to leave the room during his séances: but these absences are very rarely reported. He habitually dropt the slate or his handkerchief; and the observer habitually omitted to record so insignificant an accident. If he answered a question written on a slate carefully concealed from him, it was generally after a considerable interval, utilised for surreptitiously

[1] *S. P. R.*, vol. iv., p. 386–7.

reading the question; but the sitter frequently describes the question and answer as occurring in close juxtaposition. If he produced a Greek sentence "at the request of the sitter," it was a request led up to by Eglinton's own reference to former phenomena of the kind—a reference so casual that it seemed impertinent to take note of it. Or if the sitter chose a book from Eglinton's shelves, and his first choice, at Eglinton's suggestion, was abandoned, the trivial incident made little impression on a memory already surfeited with marvels.

But after all, Dr. Hodgson's criticisms rested necessarily, from the imperfection of the records, to a great extent upon inference. It was always open to the Spiritualists to say—and they did say—that however inaccurate and misleading were the records examined by Dr. Hodgson, they had themselves witnessed phenomena with Eglinton at which no such opportunities for fraud had occurred. There remained, therefore, one further step in the demonstration: and this fortunately was supplied. Mr. S. J. Davey—already referred to as an enthusiastic witness in 1884 to Eglinton's honesty and supernormal powers—saw reason in 1885 to suspect trickery. Following up the clue obtained, he succeeded with practice in imitating by mere sleight of hand, with the aid of some simple apparatus, most of the phenomena which he had witnessed with Eglinton. He then resolved to co-operate with the Society in unmasking the imposture. The plan adopted was as follows. Mr.

Davey assumed, for convenience, a professional name—David Clifford ; and various persons, introduced to him as to one who possessed remarkable powers of a mysterious kind, were allowed to witness his feats, on condition that they would subsequently write out a full account of what they believed themselves to have observed. Mr. Davey, of course, worked under less favourable conditions than Eglinton. Most persons who had sittings with the latter probably half believed in the mysterious powers which he claimed, and even a slight measure of belief was sufficient to intoxicate the senses and bewilder the judgment. It was difficult to maintain the same occult atmosphere about Mr. Davey and his surroundings ; and many of his sitters guessed or knew that he was merely a conjurer. Nevertheless the effect produced was such that a well-known professional conjurer expressed his complete inability to explain the results by trickery ; that no one of his sitters ever detected his *modus operandi ;* that most were completely baffled, or took refuge in the supposition of a new form of electricity, or "a powerful magnetic force used in double manner ; 1st, a force of attraction, and 2d, that of repulsion" ; and that more than one Spiritualist ascribed the phenomena to occult agency, and regarded—perhaps still regard—Mr. Davey as a renegade medium.[1]

In the early summer of 1886, Mr. Davey called

[1] See letter from Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, *Journal, S. P. R.*, March, 1891.

on me one evening and volunteered to give a séance to my brother, Mr. A. Podmore. The following is his account of what happened—written unfortunately a few weeks after the occurrence. It is important to remember that Mr. A. Podmore was personally acquainted with Mr. Davey, and knew that he was going to witness a conjuring performance.

Statement of Mr. Austin Podmore.

"July, 1886.

"A few weeks ago Mr. D. gave me a séance, and to the best of my recollection the following was the result. Mr. D. gave me an ordinary school slate, which I held at one end, he at the other, with our left hands: he then produced a double slate, hinged and locked. Without removing my left hand I unlocked the slate, and at Mr. D.'s direction, placed three small pieces of chalk—red, green, and grey—inside: I then relocked the slate, placed the key in my pocket, and the slate on the table in such a position that I could easily watch both the slate in my left hand, and the other on the table. After some few minutes, during which, to the best of my belief, I was attentively regarding *both* slates, Mr. D. whisked the first away, and showed me on the reverse a message written to myself. Almost immediately afterwards he asked me to unlock the second slate, and on doing so I found, to my intense astonishment, another message written on both the insides of the slate—the lines in alternate colours, and the chalks apparently much worn by usage.

"My brother tells me that there was an interval of some two or three minutes during which my attention was called away, but I can only believe it on his word."[1]

Mr. Davey allowed me to be present during the séance, and to see how it was done. What happened was this. After the production of the writ-

[1] *S. P. R.*, iv., p. 416.

ing on the single slate, held by Mr. A. Podmore's left hand, his one business in life was to watch the locked slate on the table. It will be seen from his account that he believed himself faithfully to have performed his task. What he actually did was to fix his eyes on Mr. Davey's face, and listen absorbed to the conjurer's patter. Mr. Davey the while put a duster over the locked slate, removed it to the far end of the room, brought back another locked slate, previously prepared, and placed it under cover of the duster on the table in front of Mr. A. Podmore. Then, and not till then, the stream of talk ceased, and my brother's attention became again concentrated on the slate, from which the sound of the spirit-writing was now heard to proceed.

Another account runs as follows :

Statement of Miss Stidolph.

"I have much pleasure in recording my recollections of a séance with Mr. S. J. Davey. His powers are certainly marvellous, and while I have not the very smallest belief in 'Spiritualism' or 'mediums' of any kind, believing the things so called to be gross deceptions, I was amazed at my friend's scientific skill. Apparently he has no appliances. I was seated with him at a small table when he gave me the following astounding evidence of his powers. He gave into my hands a slate which, when locked, looks like an ordinary box. This box I opened, washed the slate, locked it, and took the key ; for some minutes we sat, he with one hand on mine, his other hand on the table. Presently a faint scratching was heard, and continued some little time ; when it ceased Mr. Davey unlocked the slate, and lo ! it was covered with clear, distinct writing—a letter addressed to myself, and stating if I would wait a little while the writer would go to the Cape and

bring me news of my brother. Then I again washed the slate ; again it was locked, and again I kept the key. Mr. Davey then asked me to take any volume I liked from the library, to look at a page and remember the number of it. This I did, and again we sat as before. In a few moments the slate was unlocked, when on it was written, not only the number of the page I had thought of, but some of the words which were on the self-same page, and these not ordinary words, but abstruse words, as the book I selected was a learned one. This I considered a most marvellous feat, and utterly incomprehensible. That the scientific researches of my friend will lead to most important results I have no doubt. His aim is to expose deception, and if this object be attained he will benefit society and throw light on a subject which has hitherto been considered to belong exclusively to the powers of darkness.

"E. STIDOLPH.

"I would mention that the shelves from which I took the book contained hundreds of volumes, and Mr. Davey had no idea which I had selected as he closed his eyes and went to the extreme end of the room. E. S.

"November 25, 1886."[1]

But time would fail to tell of all the marvels performed by Mr. Davey's agency and attested by educated and intelligent eye-witnesses. He produced a long message in Japanese for a Japanese marquis ; he made—or seemed to make—pieces of chalk under a glass describe geometrical figures at the unexpressed wish of the sitter ; he made a tumbler walk across the table in full light ; he wrote messages in double slates securely sealed and screwed together ; he materialised in strong light a woman's head, which floated in the air and then dematerialised ; and the half-length figure of a

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 418.

bearded man, in a turban, reading a book, who bowed to the circle "and finally disappeared through the ceiling with a scraping noise."

Disinterested Fraud.

In the case of phenomena produced through the agency of professional mediums the moral presumption against fraud, whatever weight may have originally attached to it, is clearly altogether invalidated on a historical retrospect. For any one conversant with the damning record of Spiritualist exposures to suggest, where fraud was physically possible, any other explanation for a phenomenon observed in the presence of such persons as Eglinton or Slade would manifestly be preposterous. But this moral presumption still had considerable weight in cases where the more obvious motives to fraud cannot be supposed to have operated. It was this consideration mainly which induced the committee on theosophical phenomena to take a favourable view of the evidence laid before them in England.[1] Colonel Olcott and some of the Hindoos concerned, who must have been implicated in the trick—if trick there were—were educated men, without any obvious advantage to gain from fraud. We now know that some of these persons had lent themselves to carrying on the systematic deception initiated by Madame Blavatsky. But it is not easy to frame an intelligible conception of their conduct on ordinary

[1] See below Chapter VI.

motives. Madame Blavatsky herself remains, notwithstanding recent revelations, very much of an enigma. She began life, it is true, as an adventuress; and must have obtained at least bread and cheese by her theosophical ventures. But talents such as hers would almost unquestionably have commanded a higher market value in some less precarious profession. It is impossible to doubt that for her, at any rate, there was an intellectual satisfaction to be derived from fooling the world, or that not inconsiderable part of the world which came under her influence. She was an artist in chicanery; a trickster not for gain only, but for glory. And researches in the squalid annals of spiritualism have brought to light other cases where fraud was practised without the attraction of pecuniary or any obvious social advantage. Thus the Seybert Commission mentions a case in which "an unprofessional medium, a young gentleman of reputed honour and veracity," was in the habit of giving séances of the ordinary type, regularly week after week, to members of his family and a few privileged friends. The medium would sit in semi-darkness behind a curtain with his hands bound. He would then be controlled by Indian spirits and utter guttural whoops and Indian cries. Various musical instruments would be played; and two drumsticks would make their appearance above the curtain brilliantly illuminated. At the séance recorded by the Commission, some printer's ink, which had been secretly placed on one of the drum-

sticks, was found at the end of the séance disseminated over the "medium's" hands.[1]

Professor Sidgwick has put on record another case of disinterested deception carried on systematically for a considerable period. Mr. Z., the "medium" in this case, was a professional man of good social position, and an author of various books and articles dealing with a department of learned research to which he devoted much of his leisure. In this gentleman's presence, whilst his hand touched the top only, a table would be lifted from the floor, suspended, or carried through the air. Mr. Z. succeeded in persuading a circle of friends that the phenomena were not due to mechanical agency: and allowed Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick to observe them on that understanding, whilst repeatedly evading the application of tests which would have made trickery out of the question. On one occasion, indeed, by an ingenious misrepresentation, he induced a lady to take his place and carry on the trick. It was not until she learnt that Mr. Z. had signed a declaration that the phenomena had "not been produced by normal means," that this lady felt herself bound to communicate what she knew. It then appeared that the movements had been produced by means of two laths covered with black cloth, which Mr. Z. concealed up his sleeves. Motive adequate for so deliberate a deception it is hard to discover. Most amateur conjurers, no doubt, would refuse to reveal

[1] *Report of the Seybert Commission*, pp. 122, 123.

an ingenious trick; many would be willing to go some length in baffling a pertinacious inquirer, even perhaps to the extent of leading him, tacitly, or by verbal misrepresentation, to believe that the trick was no trick, but the result of abnormal powers. But there are probably few educated men, with a character to lose, who would be willing to risk an express, above all a written, declaration to that effect.[1]

With children and with many imperfectly educated persons, no doubt, such deception is not uncommon. We have come across more than one example of systematic fraud of this kind. In a case investigated by one of our members some years since, two children carried on a series of séances for some weeks in the family circle. A prominent feature of their séances was the production of writing, through the hand of one of the children, imitating the chirography of various deceased relatives; imitating also their style, and discussing various family events. The information necessary for producing these writings was derived by the children from letters and other documents obtained, sometimes, from locked drawers and desks. Other ingenious and even startling manifestations occurred, for which the complete absence of suspicion on the part of parents and friends afforded abundant opportunity. The whole was ultimately shown to be due to trickery. In the next chapter we shall see reason to believe that the so-called

[1] *Journal, S. P. R.*, July, 1894.

Poltergeist cases—ringing of bells and mysterious movements of furniture—are due to trickery on the part of the persons concerned, generally girls or young children.

Moreover, the fuller knowledge gained in recent years of subconscious mental activities affords ground for thinking that deception of this kind may, in the beginning at any rate, be only semi-conscious. The line between what is conscious and what is not-so-conscious is at all times hard to draw; since no one but the patient, and not always the patient himself, is in a position to speak with authority. It is not unlikely that seemingly motiveless deception of the kind met with in these investigations may occasionally be the accompaniment of some morbid dissociation of consciousness, such as seems to occur in certain hysterical patients. The automatic subject frequently exhibits in his utterances and actions signs of a disingenuousness foreign to his normal self. In considering the question, therefore, whether the phenomena occurring in the presence of a certain person are due to trickery or to "psychic force," we should not be justified in pressing too far the argument drawn from the improbability of wilful deception. We are bound to assume abnormality somewhere, and of the two, it may be easier to suppose the medium abnormally dishonest, than to credit him with abnormal "psychic" powers.

Some General Propositions.

At this point, before an attempt is made to estimate critically the value of the testimony for supernormal physical phenomena set forth in the preceding chapter, it will be convenient to formulate some propositions suggested by a general survey of the evidence, and by the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research in particular.

(1) *The conditions under which the phenomena generally occur—conditions for the most part suggested, and continually enforced by the medium—are such as to facilitate fraud, and to render its detection difficult.*

Amongst these conditions may be mentioned the darkness or subdued light in which the séance is generally held ; the holding of hands by the circle —a condition calculated to act as an effective check on independent investigation ; the singing and other devices to distract the sitter's attention ; the twitchings and convulsive movements of the medium's person ; and the constantly repeated injunction not to concentrate attention on the phenomena desired. Many other suspicious circumstances will occur to those familiar with the subject.

(2) *Almost all the phenomena are known to have been produced under similar conditions by mechanical means.* Some of the manifestations witnessed in the presence of Home—levitation, elongation, and the handling of hot substances—must apparently be excepted from this generalisation.

(3) *Almost every professional medium has been detected in producing results by trickery.* This proposition applies to Miss Cook, Mrs. Fay, and other mediums with whom Mr. Crookes experimented. But Home, again, forms an apparent exception. I am not aware that clear proof of imposture was ever brought forward against him.

(4) *There are several cases on record in which private persons, with no obvious pecuniary or social advantage to secure, have been detected in trickery.*

(5) *The condition of emotional excitement in which investigators have for the most part approached the subject, and the antecedent bias produced by reports of the marvellous, are calculated seriously to interfere with calm and dispassionate observation.*

It is evident from a perusal of their works that the observations of Hare and Zöllner, to take two of the most prominent instances, are vitiated from this cause. But there can be little doubt that it has operated in many other cases where its effects are less obvious.[1]

(6) *It has been shown that very few persons are capable of exercising the continuous attention necessary to detect a conjuring trick.*

This is a faculty not demanded, and therefore not exercised, in the affairs of ordinary life, or even in the investigations of the laboratory. It follows that, as Mrs. Sidgwick and Dr. Hodgson have

[1] See Dr. Hodgson's remarks on this point, *S. P. R.*, vol. iv., pp. 389 and 397.

shown, most persons are not merely deficient in this power of continuous observation, but are quite unconscious of their own deficiency, and are prone to fill up the gaps in their knowledge by conjectural additions. Now it is on this proneness to unconscious omissions and interpolations that the conjurer relies for his effects.

(7) *The phenomena upon which Spiritualists rely are such as to require the exercise of continuous observation; and experiments designed to dispense with the necessity for such observation have invariably failed.*

Some proofs of this statement have been already given. Thus the test of interlacing two solid rings cut out of different woods; of tying a knot in a ring of bladder; and of converting tartaric into racemic acid, were all evaded by Slade. Knots were indeed tied in a sealed cord, and coins abstracted from a closed box, but only after opportunity for substitution had been afforded. Securely fastened slates, and hermetically sealed glass tubes with tablets and pencil enclosed, have been repeatedly left for experiment with Eglinton, but without results, except of an equivocal kind. Mr. Crookes does, indeed, refer to the movement of "a pendulum enclosed in a glass case firmly cemented to the wall,"[1] but he gives no details of the incident; and the experiments which he describes in detail, how-

[1] *Researches*, p. 90. Mr. Crookes has explained to me verbally that this experiment, undertaken at Home's suggestion, took place when Mr. Crookes was the sole observer, and that the movements of the pendulum were not automatically recorded.

ever well planned in other respects, were scarcely such as to dispense with the necessity for continuous observation.

(8) *Abnormal substances of various kinds are alleged to have been seen by numerous observers, but investigation has never revealed anything abnormal.* Pieces of drapery have frequently been clipped from spirit robes, but the fragment has always proved to be of a texture such as the looms of Manchester could produce, and has occasionally been found to match pieces of muslin found in the medium's portmanteau. We hear, indeed, of a curious substance which was observed to exude from the ends of a medium's fingers, in the presence of a small committee, containing two doctors. This substance, when analysed, was found to consist mainly of albuminous matter, with phosphates of lime and ammonia, and an amorphous pigment. But the observation appears never to have been repeated, and we have no means of testing the accuracy of the report, quoted from an American newspaper.[1] It is extraordinary to note how experimenters in this field have persistently neglected their chances. Dr. Speer, though he was careful to note the height of the barometer and other atmospheric conditions at Mr. Moses' séances, omits to mention whether he analysed the scent so liberally showered down, some of which he preserved in a wine-glass. Mr. Crookes states that he has experienced at a séance intense cold, comparable

[1] See *Spiritualist*, May, 1879, p. 246.

to that felt by the hand in approaching frozen mercury, but he gives no thermometric readings.[1] He describes a solid, self-luminous body, as large as a turkey's egg, which floated about the room and knocked on the table,[2] and materialised hands which seemed to resolve themselves into vapour in his grasp,[3] and he spent many evenings in the company of "Katie's" spirit form. But no opportunities, it would seem, were afforded for examining even a fragment of "Katie's" garments,[4] or for dissecting an imperfectly materialised hand, fading into a cloud at the wrist; or for subjecting to chemical and spectroscopic analysis that solid, self-luminous body.

(9) *The marvels recorded imply not one new force but many.* This is a point which has not, I think, been sufficiently considered by the advocates of a psychic force. But it is obvious, if the analogies with the known physical forces are preserved at all, that it could hardly be one and the same force which should carry Mr. Home through the air, cause his body to be elongated, enable him with impunity to carry hot coals in his hand, extemporise material luminous bodies and human hands, remove coins from a closed box, and tie knots in an endless cord. Not even space of n dimensions will plausibly account for all these manifestations. But

[1] *Researches*, p. 86.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 91.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 92.

[4] Mr. Crookes informs me that pieces were occasionally cut from "Katie's" dress and proved to be of quite commonplace material.

clearly, if we have to admit several new modes of energy, the antecedent improbabilities are enormously increased.

Examination of the evidence given in Chapter III.

If, now, we take the evidence set forth in the preceding chapter, and review it in the light of recent researches, we must, I think, admit that the value of such experiments as those of de Gasparin, Hare, and the Committee of the Dialectical Society is seriously weakened, if not altogether destroyed. There are too many unknown elements in each case for us to be satisfied that fraud—even aimless and disinterested fraud—was not a probable explanation. De Gasparin's circle included servants and children; we are told little or nothing about Dr. Hare's assistants; whilst the "social position" of the anonymous members of the Dialectical Society's Committee can hardly be accepted as a guarantee of their honesty. And if the desire and the opportunity to cheat were present, we can feel no reasonable assurance, in view of the investigations of Mrs. Sidgwick and Dr. Hodgson, and the surprising results obtained by Mr. Davey, that cheating would have been detected.

The same considerations apply with even greater force to the mediumship of Mr. Stainton Moses. The evidence for the phenomena observed by Dr. Speer and others rests almost solely on the presumption of Mr. Moses' honesty. If his abnormal gifts merely took the shape of an abnormal propen-

sity for mystifying and cheating his friends, it is clear that the physical obstacles in his path were by no means insuperable.

To deceive a heterogeneous assemblage of believers and sceptics who had employed the best precautions they knew against deception is, as we have seen, a task well within the competence of the ordinary professional medium. Mr. Moses, whilst enjoying in common with these professionals the darkness which is their first line of defence, played his part unhampered by "test conditions," in the presence of a few intimate friends, whose confidence in his integrity was absolute. Dr. Speer had no suspicions and appears to have taken no precautions. He records as an interesting fact in the spiritual economy that the lights required spirit hands, and occasionally part of a forearm to support them; he mentions that Mr. Moses floated about the room apparently on no other evidence than Mr. Moses' word, and the direction of his voice. The regular attendant at Spiritualist circles a generation ago was not prone to think evil of his fellow-men; but even such a one might perhaps have held it a suspicious circumstance if, stretching out his hand in the dark to the centre of the table, he had encountered another hand not that of a sitter. Dr. Speer writes down the circumstance without comment, as a "phenomenon."[1] Yet it is noteworthy that this chance encounter in the dark was apparently the only occasion recorded on which he or any sitter at these séances was per-

[1] *S. P. R.*, ix., p. 314.

mitted to touch (instead of being touched by) a materialised hand. Again, it seems clear that most of the phenomena could have been accomplished by normal agencies. There is, as said, no evidence for the levitation beyond Mr. Moses' own statement. The building up of the cross in Mr. Moses' bedroom, the introduction of various objects from other rooms into the séance room, the spirit writing, and the production of scents and jewels, are all feats clearly within the compass of a little fraudulent ingenuity, operating in a uniquely favourable environment. The musical sounds and spirit-lights so minutely described by Dr. and Mrs. Speer present more difficulty. We can hardly suppose a Jew's harp and a bottle of phosphorised oil adequate to such opulent and varied effects. If they were indeed produced fraudulently, we must admit either a more elaborate apparatus than, in the circumstances, seems at all probable, or a very free interpretation and embellishment by the witnesses' imagination of phenomena in themselves comparatively simple.

But the hypothesis of fraud in this case presents, it may be admitted, special difficulties. Against the supposition of conscious fraud we have to oppose Mr. Moses' education, his social position, and the apparent sanity of his whole external life passed in a certain publicity, as at once a Master in a large school, and the leader of an important social movement. But if we suppose a condition of double memory, like that of the somnambulist, arising spontaneously, we are met by difficulties of another

kind. It is not enough to suggest that Mr. Moses may have been in a state of morbid semi-consciousness at the séance, when the phenomena "came off," for many of them implied a certain amount of preparation; and the hypothesis becomes almost unmanageably cumbrous if we extend this morbid state beyond the actual séance, and suppose that Mr. Moses' right hand escaped his notice in conveying scent-bottles, Parian statuettes, brass candlesticks, and jewelry into his pockets in preparation for the evening's performance, And there remains to be explained the difficult fact that Mr. Moses believed, or affected to believe, in his own manifestations to such an extent that he propounded a whole religious system based upon his own automatic "writings," and dedicated his whole after life to the movement of which he himself in his double capacity of physical medium and inspired Teacher was the mainstay. If all these things were really the result of semi-conscious fraud, it must be frankly admitted that psychology offers us at present no parallel case. Of the three possible explanations (for sheer exaggeration and misrepresentation on the part of the witnesses may be put out of the question), viz: (1) that the things were the manifestations of a new force; (2) that Mr. Moses did them consciously and deliberately; (3) that he did them in some state in which he was not wholly responsible for his actions—none are easy. But for my own part, whilst wavering to some extent between the 2d and the 3d, I incline on the whole to accept the

latter as involving the least violation of probability.[1]

It would be impossible within reasonable limits of space to criticise Mr. Crookes's experiments with Home in detail. Nor do I feel myself competent for the task. It would be an impertinence on my part to suggest that in conducting these experiments, in which his reputation is pledged no less than in his researches with the radiometer and the spectroscope, and of whose genuineness he professes himself equally assured, Mr. Crookes divested himself of the critical faculty, the power of analysis, the habit of accurate observation—in a word, of the whole results of his life's training. Through Mr. Crookes's courtesy I have had the opportunity of discussing the matter with him personally; and I confess that I am not prepared with any cheap and ready-made solution of the problems. It may be pointed out, however, that in the sittings with Home the light in the room was lessened on several occasions shortly before some of the most striking manifestations, *e. g.*, the levitations, and the handling of red-hot coals; also that the movements of articles of furniture and other objects bear a generic resemblance to phenomena known to have been produced fraudulently by other mediums; and, generally, that the absolute conviction which Mr. Crookes and the circle appear to have entertained of Home's honesty, may have led at times to the

[1] Some account of the alleged spirit communications received through Mr. Moses' physical organism is printed as an appendix to this chapter.

relaxation of precautions, when such relaxation would certainly have vitiated the observations. But I cannot pretend to find in the solution thus indicated much intellectual satisfaction.

The results obtained with Miss Cook stand on a different footing. These séances were, as I understand, of an informal character; full notes were not taken, nor was it originally intended that the results should be published in any form. The inner room, which served as a cabinet, was left in absolute darkness; the laboratory, where the circle sat, was illuminated by a light so faint that reading or note-taking was practically impossible. I cannot feel that the conditions, and especially the mental attitude of the circle, were such as to render detection probable, if Miss Cook had chosen to masquerade as a spirit form; whilst her position as a guest in the house would have facilitated the introduction of an accomplice from the outside, or the subornation of a servant to play the part, on the rare occasions when there is evidence that medium and "spirit" were separate entities.

But it is difficult to suppose that the most imbecile laxness of observation, or the most fatuous disregard of elementary precautions, would account for the handling of red-hot coals and other substances described by so many witnesses; or for the elongation and levitation of Mr. Home, as witnessed in a lighted room at close quarters by the Master of Lindsay and Lord Adare. I find myself unable to conceive that simple trickery could, under the cir-

cumstances described, be adequate to the effects reported. Short of admitting the phenomena as genuine, I can suggest but one plausible explanation—that the witnesses were to some extent hallucinated. It is not necessary to suppose in such a case a pure hallucination, containing no elements derived from actual sensation, if, indeed, a "pure" hallucination in this sense ever occurs. It may be conjectured that Home probably supplied certain material data, and guided the imagination of the percipients to complete the picture which he suggested to them. That, for instance, he really took live coals out of the fire, and possibly on some occasions held them in his hand, protected by some non-conducting substance; that he really stretched himself to his full height, and thus produced that breach of continuity between waistcoat and trousers referred to by one of the witnesses to the phenomenon of elongation[1]; that when levitated as described in Chapter III., p. 52, he at least thrust his head and shoulders out of the window. There are not wanting illustrations of the kind of hallucinatory illusions here supposed, even in normal life. The records of the Society contain numerous cases of collective, so-called telepathic, hallucinations, where if the telepathic origin of the percept is not always clear, its hallucinatory nature is undoubted; and there are two well-known classes of hallucinations of this kind—the visions seen at the time of religious epidemics, and the hallucinations of the

[1] *Dialectical Report*, p. 209.

hypnotised subject. No one who has seen a group of boys studying a kitchen chair, in the belief that they are deciphering the inscription on a moss-grown tombstone, or flying in terror from a ghost extemporised out of a white pocket handkerchief, will doubt the existence of collective hallucinations.[1] And it must be remembered that the peculiar conditions upon which this liability to hallucination is assumed to depend are, to a certain extent, reproduced at the Spiritualist séance. We find there the strong emotional excitement and the strained expectation which are characteristic of the religious epidemic, as well as the concentration and freedom from external stimuli which are commonly regarded as predisposing causes to hypnotic suggestibility. There can be little doubt that the prolonged sitting in darkness or subdued light, and the anticipation of the marvellous, which it is part of the medium's art to inspire, do tend to excite the imagination of the sitters. And it is to be noted that these conditions are practically unique. That the same witnesses are not liable to hallucination in ordinary life raises but a faint presumption against the occurrence of hallucinations at a Spiritualistic séance. The British schoolboy does not at ordinary times mistake a lapdog for a baby. But many, perhaps most, schoolboys can, as we know, have this "suggested" to them under appropriate conditions. And in this connection it is to be noted that the

[1] See the discussion on the subject in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., pp. 183–188.

conditions under which suggestions of this kind will operate are by no means identical in different subjects. With many persons suggestion—*e. g.*, not to feel pain under an operation—will take effect without loss of consciousness.

And apart from these general considerations there is definite evidence that the Master of Lindsay, at any rate, was a likely subject for hallucinatory suggestion. He tells us[1] that at one period of his life, when suffering from overwork, he was subject to the hallucination of a black dog. Moreover, one night, when he slept on a sofa in Home's room, he describes seeing a flame of fire on his knee, a column of vapour, and a woman's figure, all apparently hallucinatory. On another occasion the Master of Lindsay and several others saw a crystal ball placed on Home's head emit flashes of coloured light; and afterwards they all saw in the same crystal a view of the sea lighted up by the setting sun, with stars gradually appearing in the sky. This vision lasted for about ten minutes.[2] It may further be remarked that at Mr. Crookes's séances with Home, one or two of the observers would see luminous appearances, hands, or a shadowy form, when the rest of the circle could see nothing.[3] We have also received accounts of faces and lights seen at private circles which strongly suggest hallucination; and it is a

[1] *Dialectical Report*, pp. 215, 216.

[2] Pp. 206, 207.

[3] See *S. P. R.*, vi., pp. 114, 116, 120, etc.

common experience at séances with professional mediums that lights and spirit forms are seen by some only of the sitters. It may be suggested that the lights (not always visible to all the sitters) and the musical sounds at Mr. Moses' séances may perhaps have been hallucinations, or at least hallucinatory distortions of genuine lights and sounds.

In support of the suggestion that some of the phenomena witnessed at Spiritualist séances may be attributed to hallucination, it may be mentioned here (as will be shown farther on, in Chapter X.), that the hallucinations observed in haunted houses may in many cases be traced with some plausibility to the condition of excitement and expectation induced by the prior occurrence of mysterious noises and other disturbances.

It may be concluded, then, that in face of exposures of fraud repeated *ad nauseam;* in face of the observed propensity in this field to disinterested fraud; in face of the demonstrated incompetence even of trained observers to cope with fraud, we should not be justified in assuming any other cause for the physical phenomena of Spiritualism than fraud, eked out possibly on rare occasions by fraudulently suggested hallucinations. Unless and until some feat is performed which fraud cannot explain, the presumption that fraud is the all-sufficient cause remains unshaken. In Mr. Crookes's words:

"The Spiritualist tells of flowers with the fresh dew on them, of fruit and living objects being carried through closed

windows and even solid brick walls. The scientific investigator naturally asks that an additional weight (if it be only the 10000th part of a grain) be deposited on one pan of his balance when the case is locked, and the chemist asks for that 10000th of a grain of arsenic to be carried through the sides of a glass tube in which pure water is hermetically sealed."

When this demand is complied with, or when any other result is produced which does not depend for proof of its genuineness on the exercise of continuous observation by fallible human senses, then it will be time to revise our provisional conclusion, and to search for some other explanation.

Note on the Alleged Spirit Messages Received by Mr. Stainton Moses.

In connection with the discussion (above, Chapter IV.) on the credibility of the physical phenomena alleged to have occurred through the mediumship of Mr. Stainton Moses, the following summary of the evidence for spirit communications received through his agency is offered for the reader's consideration. These communications were accepted, in Mr. Moses' lifetime, by the general consent of English Spiritualists, at any rate, as affording a solid basis for their belief. And since his death Mr. Myers, who has edited some of his posthumous papers and his MSS. notes of séances, has been able to bring forward fresh proofs of the authenticity of these communications from disembodied spirits. Some of the evidence for those communications was published in Mr. Moses' lifetime in a small volume, *Spirit Identity*, now for some time out of print.[1] Fuller information on the cases referred to in this book and on some others is contained in Mr. Myers's article on *The Experiences of W. Stainton Moses*, Part II.[2] From these two sources we have records of communications, purporting to be of an evidential character, from thirty-eight deceased persons. These com-

[1] London, W. H. Harrison, 1879.

[2] *S. P. R.*, xi., pp. 24–113.

munications are indeed recorded by Mr. Moses himself ; and, with a few exceptions, there is no express corroboration from any other person of the accuracy of the records. In two or three cases, however, we have a detailed account from some other member of the circle fully according with Mr. Moses' own ; and in at least one case (Abraham Florentine) the record of the séance was published before its correspondence with the facts was generally known. And as regards the remaining records it may fairly be urged that as the surviving members of the circle, who have had the opportunity of reading the published accounts, have not challenged their accuracy, they have thus received indirect but valuable corroboration. For our present purpose, at any rate, we may assume that these records, at least so far as they relate to incidents which occurred at séances when other members of the circle were present, may be taken as accurate.

To give some idea of the character of the evidence, I will begin by quoting two or three cases which Mr. Moses himself selected during his lifetime as amongst the best proofs of spirit identity.[1]

The Case of Charlotte Buckworth.

"A spirit communicated by means of raps, giving particulars as to her life which were precise, and entirely unknown to any member of the circle. On the day following I inquired respecting her (of the ordinary controlling spirit) . . .

. . . . . .

"'It was said that Charlotte Buckworth, the spirit in question, had been suddenly deprived of bodily existence in 1773, at a party of pleasure, at a friend's house in Jermyn-street. Further inquiry elicited the information that she had suffered from a weak heart, and had dropped down dead while dancing. My friend, who was writing, could not say whose house, but subsequently returned to give me the information,—Dr. Baker's, on December 5th. We were not able to verify this information, and had given no further thought to the matter.

[1] *Spirit Identity*, pp. 105–112. *S. P. R.*, xi., pp. 78 and 82.

Some considerable time after, however, Dr. Speer had a friend at his house, who was very fond of rummaging among old books. We three were talking one evening in a room in which there were a number of books rarely used, arranged in shelves from floor to ceiling.

" ' Mr. A. (as I will call him) mounted a chair to get at the topmost shelf, which was filled with volumes of the *Annual Register*. He took one down amid a cloud of dust, and commented on the publication as a valuable record of events. Almost anything, he said, could be found in it. As he said this, the idea flashed into my mind at once most vividly that there was the place to look for a record of Charlotte Buckworth's death. The event would probably create interest, and so would be found in the obituary which each volume contains. The impression was so strong—it seemed as though a voice spoke to my inner sense—that I hunted out the volume for 1773, and there I found, among the notable deaths, a record of this occurrence, which had made a sensation as occurring at an entertainment at a fashionable house, and with awful suddenness. The facts were exactly given. The book was thickly covered with dust, and had evidently not been disturbed since it had been consigned to the shelf. I remembered that the books had been arranged five years before ; there they had lain ever since, and but for Mr. A.'s antiquarian tastes no one would have meddled with them. The verification was, I believe, as distinctly spiritual in its suggestion as was the communication.' "

Of the case next to be quoted Mr. Moses writes that " It has been considered, on the authority of persons who think they are best able to judge, as the best evidence ever produced for spirit-identity."

The Case of Abraham Florentine.

The letter, of which the following is an extract, appeared in the *Spiritualist* newspaper of Dec. 11, 1874, over the signature *M. A. Oxon* (the well-known pseudonym employed by Mr. Moses).

"In the month of August last I was staying with Dr. Speer at Shanklin, Isle of Wight. We had a number of sittings, and at one of them a spirit communicated, who gave his name as Abraham Florentine. He said that he had been concerned in the war of 1812, and that he had lately entered spirit-life at Brooklyn, U. S. A., on August 5th, at the age of eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days. We had some difficulty at first in making out whether the months and days referred to the age or to the length of his illness; but he returned on the following evening, and cleared up the difficulty. The manner in which the communication was made was most singular. We were seated, three in number, round a heavy loo table, which two persons could move with difficulty. Instead of the raps to which we are accustomed, the table commenced to tilt. So eager was the communicating spirit that the table rose some seconds before the required letter was arrived at. In order to mark T it would rise, quivering with excitement, in a manner perfectly indescribable, about K, and then descend at T with a thump that shook the floor. This was repeated until the whole message was complete; but so eager was the spirit, and so impetuous in his replies, that he bewildered Dr. and Mrs. Speer completely (I was in deep trance) and caused the process to be prolonged over the whole sitting. If I may venture a guess, I should say that Abraham Florentine was a good soldier, a fighting man not nice to meet, and that he retains enough of his old impetuosity to rejoice at his liberation from the body, which (if I may guess again) had become a burden to him through a painful illness.

"Will the American papers copy, and enable me to verify my facts and guesses? "M. A. (Oxon)."

It appears that all the particulars given by the spirit, with one trifling exception, were subsequently verified, partly by information received from the office of the Adjutant General for the State of New York, partly from conversation with his widow, still (in 1875) living in Brooklyn. The one exception was that Mrs. Florentine believed the age of the deceased to be eighty-three years, one month, and twenty-seven days.

Both these communications, it will be seen, purported to come from comparatively obscure persons, whose lives had no obvious point of contact with Mr. Moses or any member of his circle. There are eleven more cases which come under this head, of whom four were very young children. In the remaining twenty-five records, the spirit in some six or eight cases represented a personage of some historical importance—Bishop Wilson, Beethoven, Swedenborg, Louis Napoleon, President Garfield, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce,—whilst the remainder (including the last named) had been acquaintances either of Mr. Moses himself, or of some other member of the circle, generally the Speer family.

Now the evidence that these spirit communications were what they professed to be is roughly of three kinds.

(*a*) The record of facts in the life of the communicating intelligence presumably unknown to the medium or any person present.

(*b*) The communication of the fact of the death before it could be known by normal means.

(*c*) The reproduction of characteristic handwriting.

(*a*) As regards the first point, the spirits of friends and acquaintances hardly ever communicated a fact of the nature of a test. It is obvious that Mr. Moses' own statement that his grandmother, or an old friend of his family, or Bishop Wilberforce, reminded him of incidents in his past life which he had forgotten, scarcely merits that description. There are vague statements that spirit friends of Mr. and Mrs. Speer mentioned names, dates, and facts unknown to Mr. Moses. One or two instances are given, such as that a sister of Dr. Speer, deceased in her childhood, gave her three Christian names—Catherine Stanhope Pauline—one of which Dr. Speer had never heard or had forgotten. But it is obvious that an incident of this kind has little evidential value. If we assume Mr. Moses' good faith, it cannot be held very improbable that he may have at some time heard particulars of the past history of his friend's family, which had since lapsed from his conscious memory. But the communications received from various unknown persons present us with a problem of another kind.

In marked contrast to the vague, fishing, and non-committal communications received from most "test-mediums," Mr. Moses' spirits are prodigal of names, dates, and other obituary facts. Thus, to quote a case: "On February 28, 1874, a spirit came by raps and gave the name 'Rosamira.' She said she died at Torquay on January 10, 1874, and that she had lived at Kilburn. She stated that her husband's name was Lancaster," and added that his Christian name was Ben. Mr. Moses himself was moved to admiration by the business-like brevity of this spirit. "It is important to say," he remarks, "that not only were the facts literally true, but that nothing was said that was not true; nor was there any surplusage of detail—only plain, definite, positive fact." All the particulars given at the Séance were, in fact, contained in the notice of the death published in the *Daily Telegraph* some weeks previously. This case may be taken as typical. Mr. Moses' spirits came, gave obituary notices of themselves, setting forth with accuracy and despatch the names and dates, and occasionally the disease of which they died, and then disappeared. Thomas Wilson indeed, sometime Bishop of Sodor and Man, gave a pretty full biography of himself, which took, we are told, two hours to deliver. The facts thus communicated have been verified by Mr. Myers in Stowell's *Life of Bishop Wilson.*[1] It is interesting to recall in this connection that Mr. Moses passed part of his early life in the Isle of Man.

But reproductions of obituary notices from the daily papers, or of the biographies of eminent personages, are clearly not evidential, unless we have not merely full confidence in the good faith of the medium, but are satisfied that he could not have read and forgotten these biographies or obituary notices. One opportunity did, indeed, offer for a test. Among the thirty-eight spirits there is one who came to testify to his identity under very striking circumstances. On the morning of Saturday, Feb. 21, 1874, a man had thrown himself under a steam-roller in Baker Street, London, and had been crushed to death. In the evening of the same day

[1] *S. P. R.*, xi., p. 88.

the spirit of this man, we are told, visited Mr. Moses and his circle, drew through the medium's hand an indistinct picture of a horse and vehicle, and gave an account of the accident. This information is not of much value from a sceptical standpoint, since Mr. Moses might have heard of the accident when he passed through Baker Street earlier in the day, or might have read of it in the *Pall Mall Gazette* before he came to the séance. But the *Pall Mall Gazette* did not mention the name of the suicide. It is to be regretted then—and the more so because the incidents of this séance are attested by an independent account contributed to the *Spiritualist* by Mr. F. W. Percival—that among the thirty-eight communicating intelligences this particular spirit alone chose to remain anonymous.[1]

(*b*) If we turn now to the second head, we shall find that there is no independent evidence that the communications were ever received until after such an interval as would allow of the facts of the death and attendant circumstances being ascertained from the daily papers. In the case of deaths occurring in England the interval was usually several days. In the case of Abraham Florentine, who died in America on the 5th August, 1874, the séance at which the communication was made is described, in the only account we possess—an account written in December of that year—as having taken place "last August." In the only other case of a death at a distance where we can apply this test, we are fortunately able to fix the date precisely. On the last day of 1873 and at the beginning of 1874 there died in India three young children. The obituary column of the *Times* (London) of Feb. 4, 1874, contained

[1] The paragraph in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 21, 1874, runs as follows: "A cab-driver, out of employment, this morning threw himself under a steam-roller which was being used in repairing the road in York Place [part of Baker Street is so-named], Marylebone, and was killed immediately." Incidentally the paragraph furnishes an explanation of the drawing with which, in place of the usual names and dates, the spirit prefaced his communication. Mr. Percival described this as "a horse fastened to a kind of cart or truck," and suggested that it had reference to a brass figure of a horse on the front of the steam-roller. If I may venture to interpret the communication, I would suggest that the intelligence which guided Mr. Moses' hand intended to draw a horse attached to a London cab.

the following notice: "At Umballa, India, the three children of W. C. Nigel Jones, Esq., and Constance his wife, namely: on the 31st Dec. 1873, Bertie Henry D'Oyly, aged 1 year and 7 months; on the 3rd Jan. 1874, Edward George Nigel, aged 2 years and 9 months, and on the 5th Jan. 1874, Archie William Cholmeley, an infant." On Feb. 10, 1874, the whole of these particulars—full names, ages, and dates, with a slight variation in the spelling—were reproduced at the séance.

In three cases only does the announcement of the death purport to have been made within twenty-four hours of the occurrence. One of these, the suicide under the steam-roller, has been discussed. The evidence for the other two was obtained posthumously by Mr. Myers from Mr. Moses' note-books. A lady—"Blanche Abercromby"—known to Mr. Myers, whom Mr. Moses had met at least once at a Spiritualistic séance, died in the country on a certain Sunday afternoon in 1874. Notice of her death appeared in the *Times* on the Monday morning. In one of Mr. Moses' note-books there was found a communication claiming to be from this lady and written in a handwriting resembling hers, which announced the fact of her death. This communication purported to have been made on the Sunday evening—before, that is, the death would be known in London to any but her intimate friends, amongst whom Mr. Moses was not numbered. So, on the death of President Garfield, Mr. Moses' note-book records that the fact was communicated to him some hours before the news reached Bedford, where he was then residing. Of both these communications it is enough to say that they were *ex hypothesi* made at a time when Mr. Moses was alone, and that we have no corroborative evidence of any kind that they were made at the time alleged.

(*c*) As regards the evidence from handwriting: Messages in writing characteristic of the deceased person were frequently produced at the séances, and in Mr. Moses' note-books when he was alone. In some instances the handwriting was that of a historical personage—Bishop Wilson, Beethoven, Swedenborg; in others, that of some person known in life to the medium; in one or two cases the writing

reproduced was that of some deceased friend of the Speers, of whose existence Mr. Moses professed himself ignorant; and in one other case—"Blanche Abercromby"—there is no evidence that Mr. Moses had ever had the opportunity of seeing the writing of the deceased. On the other side, excluding infants, there were nine communications received from total strangers both to Mr. Moses and the circle. Messages in characteristic handwriting from any one of these persons would have possessed some evidential value. But in only one of these cases is such evidence vouchsafed—the facsimile of the signature of a lady professedly unknown to Mr. Moses, which was produced, not in the circle, but when the medium was alone.

It is scarcely necessary to comment upon this bald summary of the evidence upon which the claims of Mr. Moses to Spirit-intercourse are based. That it has been thought necessary to say so much is due less to the importance of the subject in itself, than to the prominence which has been given to these alleged communications, both during the "Medium's" life-time, and since his death. It will suffice to point out that, judged by the standard which we apply, and necessarily apply, to other records of the kind, they afford hardly evidence to justify even a suggestion that the messages—I will not say proceeded from the source from which they purported to proceed,—but that they involved any supernormal element whatever. In other words, apart from the moral difficulties involved, there is little or nothing to forbid the supposition that the whole of these messages were deliberately concocted by Mr. Moses himself, and palmed off upon his unsuspecting friends. He would not have had to go beyond the obituary columns of the daily papers, or the topmost shelf of Dr. Speer's library. Of those moral difficulties I have already spoken in Chapter IV. The reader, with the evidence before him, may choose between the moral and the material miracle. At any rate, whatever the solution of the mystery of Mr. Moses' life, his works can scarcely be held to afford proof of Spirit-intercourse.

CHAPTER V.

POLTERGEISTS.

OF the manifestations described in the preceding chapters, some few find a parallel in earlier times, or amongst uncivilised peoples at the present day. Thus, moving tables formed a feature in some ancient Egyptian mysteries; levitation was an occasional diversion of mediæval saints; and the fire-ordeal is found not only in European witchcraft stories, but amongst some modern savages. But speaking generally the physical phenomena of the séance room belong to the last fifty years. There is no continuous chain of practice, or even of tradition, to connect the modern with the ancient miracles. Not so the Poltergeist, the *fera naturæ* of Spiritualism; visitations of raps and loud noises, accompanied by the throwing of stones, ringing of bells, smashing of crockery, and other disturbances of an inexplicable kind, have been reported from very early times, and have persisted down to the present day. Since the middle of the last century—to go no farther back—there have been many outbreaks of the kind, nor have the manifestations been confined to any one country. We hear of a case, in 1750, in Saxony, of

mysterious stone-throwing, which lasted for some weeks, much to the annoyance of a clergyman and his two sisters, who were the victims of the outbreak[1]; there was a tumult of bell ringing in the Russian monastery of Tsareconstantinof in 1753[2]; and there was the celebrated Cock Lane ghost, occurring in London in 1762. A mysterious outbreak took place at Stockwell in 1772, by which one Mrs. Golding lost the greater part of her glass and crockery, and such other items as a jar of pickles, a pot of raspberry jam, and a bottle of rum.[3] Coming down to more recent times, we find in a small and now rare book called *Bealings Bells*, published in 1841 by Major Moor, F.R.S., for sale at a church bazaar, some twenty accounts, mostly at first-hand, of similar incidents. The disturbances described in *Bealings Bells* consisted generally of bell ringing, but they included occasional noises of other kinds, movements of furniture, throwing of crockery and other small objects. And even now the newspapers every month recount some story of mysterious stone-throwing, which has set a country village agape, and bewildered a rustic policeman; perhaps even has formed a nine days' wonder in a London suburb.

There are two points to be noticed in these accounts—the general similarity of the disturbances

[1] *Annali dello Spiritismo*, quoted in *Light*, February 22, 1896.

[2] The Russian Archives, 1878, pp. 278–9.

[3] From a contemporary tract, quoted by Mr. Andrew Lang, *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, pp. 118–121.

in many countries and in many different centuries, and their apparently inexplicable nature. The results described are such as could not have been produced fraudulently, or only by the help of ingenious and complicated machinery; and it is but here and there that we have even a confession of trickery, frequently extorted by threats, or perhaps an actual exposure of fraudulent devices, which seem for the most part, as in the Cock Lane case, ludicrously inadequate to the effects. It seems equally incredible that the manifestations described should have been produced by any known physical means; or that, if so produced, detection of the imposture should not have been the rule, instead of the insignificant exception. In short, we are driven either to assume a conjunction of extraordinary cunning on the part of one of the actors in the drama, with imbecile stupidity on the part of the rest, or to surmise that the things vouched for may actually have been due to the operation of some supernormal agency. The latter alternative is naturally that preferred by most of those who have reported these occurrences. To the writers of two or three generations ago, as to the Neo-Platonists and the early Fathers, these performances were the clumsy practical jokes of an ill-disposed demon. To the modern believer they appear as extra-corporeal manifestations of the psychic force of the medium. If we leave on one side the physical phenomena of the Spiritualistic séance, it is probable that there is no marvel of modern times which has won more

general attention and acceptance, or for which so much evidence, of a sort, is forthcoming. For this reason the Society for Psychical Research has welcomed reports of these phenomena from independent observers,[1] whilst from time to time members of the Society have investigated such cases either during the actual occurrence of the disturbances, or—if that were not practicable—by visiting the locality and interrogating the witnesses as soon as possible after the events.

Case I. Worksop.

The first case investigated by us occurred in the early part of 1883, at Worksop, in the house of a small horse-dealer, named White. I went to Worksop on April 7th, interviewed all the principal witnesses of the disturbances, took full notes of their evidence, and obtained signed accounts from three persons—White himself, Higgs (a policeman), and Currass (a neighbour).

Briefly the account which I received was as follows:

On the 20th or 21st of February, Mrs. White, being alone in the kitchen with two of her young children, was washing up the tea things, when the table, apparently without the contact of any person, tilted up at a considerable angle. The whole incident impressed her as very extraordinary. On Monday, 26th February, a girl of about sixteen, named Eliza R——, the daughter of an imbecile mother, came as a servant. On the morning of Thursday, 1st of March, White went away until Friday afternoon. On Thursday night at about 11 P.M. Tom

[1] Two such are printed in *Proceedings*, vol. vii., pp. 160–173, and 383–394.

White, Joe White's brother, aged about twenty, went up-stairs to bed. The children, who also slept upstairs, had been in bed some hours previously. Mrs. White and R—— were then left alone in the kitchen. At about 11.30, a corkscrew, clothes-pegs, a salt-cellar, and many other things, which had been seen in the kitchen a few minutes before, came tumbling down the kitchen stairs. Some *hot* coals were also thrown down. Tom, who had been upstairs twenty minutes or half an hour, denied having thrown the things down.

On the following night at about the same hour, White, Mrs. White, and R—— being alone in the kitchen, a surcingle, pieces of carpet, knives, forks, and other things were thrown down-stairs. The girl picked them up ; but they followed still faster. White then left the room to go up to Tom. During his absence one of the ornaments flew off the mantel-piece into the corner of the room near the door. Nothing was seen by the two women ; but they heard it fall, and found it there. Their screams summoned White down ; as he entered the room his candle went out, and something struck him on the forehead. The girl picked up the candle —which appears to have left the candlestick—and two new ones, which had not been in the house previously, from the ground ; and as soon as a candle was lit, a little china woman left the mantelpiece and fell into the corner, where it was seen by White. As soon as it was replaced it flew across the room again and was broken. Other things followed, and the women being very frightened, and White thinking that the disturb-ances presaged the death of his child, who was very ill with an abscess in the back, sent Tom (who was afraid to go alone) with Ford (a neighbour) to fetch the doctor. Mrs. White meanwhile took one of the children next door. R—— ap-proached the inner room to fetch another, when things imme-diately began to fly about and smash themselves in that room. After this all appear to have been absent from the house for a short time. White then returned, with Higgs the policeman, and, whilst they were alone in the kitchen, standing near the door, a glass jar flew out of the cupboard into the yard ; a tumbler also fell from the chest of drawers in the kitchen,

when only Higgs was near it. Both then went into the inner room, and found the chest of drawers there turned up on end and smashed. On their return they found R——, Wass (a neighbour), and Tom White in the kitchen, and all saw a cream-jug, which R—— had just placed on the bin, fly four feet up in the air and smash on the floor. Dr. Lloyd and Mrs. White then entered, and in the presence of all these witnesses, a basin was seen to move slowly from the bin, wobbling as it rose in the air—no person being near it except Dr. Lloyd and Higgs. It touched the ceiling, and then fell suddenly to the floor and was smashed. This was at midnight. All then left except Tom White and his brother. The disturbances continued until about 2 A.M., when all grew quiet, and the Whites slept. At about 8 A.M. on Saturday, the 3d, the disturbances began again.

White left the kitchen to attend to some pigs ; and in his absence Mrs. White and R—— were left alone in the kitchen. A nearly empty port-wine bottle leaped up from the table about four feet into the air, and fell into a bucket of milk, standing on the table, from which Mrs. White was filling some jugs.

Then Currass appears to have been attracted to the scene. He entered with White, young Wass, and others, and viewed the inner room. They had but just returned to the kitchen, leaving the inner room empty, and the door of communication open, when the American clock, which hung over the bed in the inner room, was heard to strike. (It had not done so for eighteen months previously.) A crash was then heard, and Currass, who was nearest the door, looked in, and found that the clock had fallen over the bed—about four feet broad—and was lying on the floor. Shortly afterward, no one being near it, a china dog flew off the mantelpiece, and smashed itself in the corner near the door. Currass and some others then left.

Some plates, a cream-jug, and other things, then flew up in the air, and smashed themselves in view of all who were in the kitchen—R——, Mrs. White, and Mrs. Wass.

A few more things followed at intervals, and then White

could stand it no longer, and told the girl R—— that she must go. With her departure the phenomena ceased altogether.

It will be seen that the phenomena described are quite inexplicable by ordinary mechanical means. The actual witnesses of the disturbances, including Dr. Lloyd, were satisfied that no trickery could have produced what they saw. Nor does any serious suggestion of trickery seem to have been made by any of the neighbours who were acquainted with the circumstances. Some persons seem to have suspected White himself ; but, apart from the entire absence of motive (White was a considerable loser by the articles broken), no one was prepared with a suggestion of the mechanical means employed, beyond a vague allusion to the omnipotence of electricity. Moreover, White, it is admitted, was absent when the disturbances first broke out, and must, therefore, have had an accomplice. But no one saw any suspicious movement, or could point to any circumstance tending to throw suspicion on White or anyone else, though the phenomena occurred at intervals during a period of about forty hours, and frequently in broad daylight in the presence of several witnesses. At the time I was much impressed with the strength of the evidence in this case for supernormal agency, and concluded my report as follows :

"To suppose that the various objects were all moved by mechanical means argues incredible stupidity, amounting almost to imbecility, on the part of all the persons present who

were not in the plot. That the movements of the arms necessary to set the machinery in motion should have passed unobserved on each and every occasion by all the witnesses is almost impossible. Not only so, but Currass, Higgs and Dr. Lloyd, all independent observers, assured me that they examined some of the objects which had been moved immediately after the occurrence . . . that they could discover no possible explanation of the disturbances, and were fairly bewildered by the whole matter."

Two other cases may be referred to in this connection.

Case II. Durweston.

This case is of interest because, again, we have the contemporary evidence of an educated witness, who remains convinced of the genuineness of the manifestations.

The disturbances began in December, 1894, at the village of Durweston, near Blandford, in a cottage tenanted by a respectable widow named Best, her daughter Julia, aged about sixteen, and two orphan children, who were boarded out from a London workhouse; the elder, Annie, being about thirteen years of age.

Mr. Westlake went to Durweston at the end of January, 1895, and took notes of his conversations with the various eye-witnesses. The disturbances consisted of loud noises, rappings on the walls, stone-throwing, etc. One witness, Newman, a gamekeeper, had seen shells, beads, thimbles, bits of slate-pencil, a boot and other objects thrown about the room in broad daylight. The pheno-

mena which he claimed to have seen were quite inexplicable. His account was given to Mr. Westlake some five weeks after the events.

The disturbances were also investigated by a local clergyman, the Rev. W. M. Anderson, who describes the following experiment.

A slate and pencil were placed on the ledge of the window in the room in which Mrs. Best and the two children were in bed. The room was left in darkness, and Mr. Anderson with others remained at the bottom of the stairs. Then, to quote his account: "Some fifteen seconds elapsed, and amid perfect silence we all heard the pencil scratch on the slate. Mrs. Best gave a suppressed groan, which I could distinctly hear. Four sharp raps were given almost simultaneously with the dropping of the pencil on the slate, and Mrs. Best gave a loud screaming call, 'Come.' I was in the room instantly. The light showed some unmeaning scratches on the slate."

At a later performance the words "*Mony*" and "Garden" were found on the slate.

Mr. Anderson is convinced of the supernormal character of this manifestation. It remains to add that the child Annie is of a decidedly consumptive tendency and apparently hysterical, and that both children are alleged to have seen a curious (hallucinatory) animal in the house.

Case III. Arundel.

This case was of the same general character. The disturbances, which took place in a cottage at Arundel, Sussex, in Feb., 1884, consisted of scratchings all about the bed in which a little girl of thirteen was lying; loud unaccountable noises in the house; the throwing down of a clock, chimney-piece orna-

ments, a tray of potatoes, an iron pot, etc., in the presence of this girl. The chief witnesses were the girl's father and two grandmothers, and, according to their statements, the things moved were at such a distance from the girl that the movements could not have been effected by normal means. In this case, again, the girl claimed to have seen a ghostly figure in a white dress. The occurrences appear to have caused some sensation in the neighbourhood.

So far no actual trickery has been detected, though in the last case the local doctor satisfied himself that trickery had been employed by the little girl; and the gentlemen—Major King and Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor—who investigated the case on behalf of the Society, expressed themselves of the same opinion. Colonel Taylor, however, appears since 1884 to have changed his opinion.[1]

Now the value of the reports in these three cases as testifying to the operation of some supernormal agency depends upon two assumptions: first, that the various witnesses—for the most part imperfectly educated persons, not skilled in accurate observation of any kind—correctly described what they saw; and second, that after an interval varying from a fortnight in the last case to more than five weeks in the other two, during which their experiences had been discussed and compared and gaped at by every village fireside, and embellished in the public press, they correctly remembered what they described. The concordant testimony of so many

[1] See his letter in the *Journal* of the S. P. R., October, 1896.

honest and fairly intelligent persons to the marvellous occurrences in White's house at Worksop certainly produced a strong impression on my mind at the time. Nor do I see reason now to question my original estimate of their intelligence and good faith. If my verdict in 1897 differs from that which I gave, according to the best of my ability, in 1883, it is because many things have happened since, which have taught us to discount testimony in matters of this kind. In the course of the fourteen years which have elapsed we have received some striking object-lessons demonstrating the incapacity of the ordinary unskilled observer to detect trickery or sleight-of-hand ; and we have learnt to distrust the accuracy of the unaided memory in recording feats of this kind, especially when witnessed under circumstances of considerable excitement.

And, indeed, if we scrutinise the accounts of the various witnesses as they stand, we shall find omissions, discrepancies, and contradictions in the evidence. (1) Thus, according to White, Higgs and he went into the front room first, to see the damage done there, and on their return to the kitchen a glass jar flew out of the cupboard. But according to Higgs's version, it was after seeing the glass jar fly through the air that White and he went into the inner room. (2) White's account is that two or three witnesses were present when the glass jar flew out ; Higgs says " that no one else was in the room at the time." (3) There seems to be a doubt as to

whether R. entered the kitchen during Higgs's visit. White does not mention her entrance at all. Higgs says they found her in the kitchen on their return from the inner room. (4) Currass says he was in the inner room on the morning of the 3d when the clock fell. White says that Currass was in the kitchen. (5) Again, White cannot remember where R. was at the time of the incident; whilst Currass says that she was near the inner door. (6) White and Currass agree that Coulter was not present when the American clock fell and was smashed. Now Coulter, whom I saw, and who impressed me favourably as an honest man, stated that he was present when the clock fell, and also during the immediately succeeding disturbances in the kitchen.

Such are some of the defects which appear in the evidence even as prepared and taken down from the lips of the witnesses by a too sympathetic reporter. It is probable that more and more serious discrepancies and contradictions would have been found if there had been no speculation and consultation and comparison in the interval of five weeks; and if each witness at the end of that time had written an independent account of the incidents.

In four other cases which we have investigated, trickery was actually detected by one or more eye-witnesses.

Case IV. Ham.

Early in February, 1895, we received intelligence of a Poltergeist at Ham, a little village near Hungerford, in Berkshire. The following extract from

a letter written by a local clergyman will give some idea of how the matter was regarded in the neighbourhood:

"F. VICARAGE, HUNGERFORD, BERKS,
"January 31, 1895.

"There is a veritable ghost at Ham; it has overturned boots and shoes from the slab of an oven on to the hob—overturned a stool, and pitched the cat on it into the fire—upset tables and all sorts of things. The tenant's name is T——, and he works for Mr. W——. W—— has put the man into an adjacent, but not adjoining, house, and has had the floor of the house taken up, but has not discovered the cause, and now the same pranks are going on in the house into which the people have removed. It is no delusion—it takes place in broad daylight before people's eyes, and E. W. saw a table overturned on Tuesday. No one can explain it—it is quite a mystery, and is causing great excitement through the country-side; people from Marlborough, Hungerford, and Froxfield visit the scene of these operations. They say that the people have a daughter who is eccentric and deformed."

From several witnesses, including a police constable, we have received accounts of the disturbances. The lid of an oven was frequently seen to fall; chairs, stools, and other articles of furniture were upset, in the presence of numerous witnesses, and frequently in broad daylight. Polly T., the little girl, was always present during these performances, but the witnesses seem as a rule to have been completely satisfied that the movements were beyond her power to execute, and many sent a plan of the room and the position of the people in it to demonstrate the impossibility of the movements being due to ordinary human agency.

Early in February Mr. Westlake went to Ham. On the morning following his arrival he wrote as follows:

Letter I.

POST OFFICE, HAM, HUNGERFORD, BERKS,
February 9, 1895.

Nothing is alleged in this case but the frequent movements of objects (except that Mrs. T. says that once she saw a woman's face in the oven). It is one of those baffling cases where the thing won't work, or only inconclusively, in the presence of strangers. At least that was my experience last evening; some local observers have had better success, I hear. Nevertheless I think it to be genuine from the hundred and one indications which one gathers when talking with the folks around their hearth—the primitive séance. Polly, a little dwarfed, black-haired girl, turning twelve, sits in the chimney corner and nurses the cats Topsy and Titit—she is the centre of force—then (in the absence of strangers) the coals fly about and all movable objects are thrown down *ad libitum*, and *ad nauseam* according to their account.

It has been a nine days' wonder, and local interest (all unintelligent) is dying.

The T—s, however, say that things are as active as ever (last evening, *e. g.*). The report that they have made money out of it seems to be untrue.

On the same day, a few hours later, Mr. Westlake writes as follows:

Letter II.

The "Ham Ghost" is a humbug *now*, whatever it may have been. I made friends with the cats, and their mistress, poor child, gave me a private sitting of some two or three hours, in the course of which she moved between forty and fifty objects when she thought I was n't looking (her plan being to watch me till I looked away). However, I saw her in contact with the objects with every degree of distinctness, and on seven (at

least) occasions by simple devices I had a clear view of her hands in contact with the objects and saw them quickly moved. I entered into the spirit of the thing, and said nothing to anyone, beyond suggesting to the lady (Miss W.) at the Manor House that the affair would probably cease if no further attention were paid to it, and that some one would do well to watch the child.

She is a dwarf, aged twelve, who has only lately learned to walk, pale, with long, black hair, and eyes very sharp, and watches one like a cat a mouse. Her mother is said never to leave the house or to allow the child to do so.

But it is curious that a little child should succeed in deceiving a whole country-side, and especially in deceiving her parents (for I do not think they are implicated ;—if they have suspicions, they smother them ; they appear genuinely worried). The mother would sometimes ask the child, after a particularly barefaced "upset," whether she did it, and she always denied.

Mr. Westlake has kindly furnished the following additional particulars of what he observed :

"After posting my first letter, I went to the T—s' and sat on a bench in front of the fire. No one else was present besides the child. She sat on a low stool in the chimney on the right of the fire. On the other side of the hearth there was a brick oven in which, much to Polly's interest, I placed a dish of flour, arguing that a power capable of discharging the contents of the oven (one of the first disturbances) might be able to impress the flour. After a time I went to the oven to see how the flour was getting on, stooping slightly to look in, but kept my eyes on the child's hands, looking at them under my right arm. I saw her hand stealing down towards a stick that was projecting from the fire ; I moved slightly and the hand was withdrawn. Next time I was careful to make no movement and saw her hand jerk the brand out on to the floor. She cried out. I expressed interest and astonishment ; and her mother came in and cleared up the débris. This was repeated

several times, and one or two large sticks ready for burning which stood near the child were thrown down. Then a kettle which was hanging on a hook and chain was jerked off the hook on to the fire. This was repeated. As the kettle refused to stay on its hook, the mother placed it on the hearth, but it was soon overturned on to the floor and upset. After this I was sitting on the bench which stood facing the fire in front of the table. I had placed my hat on the table behind me. The little girl was standing near me on my right hand. Presently the hat was thrown down on the ground. I did not on the first occasion see the girl's movements, but later, by seeming to look in another direction, I saw her hand sweep the hat off on to the floor. This I saw at least twice. A Windsor chair near the girl was then upset more than once, falling away from her. On one occasion I saw her push the chair over with both hands. As she was looking away from me, I got a nearly complete view. After one of these performances the mother came in and asked the girl if she had done it, but she denied it."

It may be of interest to add that Mr. E. N. Bennett, of Hertford College, Oxford, spent nearly five hours in the cottage, and witnessed several movements of furniture. But though he strongly suspected the child of trickery, and watched her very closely, he was not able actually to detect any fraudulent movement on her part.

Case V. Wem.

In November, 1883, a series of disturbances broke out at Wood's Farm, near Wem, in Shropshire, in the presence of a small nursemaid, Emma D., a girl about thirteen years of age. The phenomena, as testified to by the farmer and his wife—intelligent persons—the local schoolmis-

tress, and various neighbours, included violent movements of small objects and much smashing of crockery. Emma D. was seen by several witnesses to be levitated, chair and all; and the baby's clothes were on several occasions found alight, with a spent match lying near. No trickery was detected on the part of the girl; and many of the manifestations, as described to us, were certainly inexplicable by trickery. The disturbances began on the 1st of November. On Friday the 9th, Emma D., who had got into a very nervous state, was placed in a doctor's house at Wem, and put under charge of his housekeeper, Miss Turner. From this lady and Dr. Mackey, the late Mr. Hughes, who investigated the case, learnt that after the child's arrival

"certain manifestations took place, similar in character to those that preceded them, and for two or three days they were quite unable to detect any fraud, though no manifestation ever took place when the girl was not in such a position that she *might* have produced them by ordinary trickery.

"Thus, in the presence of Dr. Mackey and Miss Turner a piece of bread jumped across the room, the girl not being actually seen to throw it. On another occasion when Miss Turner had left the room, the girl suddenly screamed, and when Miss T. returned, a pair of slippers were on the sofa which had just before been seen on the hearth-rug. Again, when Miss T. had just turned her back to the girl, the usual scream was heard, and turning round Miss T. saw a bucket in the air descending to the ground. A knife on another occasion was thrown across the room, being in the air when Dr. Corke's servant was entering the room.

"On Tuesday morning, however, Miss Turner was in an upper room at the back of the house, and the servant of the establishment and Emma D. were outside, Emma having her

back to the house, and unaware that she was observed. Miss Turner noticed that Emma D. had a piece of brick in her hand held behind her back. This she threw to a distance by a turn of the wrist, and while doing so, screamed to attract the attention of the servant, who, of course, turning round, saw the brick in the air, and was very much frightened. Emma D., looking round, saw that she had been seen by Miss Turner, and apparently imagining that she had been found out, was very anxious to return home that night.

"Miss Turner took no notice of the occurrence at the time, but the next morning (Wednesday) she asked the girl if she had been playing tricks, and the girl confessed that she had, and went through some of the performances very skilfully, according to Miss Turner's account."

Notwithstanding this exposure the girl persistently denied that she had produced the previous disturbances.

It may be added that, though Dr. Mackey considered the child to be quite normal, Mr. Hughes found some evidence of unusual precocity on her part; and she had, according to her mother's statement, been subject to fits since the outbreak of the disturbances. Moreover, the schoolmistress stated that during some of the disturbances Emma D. cried out that an old woman was at her and would not let her breathe.

In two other cases of the kind, VI., Bramford, and VII., Waterford, trickery was detected, by two witnesses in each case, on the part of a young child.

So far the agent or "medium" has been a child in humble circumstances, and we have had to rely for our accounts of the manifestations mainly upon the evidence of persons possessing little education.

But in four other cases which we have inquired into the outbreak occurred in houses of more pretension, and both agent and witnesses were persons of fair education. In one instance, Case VIII., I received a partial confession from the agent (or one of the agents), a nervous and delicate boy of fifteen. In the three other cases no confession has been made, and no trickery has been detected; but if we make such slight allowances for mal-observation and unintentional misrepresentation on the part of the witnesses as we are, I think, entitled to make, there is no difficulty, moral considerations apart, in attributing all the phenomena described to trickery. A single case will suffice.

Case IX.

The house in which the phenomena to be described took place is a small terrace-house in a town in the south of England, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. B. and their family. The younger daughter, Alice, is barely twelve. She is very tall and pale, and has apparently outgrown her strength; and is compelled, under medical advice, to lie down on her bed for an hour or two every afternoon. She impressed me, on my visit to the house, as being very intelligent, energetic, and clever beyond her years.

In the summer of 18— the servant complained of hearing strange noises in the house, and seeing shadows behind her, and occasionally of being touched. In the course of the same year Mrs. B. on one occasion heard a tremendous blow on the door of a room in which she was sitting; and on another occasion saw part of a figure clothed in a print dress through the half-open door of the dining-room..

In the autumn of the following year, however, the phenomena were very frequent and striking. The manifestations

were of two kinds: (1) physical disturbances, (2) auditory and visual phenomena, which may have been hallucinations. It will be convenient first to consider the physical phenomena. If we omit such matters as blows on doors, the violent slamming of half-opened doors, and the fall of a picture from its nail, the most striking physical phenomena were the following:

I cite these in the order in which they are given in the narrative furnished by Mr. B. and other members of the family. (1) Alice, when alone in her room, found some newly shed blood on the floor. (2) Alice, entering her bedroom, closely followed by Miss K., an inmate of the house, found that her water-jug had been quite recently upset on the floor. (3) A water-jug was again found upset in the same bedroom, Alice being in the room alone at the time. (4) Mrs. B., in stooping down to kiss her daughter Alice good-night, felt distinctly a hand laid on her back. (5) A charwoman complained that a saucepan was dragged from her hand and dashed down on the stove. (6) A chair was moved in Mrs. B's room, Alice being the only other person present. (7) A picture was seen to move from its position on the wall of the dining-room to the extent of about four inches. It then, when commanded by Mrs. B., in the name of the Trinity, returned slowly to its original position. The witnesses to this phenomenon were Mrs. B., Alice, and Miss K. (8) A card-table, at which Mrs. B., Miss K., Miss B., and Alice were seated, moved sharply and struck Miss K. on the arm. (9) Two little boys were having tea with Alice in the dining-room. One of the little boys had first his leg and then his throat sharply pinched.

It is, perhaps, not uncharitable to suggest that the fall of the saucepan may have been due to the clumsiness of the charwoman, and that the other disturbances were caused by Alice, by ordinary physical means. The only incident which, on this interpretation, offers any difficulty, is the movement

of the picture on the wall of the dining-room. This may have been effected by a string; though I could find no trace either on the picture itself or on the adjacent wall of any such means having been used. Mrs. B. could not remember in what part of the room Alice was standing during the phenomenon; and Miss K. and Mrs. B. assigned different positions to Mrs. B. herself. I think it not impossible that the whole movement was imaginary.

The visual and auditory phenomena were very curious and interesting. Mrs. B. and Miss K. at various times—sometimes together—heard voices speaking, moans, cries, rappings, footsteps, and loud noises. Some of these noises—the sounds of articulate sentences, for instance,—were apparently hallucinatory. There were also many visual hallucinations. Miss K., on two occasions, saw a hand—in one case, on the glass of a bookcase. Mrs. B., besides the hallucination of a woman's dress already referred to, saw, when in bed, a brilliant disc of white light and a dazzling white garment; she also saw a shadowy black form on suddenly entering a dark room. She saw, in the middle of the afternoon, a lovely white bird, larger than a dove, gliding across the upper hall. Going up the stairs shortly after this vision, Mrs. B. saw a shower of gold and silver flakes. Alice, who accompanied her, saw them too, and went to fetch the charwoman. The charwoman "thought it rather pretty, and supposed it was motes." Perhaps it was.

Alice also recited several experiences of her own, which may, perhaps, be classed as hallucinations: she was thumped on the back; she felt something push against her in going up-stairs; she heard moans, voices, and other noises; and once, when lying down on her bed in the afternoon, she heard the sound of paper scraping on the wall, and, looking up, saw a coloured ball of paper fall from the ceiling and disappear in the basin. No such ball could be found.

It should be added that the B. family regard the phenomena as inexplicable.

In the two other cases under this head, X. and XI., the phenomena attested are about on a par with those above detailed. But the narratives possess one or two special features of interest. Space will not permit of their being quoted here, but some reference is made to them in the Summary; and a more detailed account of all the cases here dealt with, and of several others which have been reported to us, will be found in *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, vol. xii., pp. 45–115.

It will be seen that these eleven cases bear a general resemblance throughout, and belong pretty obviously to the same class. It is therefore *primâ facie* probable that an explanation which fits one case will fit all. An exception should perhaps be made in Case VIII., since it seems doubtful whether anyone was deceived by the manifestations in this case except the lady of the house. But in the other cases most of those who witnessed the disturbances,

whether inmates of the house or neighbours, appear to have regarded them as inexplicable.

Now the only explanation for which we have valid evidence at all is trickery. Trickery was actually detected by one or more witnesses in four cases. In two of these cases (V. and VI.) and in Case VIII., there was a confession of trickery. There is, therefore, strong ground for assuming trickery as the true and sufficient explanation in all eleven cases. In the first place, we may note that the phenomena described in the Wem and Ham cases, for instance, were *primâ facie* as inexplicable as those testified to in other instances. But in these two cases we know that trickery was employed. It is to be noted also that in the Wem case the child was so skilful that, though she was under the close observation of several pairs of eyes in the doctor's house, and though she brought off many "phenomena," it was not until the fifth day that she was actually detected in her performances, and then only through a surreptitious entry on the theatre. In the Ham case Mr. Westlake was able to detect the actual movements of the child only when the repetition of the performance taught him what to look for, and Mr. Bennett, despite his strong suspicions, failed altogether to obtain conclusive proof of fraud. And if we remember how many and how great were the errors in observation demonstrated by Dr. Hodgson in the records given by educated persons of séances with Mr. Davey, we shall find it not unreasonable to infer, even when direct evidence is

wanting, like errors in the testimony, mostly of uneducated persons, now under consideration. We have some indirect proof of the justice of this inference. It is to be noted that in the last four cases, where the witnesses were for the most part educated persons, and the record was in some instances almost contemporaneous with the events, it is not difficult to explain all that took place—with a few exceptions—as due to trickery. The proof of abnormal agency in these cases rests almost entirely on moral considerations. But in cases like those first cited, where the chief witnesses were persons of limited education, the phenomena attested are of a much more surprising kind; and at Worksop and Durweston especially, where the witnesses were not only imperfectly educated, but did not give their testimony until some weeks after the events, the things described seem wholly inexplicable by normal agencies.

One feature in these records should be noticed in this connection. Many of the witnesses described the articles as moving slowly through the air, or exhibiting some peculiarity of flight. (See *e. g.* the Worksop case.) Similar peculiarities are noted by Mr. Bristow.[1] In describing the movement of pieces of wood in a carpenter's shop, he writes of them as now moving in a straight line and striking a door "noiselessly as a feather," and again "as though borne along on gently heaving waves." In a case which was investigated by one of our correspond-

[1] *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, vol. vii., pp. 383–394.

ing members, Herr Hans Natge, an account of which was published in Berlin in 1889, under the title *Der Spuk von Resau*, a similar phenomenon is described by the witnesses. Thus, a frying pan in the air is described as having the appearance not of a thing thrown, but of a thing flying; and the witnesses are said to have noticed the absence of any curve of projection in the articles. In default of any experimental evidence that disturbances of the kind are ever due to abnormal agency, I am disposed to explain the appearance of moving slowly or flying as a sensory illusion, conditioned by the excited state of the percipients.

Again, we have proofs in many of these records, of serious errors of memory. In several instances we find that the various witnesses to a phenomenon differed amongst themselves as to the position, or even the presence or absence, of particular persons; or failed to mention at all the whereabouts of the presumed agent; or imagined that they had been present at manifestations of which—according to other witnesses—they knew only by hearsay.

Of the errors of narration perpetrated by journalists in search of sensational copy, it is hardly necessary to speak, except to point out that the dramatic and exaggerated accounts of the disturbances given in the newspapers inevitably react upon the memories of those who read them, and so tend still further to vitiate testimony.

But it is much easier to infer that trickery has been practised in these cases than to find a plausi-

ble motive for trickery. In most cases it is difficult to conceive that any adequate or even rational end was aimed at by the authors of the disturbance. A considerable amount of labour, extending in some cases over months or years, has been voluntarily undertaken by the agent; much annoyance, expense, and occasionally severe distress has been inflicted on other persons; and a lively sensation has been caused in the neighbourhood. But there has been apparently no revenge to satisfy; and such fame as lies in the mouths of rustics, and in occasional paragraphs in provincial newspapers, would hardly constitute for normal persons—even for children—a sufficient recompense for the labour incurred. And yet it is, in fact, in the desire to cause a sensation that the working motive is probably to be found. The agent—or central figure—in the great majority of the cases is a young girl, roughly between the ages of twelve and sixteen, though one or two may have been a little older. In these eleven records, a young girl appears in eight cases and a young boy in two; further, in one of the eight cases a young boy is apparently associated with his sister. But a further peculiarity is to be noted beside the youth of the agents, to wit, their mental and physical abnormality. In the Worksop case, the presumed agent was a half-witted girl, child of an imbecile mother. In the Wem case, Emma D. was stated by her mother to be subject to fits. In Case VI. the girl appears to have suffered from attacks of hysterical blindness.

In Cases IV. and X. the girl was deformed, in Case II. hysterical and consumptive. In Case VIII. the boy was delicate and liable to attacks of spontaneous somnambulism; and in Case IX. the girl is delicate and has outgrown her strength. Thus in eight out of the eleven cases we have evidence of ill-health or abnormality more or less pronounced. This evidence is strengthened if we accept the agent's own testimony for the occurrence of hallucinations. Thus, in Cases II., III., V., VI., IX., and X., the child agent was the subject of hallucinations, which in Case X. were frequent and prolonged.

It may be suggested then that, in the majority of these cases, the real motive which impelled these children to a long series of apparently meaningless acts of mischief, was the excessive love of notoriety which is occasionally associated with other morbid conditions, especially in young girls. Case XI., on this view, remains unaccounted for, since the agents in this instance were educated adults, apparently free from morbid influences.

To sum up: (1) In the eleven cases which we have investigated in detail, direct proofs of trickery have been obtained in several instances. (2) Where the phenomena have been recorded shortly after their occurrence by educated persons, trickery is found—moral considerations apart—to be an adequate explanation. (3) Where the phenomena have been described by illiterate persons, or recorded some time after the event, this ex-

planation becomes difficult; and the difficulty is found to increase directly with the length of the interval and inversely with the education of the witness. (4) But these eleven cases are fairly representative of their class. A certain number of such cases are brought to our notice each year. These eleven cases were selected for investigation, mainly because, from the accounts in the press, or from reports received from trustworthy private sources, they seemed to present a *primâ facie* case for abnormal agency. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that if the opportunity had been given to us, with the experience which we have now obtained, to undertake an equally full and searching inquiry into the cases of this kind which figure so largely in the literature of the subject, the evidence for abnormal agency would have been found as little calculated to convince.

Before the subject is dismissed, attention may be directed to two points. The first is, that the moral presumption, upon which the evidence for abnormal physical phenomena occurring in the presence of private persons mainly depends, is seriously weakened by this demonstration of frequent, elaborate, and long-continued trickery, practised occasionally even by educated persons, without apparent recompense or adequate motive. The second point is, that genuine hallucinations may apparently be associated with fraudulent physical phenomena. Leaving on one side the hallucinations alleged to have been experienced by the agents in many of

these cases—though these are not without interest—we find hallucinations reported by the witnesses in several instances. Thus at Ham (Case IV.) one witness is recorded to have seen a woman's face in the oven; and in Cases IX. and X. several credible witnesses give accounts of hallucinatory experiences.[1] Many of the auditory experiences, and at least two of the visual hallucinations, appear to have been "collective."

These facts are of special interest in their bearing on the phenomena of collective hallucination, and on the genesis of hallucinatory disturbances—auditory and visual—in so-called "haunted houses."

[1] Luminous apparitions are said to have been seen by some of the witnesses in the Cock Lane case.

CHAPTER VI.

MADAME BLAVATSKY AND THEOSOPHY.

THE history of the Theosophical movement, so far as it can be disentangled, appears to be somewhat as follows: In 1875, Madame Blavatsky, in concert with Colonel Olcott, an American gentleman of honourable repute, and with a record of good service done during the War of Secession, founded in New York the Theosophical Society. Of Madame Blavatsky herself little was at that time known; her life-history up to this point was for some time involved in an obscurity not wholly fortuitous. For information regarding her past we had to rely mainly on her own account of herself; and research tended to show that this guarantee was insufficient. But these few facts that follow appear to rest on a basis of somewhat superior certainty:—that she was a Russian lady of good family; that she left Russia when young, and spent a nomad existence in Europe and elsewhere; and that for two or three years previous to 1875 she passed in Egypt and in the United States as a spirit medium. In or about that year, however, she appears to have discovered in herself powers quite superior to those of the ordinary medium, and to

have claimed intercourse with beings of a more exalted order than "John King" and other familiar spirits, from whom it is said that she had hitherto derived her inspiration. The Theosophical Society was founded for the reception and study of these new revelations, and for the practice of the rites enjoined as a necessary prelude to the initiation into theosophic mysteries. Strange rumours reached Europe in those years of the sudden appearance of mysterious Asiatics in that first-floor room in New York; there were those who claimed to have spoken with these phantom visitants; the president-founder himself held an interview with one of the "Brothers," who had come in ghostly form from far Thibet, and left behind him, for the confusion of the scoffer, the materialised turban which he wore. Strange tales, too, were told of the Russian princess who, with rare self-abnegation, had refused to take the highest place in the sect which she had founded. She had imprinted on handkerchiefs and papers, by the mere imposition of her hand on the white surface, a portrait of some statesman or eminent personage, and all the experts in New York had failed to discover by what occult art the pictures so produced had been engrained into the very substance of the paper or linen. She had called into existence things which had no existence before. Even in one of her visits to England she had caused the miraculous transportation of documents from place to place. Her very age was not the least of the mysteries which surrounded her. There were

whispers that, though seemingly in the prime of life, she had already numbered more than four-score years and ten, and that she had discovered, or was near to discovering, the secret of eternal youth. And when she published her great work,—*Isis Unveiled*,—in which she claimed to rebuild the flimsy fabric of Western science, and to lay the broad foundations of a new philosophy and a new religion, there were not wanting disciples to acknowledge her claims. It is true that competent persons who had read the book reported that it contained only a chaotic apocalypse of ignorance; that the new science was so far without facts, that the new philosophy was innocent of metaphysic, and that the religion owned no God. But the deficiencies which the ingenuity of her disciples could not supply their credulity was willing to ignore. And the authoress, with proud humility, disclaimed all honour for herself. She was but the mouthpiece of a wisdom higher than her own; the chosen medium of saints who dwelt in the far Himalayas, remote from the errors and strife of the world. And when, a few years later, it was found that the busy life of New York vexed that serene atmosphere which was essential to the due absorption of theosophic truth, she found in India a ready welcome and a more congenial environment for herself and the Society. There the Society made rapid progress, and soon numbered its adherents by thousands. The great bulk of its members were, no doubt, natives. But gradually a few Europeans of educa-

tion and repute were attracted by the new doctrines; amongst others Mr. A. P. Sinnett, at that time editor of the *Pioneer*. It is to him that we owe the most orderly and complete exposition of these doctrines. In the *Occult World*, published in 1881, and in *Esoteric Buddhism*, published in 1883, Mr. Sinnett set forth the scientific and philosophic, or rather, cosmologic teachings of the new cult. Like Madame Blavatsky, he disclaimed for himself all credit, except what might be his due for skilful exposition and compilation. He testified only to that which he had received from the "Brothers." The "Brothers," he explained to us, are men of exalted spirituality, and more than mortal wisdom, who reside in the mountain fastnesses, as yet undefiled by the magnetism of European travellers, of the Thibetan Himalayas, and there hand down to the new generation the traditional knowledge, enriched by additions of their own, which they have received from those who preceded them. By the practice of a life of austere simplicity, and by the diligent cultivation of their spiritual faculties, they have attained a mastery over the elemental world, an insight into the processes of nature and the secrets of the cosmic order, which the devotees of occidental science, who proceed by logic and experiment, and who trust to the gropings of a purblind intellect, may never hope to rival. Our European thinkers are like blind men who are painfully learning to read with their fingers from a child's primer, whilst these have eyes to see the universe, past,

present, and to come. To Mr. Sinnett it had been given to learn the alphabet of that transcendent language.

And first, as to the doctrines, which, as Mr. Sinnett is careful to remind us, are wholly independent of any extrinsic support from the marvellous powers with which the "Brothers" are credited. No miracles can attest a revelation. We must judge of its truth by the light which is in us. There must always be a strange attraction in any authoritative teachings on the unseen. And when the teacher can graft on the splendours of Eastern phantasy the precision and symmetry of European science, it is hard to resist the fascination exercised. The Brothers had chosen their instrument well. Contagious enthusiasm, poetic fervour, a lofty metaphysic,—Mr. Sinnett had none of these; but he was gifted with a considerable faculty for looking at things from a common-sense standpoint. He could make the most extravagant mysticism seem matter-of-fact. He could write of *Manvantaras* and *Nirvana*, and the septenary constitution of man, in language which would have been appropriate in a treatise on kitchen middens, or the functions of the pineal gland. In his lucid prose the vast conceptions of primitive Buddhism were fused with the commonplaces of modern science; and whilst the cosmology which resulted from their union dazzled by its splendid visions, the precise terminology of the writer, and the very poverty of his imagination, served to reassure his readers that they were

listening to the words of truth and soberness. We were taught to look back upon this earth and all its mighty sisterhood of planets and suns rolling onward in infinite space, through cycle after cycle in the past. We were shown how, through the perpetual flux and reflux of the spiritual and the natural, the cosmic evolution was accomplished, and the earth grew, through the life of crystal, and plant, and brute, to man. We saw how the worlds throbbed in vast alternation of systole and diastole, and how the tide of human life itself had its ebb and flow. And this fugitive human personality—the man who works, and loves, and suffers—we saw to endure but for a short life on earth, and for an age, shorter or longer, in *Devachan.* Memory is then purged away, the eternal spirit puts on a new dress, and a new life on earth is begun. And so through each succeeding re-incarnation the goal of the life preceding becomes the starting-point of the life which follows. But outside of all nebular vortices, and cosmic evolutions, and geological progressions, and beyond the dance of the suns, and behind the cycles of time and the sequence of fading generations, the man himself endures as an incorruptible, indiscerptible, and imperishable unity.

But lest the eye should be dimmed and the heart grow faint with fear, as the vast panorama of the ages revolves before us, Mr. Sinnett was careful to explain that the actual number of lives which an individual may expect in this particular *Manvantara* will be not less than six hundred and eighty-

six, nor more than eight hundred, each with its corresponding allotment of *Devachan*; and that, as we have now only reached the middle of the fourth round (out of seven), we have approximately three hundred and fifty lives still to the good, and can spare time to attend to our immediate business, and so avert catastrophe in the critical period of the fifth round: the future which awaits us in the coming *Pralaya*, and the next ensuing *Manvantara*, we may safely leave to the *Dhyan Chohasn.*

But to the Brothers—or, in their language, *Mahatmas*—is given not only this transcendent vision of the universal flux of things, but also the mastery over *Akaz*, the mysterious world-ether, full of unknown and dimly conjectured potencies. Mr. Sinnett gives us a few instances of the marvels effected by *akasic* force. The letters on which his book is based reached him by various channels; sometimes they would drop on his desk from the air; sometimes they would be discovered in private drawers, or enclosed in the covers of official telegrams. At other times the Master, Koot Hoomi, preferred to write his instructions on the blank spaces of a letter as it came through the post, leaving the seal intact. Notes were found in cushions and on trees; a cup and saucer were dug up when required at a picnic from a wayside bank; a brooch, long lost, was reconstructed from its elements to order. But of all the marvels reported, those which most attracted the Western mind, whilst they possessed in themselves most verisimilitude, were the apparitions of

Mahatmas in distant places. Not the adepts only, but some of the more advanced pupils also, claimed this power of projecting their "astral bodies" to the place where they would be. But these phantasmal visits appeared to stand on a different footing from the other marvels alleged. The transportation and duplication of objects, and the miraculous conveyance of Mahatma letters, bore a *primâ facie* resemblance to conjuring tricks, and they were apt to occur with disproportionate frequency in the neighbourhood of Madame Blavatsky. It seemed therefore antecedently probable that closer investigation might reveal a causal connection with her of a kind not unfamiliar to Western science. But the occurrence of the apparitions seemed to rest on the credible testimony of several independent observers, both native and European, and to discredit these was to impute fraud, or almost imbecile credulity, to those persons. Moreover, to admit the possibility of the facts attested by no means involved an acceptance of the explanation given. There was no need to assume the actual transportation of an astral, or ethereal, or *akasic* body. It was sufficient to suppose that some telepathic communication took place between the mind of the master and his disciple capable of evoking an hallucinatory image. The occurrence would thus be referable to the same general causes as many spontaneous cases of apparitions which had already been brought under the notice of the Society for Psychical Research; and further, we

had investigated a few cases in this country of voluntarily induced hallucinations, which seemed to present a parallel sufficiently close to encourage further examination of this Indian evidence. Upon these considerations it appeared to the Council of the Society that the theosophical phenomena presented a *primâ facie* case for investigation, and a Committee, of whom the present writer was one, was appointed for that purpose in May, 1884. After receiving the oral or written evidence of several important witnesses, some of them at that time resident in England, it seemed to us desirable that a fuller investigation should be made on the spot, and Mr. R. Hodgson, of St. John's College, Cambridge, accordingly proceeded to India in November, 1884. Previously to his departure there had appeared in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* some letters, of a directly incriminating character, alleged to have been written by Madame Blavatsky to two confederates. Mr. Hodgson was instructed to inquire into the authenticity of those letters, as also to examine the evidence offered for the physical phenomena, and for the *astral* journeys above described.

The letters purported to be written by Madame Blavatsky to Monsieur and Madame Coulomb, who had been respectively librarian and assistant corresponding secretary at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, having been introduced into the Society by Madame Blavatsky herself. Written in an extraordinary medley of

French, English, and occasional Italian, they contained instructions, readily intelligible through the disguise of nicknames, allusions, and colloquial brevities, for the carrying out of an elaborate series of impostures. If the letters were authentic, there could be no doubt that some, at least, of the marvels which took place in the headquarters at Adyar were fraudulently produced, and that the Coulombs fully merited the honour which they claimed for themselves, of having been the accomplices in fraud of Madame Blavatsky. It is sufficient to say here that, in the unanimous opinion of the two experts, Messrs. Netherclift and Sims, and of other competent persons who examined these letters, they are indisputably the authentic productions of Madame Blavatsky.

The marvels, to the manufacture of which these letters related, included apparitions of the Mahatmas, who seem generally to have been personated by one of the Coulombs, with the aid of drapery and a dummy head—over whose destruction by Mons. Coulomb, in a fit of rage and remorse, Madame Blavatsky utters a pathetic lament, "Oh, mon pauvre Cristofolo! Il est donc mort, et vous l'avez tué!" The letters bore also upon what are known as the Shrine phenomena. The Shrine was a small wooden cupboard, placed against the wall of the "occult" room at headquarters, and it formed the ordinary means of communication with the Brothers, notes being placed in it for transmission to Thibet, and the answers being received in some cases almost

instantaneously. It will be sufficient to quote here a description by an eye-witness of one of the most famous of the miracles of the Shrine. General Morgan, a member of the Theosophical Society, writes thus in the supplement to the *Theosophist* for December, 1883 :

" In the month of August, having occasion to come to Madras in the absence of Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, I visited the headquarters of the Theosophical Society to see a wonderful painting of the Mahatma Koot Hoomi kept there in a Shrine and daily attended to by the Chelas. On arrival at the house I was told that the lady, Madame Coulomb, who had charge of the keys of the Shrine, was absent, so I awaited her return. She came home in about an hour, and we proceeded up-stairs to open the Shrine and inspect the picture. Madame Coulomb advanced quickly to unlock the double doors of the hanging cupboard, and hurriedly threw them open. In so doing she had failed to observe that a china tray inside was on the edge of the Shrine and leaning against one of the doors, and when they were opened, down fell the china tray, smashed to pieces on the hard chunam floor. Whilst Madame Coulomb was wringing her hands and lamenting this unfortunate accident to a valuable article of Madame Blavatsky's, and her husband was on his knees collecting the *débris*, I remarked it would be necessary to obtain some china cement and thus try to restore the fragments. Thereupon M. Coulomb was despatched for the same. The broken pieces were carefully collected and placed, tied in a cloth, within the Shrine, and the doors locked. Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar, the Joint Recording Secretary of the Society, was opposite the Shrine, seated on a chair, about ten feet away from it, when, after some conversation, an idea occurred to me to which I immediately gave expression. I remarked that if the Brothers considered it of sufficient importance, they would easily restore the broken articles ; if not, they would leave it to the culprits to do so, the best way they could. Five minutes had

scarcely elapsed after this remark when Mr. Damodar, who during this time seemed wrapped in a reverie, exclaimed, 'I think there is an answer.' The doors were opened, and, sure enough, a small note was found on the shelf of the Shrine—on opening which we read: 'To the small audience present. Madame Coulomb has occasion to assure herself that the devil is neither so black nor so wicked as he is generally represented; the mischief is easily repaired.'

"On opening the cloth the china tray was found to be whole and perfect; not a trace of the breakage to be found on it! I at once wrote across the note, stating that I was present when the tray was broken and immediately restored, dated and signed it, so that there should be no mistake in the matter. It may be here observed that Madame Coulomb believes that the many things of a wonderful nature that occur at the headquarters may be the work of the devil—hence the playful remark of the Mahatma who came to her rescue." [1]

This is General Morgan's almost contemporary account of the miracle. In the Blavatsky-Coulomb correspondence occur the following letters, undated, but written apparently a few days before the occurrence above described:

"C'est je crois cela que vous devez avoir. Tâchez donc si vous croyez que cela va réussir d'avoir plus d'audience que nos *imbéciles domestiques* seulement. Cela mérite la peine—Car la soucoupe d'Adyar pourrait devenir historique comme la tasse de Simla. Soubbaya ici et je n'ai guère le temps *d'écrire à mon aise*, à vous mes honneurs et remerciments.

[Signed] "H. P. B."

This letter is said by Madame Coulomb to have contained the following enclosure:

"To the small audience present as witness. Now Madame Coulomb has occasion to assure herself that the devil is neither

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iii., pp. 218–19.

as black nor as wicked as he is generally represented. The mischief is easily repaired.—K. H."

" *Vendredi.*

" Ma chère Madame Coulomb et Marquis,[1]—Voici le moment de nous montrer—*ne nous cachons pas.* Le Général part pour affaires à Madras et y sera lundi et y passera deux jours. Il est Président de la Société ici et veut voir le *shrine.* C'est probable qu'il fera une question quelconque et peutêtre se bornera-t-il à regarder. Mais il est sûr qu'il s'attend à un phénomène, car il me l'a dit. Dans le premier cas suppliez K. H. que vous voyez tous les jours ou Cristofolo de soutenir l'honneur de famille. Dites lui donc qu'une fleur suffirait, et que *si le pot de chambre cassait* sous le poids de la curiosité il serait bon de le remplacer *en ce moment.* Damn les autres. Celui-là vaut son pesant d'or. Per l'amor del Dio ou de qui vous voudrez *ne manquez pas cette occasion,* car elle ne se répétera plus. Je ne suis pas là, et c'est cela qui est beau. Je me fie à vous et je vous supplie de ne pas me désappointer car tous mes projets et mon avenir avec vous tous—(car je vais avoir une maison ici pour passer les six mois de l'année et elle sera à moi à la Société, et vous ne souffrirez plus de la chaleur comme vous le faites, si j'y réussis).

. . . . . .

" Voici le moment de faire quelque chose. Tournez lui la tête au Général et il fera tout pour vous, surtout si vous êtes avec lui au moment du Christophe. Je vous envoie un *en cas* —e vi saluto. Le Colonel vient ici du 20 au 25. Je reviendrai vers le milieu de Septembre.

" A vous de cœur,

" LUNA MELANCONICA." [2]

We may note here a judicious economy of the supernatural; signs and wonders are not to be lavished to little profit on those who believe already. But Madame Blavatsky is, perhaps, unduly severe

[1] Marquis and Marquise were names given by Madame Blavatsky to M. and Madame Coulomb.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

upon her "domestic imbeciles," who appear to have played their parts upon the occasion so well that General Morgan, a year or two later, still believed in the genuineness of the miracle, and wrote a more detailed account, to prove that it was miraculous.

It may be added that Mr. Hodgson was permitted to examine the saucer in question; that he ascertained that Madame Coulomb had made purchases at a store in Madras on July 3, 1883, and that two articles of the kind had actually been sold on that day at the cost of 2 rupees 8 annas the pair—a quite inconsiderable outlay, it will be admitted, for a miracle of this magnitude.

The Shrine itself had been destroyed by the Theosophists two or three months before Mr. Hodgson arrived in India. By the interrogation, however, of a large number of persons, native and European, and by a careful inspection of its former site, he was enabled to give a tolerably clear description of the Shrine and its surroundings, which is illustrated by diagrams in his Report. Briefly, the Shrine was fastened against the party wall between the "occult" room and Madame Blavatsky's bedroom; in the wall immediately behind it a window had formerly existed. The window had been built up level with the general surface of the wall on the "occult" side, but remained as a deep recess on the other side of the wall. This recess was at first used as a wardrobe by Madame Blavatsky. Afterwards, when this arrangement appeared objectionable, the recess was closed in by a wooden

framework filled with bricks, leaving, however, a hollow space in the thickness of the wall, and a sideboard was placed in front of it. In the back of the Shrine was a sliding panel, hidden by a mirror; in the wall against which it rested was a corresponding hole, hidden by the Shrine; between this wall and the brick framework was a hollow space, one foot in depth and about eight feet high; in the brick framework there was an aperture large enough to admit a man's body; and the sideboard which concealed this aperture from view possessed also a sliding panel at the back. It remains only to add that the more advanced initiates so stringently enjoined on their fellow-disciples the utmost reverence for the Shrine, that the majority of the native members durst not approach within some feet, and that the Europeans respected its sanctity and avoided all sacrilegious handling of it.

Another phenomenon of frequent occurrence in the vicinity of Madame Blavatsky was the mysterious precipitation of letters in one of the well-known Mahatma handwritings, addressed to some one present, and having generally some bearing on the subject of conversation at the moment. Mr. Hodgson was so fortunate as to witness a phenomenon of this kind in the presence, not indeed of the high-priestess herself, but of her right trusty friends and servants, M. and Madame Coulomb. Mr. Hodgson wrote from Madras on January 9, 1885:

"This morning I called upon the Coulombs, who are living

at the house of Mrs. Dyer in St. Thomé. I conversed a short time with M. Coulomb before Madame Coulomb appeared. In the course of the conversation that followed I remarked, concerning certain cases of premonition, that I had no satisfactory theory at present to account for them. At this moment something white appeared, touching my hair, and fell on the floor. It was a letter. I picked it up. It was addressed to myself. M. and Madame Coulomb were sitting near me and in front of me. I had observed no motion on their part which could account for the appearance of the letter. Examining the ceiling as I stood I could detect no flaw ; it appeared intact. On opening the letter, I found it referred to the conversation which had just taken place. I transcribe the words :

"'Because the existing cause of to-day foretells the effect of to-morrow—a bud assures us beforehand the full-blown rose of to-morrow ; on seeing a fine field of corn in which are buried eggs of locusts, we are to foresee that that corn will never enter the granary ; by the appearance of consumptive father and scrofulous mother a sickly child can be foretold. Now all these causes, which bring to us these effects, have in their turn their effects themselves, and so, *ad infinitum ;* and as nothing is lost in Nature, but remains impressed in the *akasa*, so the acute perception of the seer beginning at the source arrives at the result with exactitude.

"'THE NEW ADEPT, COLUMBUS.'"[1]

The ceiling of the room in which this took place was supported by a main beam and several transverse beams, the intervening spaces being filled by blocks of wood held together by mortar. The mortar, M. Coulomb explained, had been scraped out of one of the interstices, so that the letter could be inserted. A piece of thread was passed loosely twice round the letter, and the end placed in the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 249, 250.

hands of an accomplice outside the room, who, on a given signal (a call to the dog), pulled the thread away, and so caused the fall of the letter. The subject of the conversation had, of course, been led up to.

The ceiling of Madame Blavatsky's room had the construction above described; other ceilings appear to have been covered with a ceiling cloth having a slit in it; or to have been composed of loosely fitting boards, with a trap for the letter in a loft above—as in the guest-room at Crow's Nest Bungalow, where Mr. Sinnett received an important missive from Koot Hoomi.

The above may be taken as fair specimens of the power of the adepts over the material world. We come now to the *astral* journeys. The accounts given of the apparitions of the Mahatmas themselves appeared to us to possess little evidential value, both from the conditions under which they appeared, and from the character of the principal witnesses. Moreover, the bodily existence of the Mahatmas seemed to be in no wise adequately proved. But there were the *astral* journeys of Mr. Damodar, an advanced *Chela*, or pupil, the evidence for which seemed to possess superior cogency. One of these journeys is thus described by Colonel Olcott, in his evidence given before the Committee[1]:

"On the night of the 17th November, 1883, I was in the train on my way from Meerut, N. W. P., to Lahore. Two per-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

sons were in the carriage with me—Mr. Damodar, and another Hindu named Narain Swamy Naidu, who were asleep on their beds at either side of the saloon compartment. I myself was reading a book by the light of the lamp. Damodar had been moving upon his bed from time to time, showing that he was not physically asleep, as the other one was. Presently Damodar came to me and asked what time it was. I told him that it was a few minutes to 6 P.M. He said: 'I have just been to headquarters,'—meaning in the double,—'and an accident has happened to Madame Blavatsky.' I inquired if it was anything serious. He said that he could not tell me; but she had tripped her foot in the carpet, he thought, and fallen heavily upon her right knee. . . . I therefore tore a piece of paper out of some book, and on the spot made a memorandum, which was signed by myself and the second Hindu."

The memorandum runs as follows:

"In train at Nagul Station, S. P. and D. Railway, at 5.55 P.M., 17/11/83. D. K. M. says he has just been (in Sukshma Sarira) to headquarters. H. P. B. has just tripped in carpet and hurt right knee. Had just taken K. H.'s portrait from Shrine. Heard her mention names of General and Mrs. Morgan. Thinks they are there. Saw nobody but H. P. B., but *felt* several others.

"The next station reached by the train was Saharanpur, where a halt of half an hour for supper occurred. I went directly to the telegraph office, and sent a despatch to Madame Blavatsky as near as I can remember in the following words: 'What accident happened at headquarters at about 6 o'clock? Answer to Lahore.'"

To this Madame Blavatsky telegraphed in reply:

"Nearly broke right leg, tumbling from bishop's chair, dragging Coulomb, frightening Morgans. Damodar startled us."

Colonel Olcott added:

"The presence of General and Mrs. Morgan at headquarters is confirmed by this telegram, and before that we travellers had no knowledge of their having come down from the Nilgiris."

And to this remark Madame Blavatsky, when she read through Colonel Olcott's depositions in proof, appended the following note: "They had just arrived from the Nilgherry Hills.—H. P. Blavatsky." If Colonel Olcott was correct in his statement that the presence of the Morgans at headquarters was unexpected, it appeared to us improbable that the coincidence of Madame Blavatsky's accident and Mr. Damodar's account of the matter could be due to collusion. The incident would then fall under a category with which we were already familiar—thought transference at a distance, or telepathy. The two actors in this episode were intimately associated in the work of Theosophy, and it seemed possible that an accident of the kind occurring to one of them should prove an occasion for the transmission of a telepathic impulse, such as we believed on other evidence to occur at times of crisis between persons in close sympathy with one another. Mr. Hodgson, however, learned from General and Mrs. Morgan that, so far from having "just arrived," they had been at headquarters for a week when this occurred; that they had been specially summoned thither by a Mahatma letter; and that even so they had not been actual witnesses of the accident, having been in another part of the house at the time.

In another case of the kind, occurring a few days previously, in which Mr. Damodar was again the principal figure, the evidence against pre-arrangement by collusion between him and Madame Blavatsky rested mainly upon Colonel Olcott's positive statement, that his movements were not known at headquarters beforehand. In the event it was proved, by a comparison of Colonel Olcott's diary with the antecedently published programme of his tour in the *Theosophist*, and with other published evidence, that every detail of the scene described could have been anticipated at headquarters for some days or even weeks beforehand, and it seems probable that the "astral journeys" of Mr. Damodar, with their attesting telegrams, were in both cases preconcerted by that gentleman with Madame Blavatsky before he left to accompany the unsuspecting Colonel Olcott on his tour.

That the phenomenal basis of Theosophy should thus disappear upon a strict examination was perhaps neither unexpected nor altogether unwelcome to some of the more intelligent adherents of the doctrine. Madame Blavatsky's nomadic life, and her past record as a Spiritualist, must have appeared to them, as to us, suspicious circumstances, and it might seem not improbable that to a woman of her unscrupulous judgment fraud would be justified in the measure of its success. She had, it was presumed, a mission to preach certain saving truths, and if her gospel was too subtle to be readily apprehended by those to whom it was preached,

it might well be that she would not pause for any over-nice scrutiny of the means to be employed in the propaganda. If the crude materialism of the West refused to receive the message in its metaphysical simplicity, the apostles of a neoteric Buddhism must devise other methods to enforce its acceptance. To those who will believe only in what they can touch and see, arguments must be presented of a visible and palpable kind. Haply the truth which is enwrapped in the fictitious symbols will so be more readily discerned. By reasoning of this kind it appeared to some that Madame Blavatsky might have sanctified her impostures. Of course this theory involved the Mahatmas in connivance with fraud. But so might a scientific Pope view with approval the miracles of Lourdes, and refrain from disturbing comment on the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius. And other circumstances had come to light, which proved that, whatever their wisdom and spirituality, the adepts fell short of the European standard of honour. Koot Hoomi himself had been convicted of gross and impudent plagiarism, and had, after a delay of some months, offered an explanation, which, in the opinion of many, served only to aggravate his original fault. In brief, it had already become evident that the Master, if a saint and a scholar, was something less than a gentleman.

It seemed still possible, therefore, that there might be real Mahatmas with an authentic message to deliver. Now the evidence for the existence of

the Mahatmas rested ultimately on their writings; for no reliance could, obviously, be placed upon the testimony of discredited witnesses, who professed to have seen—generally in the dusk of the evening—the phantoms of the "Brothers" walking many yards off on the terrace, or standing in the balcony at headquarters; or who had knelt spell-bound with awe under a shower of Thibetan roses thrown by the Master's hand. Nor did the identity of the undeniably human forms, purporting to be those of Mahatmas, which had been seen by one or two European witnesses, rest upon any surer foundation. It was, therefore, of the first importance to examine the writings minutely. There was no lack of material. The greater part of the *Occult World* had been founded on letters from Koot Hoomi, and they had been freely lavished amongst the faithful, and amongst those who lingered in the borderland of faith and doubt. As the inquiry into other phenomena proceeded, it became, from external evidence, increasingly probable that the Koot Hoomi scriptures also were the handiwork of Madame Blavatsky. But the two English experts, to whom some specimens of the later Koot Hoomi writings were submitted, unhesitatingly repudiated that theory. Mr. Hodgson, however, took pains to collect from every accessible source a complete series of Koot Hoomi writings of various dates; and his elaborate and minute comparison of these with the acknowledged writings of Madame Blavatsky served to establish beyond reason-

able doubt their common authorship. For the details of his argument and for facsimiles of the various writings, the reader must refer to the *Report* itself. It is sufficient here to state that the earliest specimens of the Koot Hoomi writings and the contemporary writings of Madame Blavatsky possessed some very marked features in common, but that gradually the resemblances disappeared, by the elimination of certain characteristic forms from Madame Blavatsky's ordinary hand, and by the concurrent development of more distinctive and specialised characters in the Koot Hoomi scriptures. The formation of certain letters remained to the last identical in the two series. It may be added that the professional experts, after examining the fuller and more representative selection of documents, retracted the opinion which they originally expressed, and concurred in that arrived at independently by Mr. Hodgson. There are, moreover, various marked peculiarities of grammar, idiom, and spelling common to the two writings.[1]

With the proof of the forgery of the Koot Hoomi documents, the last shred of evidence for the Theosophical position vanishes. It is not, of course, possible in the compass of this chapter to furnish a tithe of the accumulated proof of imposture. The time would fail to tell of the Simla cup, of the famous plaster plaque incident, of brooches and rings formed out of the *Akaz*, of the "Vega"

[1] *S. P. R.*, vol. iii., pp. 306–7.

letter, the "Sassoon" telegram, and the "astral bells." Nor can we stay to speak of the apocalyptic hand of Mr. T. Vigiaraghava Charloo, "commonly called Ananda"; of the too frequent presence of the serviceable Babula; of the mythical existence of Ramalinga Deb, and the many-named personality of the ingenuous Babajee; of the childlike simplicity of Colonel Olcott, and the faithfulness through good and evil report of Dr. Hartmann and the Board of Control; of the 'prentice forgeries of Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar; and of all the multiform successes in the same line of Madame Blavatsky herself. And we must, with more reluctance, forbear to discuss the motives which Mr. Hodgson imputes to that lady, and the not inconsiderable part which he assigns to her in the international drama.

It remains but to say a few words in explanation of the attitude assumed by the Society for Psychical Research. In entering upon this inquiry we were led away by no craving for mysticism, nor buoyed up by the hope of introducing into Europe the lost secrets of Oriental magic. When, however, we found ourselves confronted with evidence for occurrences in India, analogous in some respects to those which had already formed the subject of our inquiries in England, and when we found that some of these occurrences were vouched for by witnesses of good repute and good intelligence in other matters, we held that we should not be justified in summarily dismissing their evidence. It did, in-

deed, seem to some of us probable that the alleged physical marvels would prove to be fraudulent; but it seemed also not impossible that the accounts which had reached us of the *astral* journeys might prove to be slightly distorted versions of actual occurrences, analogous to those cases of thought transference with which we were already familiar. Moreover, to reject the evidence for those occurrences was, as it then seemed to us, to impute fraud to Colonel Olcott as well as to Mr. Damodar. Colonel Olcott we believed to be an honourable man, and Mr. Damodar was credibly alleged to be a Hindu of high caste, who had voluntarily sacrificed his patrimony on account of his connection with the Theosophical Society, and who had unquestionably been, in the early years of the Society, himself the recipient of many of the signs and wonders reported. It seemed unlikely that one who began as a dupe should end as an accomplice in imposture. In the event it has proved that there was fraud; and we are constrained to believe that the transformation above referred to in the attitude of Mr. Damodar was less difficult than we had supposed. If Colonel Olcott's honesty has not been impugned, the limits of his credulity have proved elastic beyond our anticipation.

In fact, many of the leading members of the Theosophic cult present, in the light of this inquiry, a pleasantly ambiguous blend of charlatanry and simplicity.

Since the publication, in 1885, of Mr. Hodgson's

Report, upon which the foregoing account of Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical movement is based, much additional evidence has been published. In the first place, we have the translation of a series of letters written from America by Madame Blavatsky to Mr. Aksakoff. We have here the whole early history of the Theosophical Society, told in her own inimitable style by its foundress. The series begin in October, 1874, with a letter describing the spirit materialisations at the Eddy brothers' house, and the writer's meeting there with Colonel Olcott. It goes on to speak of the eleven millions of Spiritualists at the last census in the United States, "which have already grown to eighteen millions, almost 50 per cent." (Madame was always a little vague in her arithmetic), and of the writer's own adhesion to the faith—"I have now been a Spiritualist for more than ten years, and now all my life is devoted to the doctrine." Then came, at an inopportune moment, the Katie King exposure, which made Spiritualism less popular on the other side of the Atlantic. Madame Blavatsky began by denouncing the exposure as "neither more nor less than a plot (now almost proved) of the Protestant Jesuitical Society called the Young Men's Christian Association!" (Ten years later, the same Madame Blavatsky, in a new rôle, was protesting that another exposure, in which she was more directly concerned, was due to a conspiracy on the part of certain Christian missionaries, who had—as again was "almost proved"—

paid 40,000 rupees to suborn false witnesses.) Shortly after we read of a secession from the orthodox American Spiritualists, and the establishment of a new organ, the *Spiritual Scientist.* Then again we hear much of the Hermetic philosophy and of the Kabbala and of Paracelsus; of the fruits of Madame's observations in past journeyings in Egypt, Assyria, Siam, Cambodia, Mexico. Then we are enabled to trace how, by stern necessity, under the pressure of the environment, Spiritualism was gradually metamorphosed into Theosophy, ghosts into astral bodies, spiritual phenomena into manifestations of the occult power of the human mind; how finally Madame from a medium evolved into a Chela, John King with his saucer-shaped cap became the Mahatma Morya with his turban; and the centre of the spiritual universe shifted from the séance room to the Thibetan Himalayas.

But an even more important document is furnished by Mr. Solovyoff's account of his intercourse with Madame Blavatsky in the years 1884–6, and of her final confession to him of the nature of the occult power which she exercised.[1]

Mr. Solovyoff is a Russian of good social position, and an author of some repute. At the time when his narrative begins, May, 1884, he was staying in Paris, studying mystic and occult literature, and planning to write on "the rare, but, in my

[1] *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, by V. S. Solovyoff, abridged and translated from the Russian, on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, by Dr. Walter Leaf. London, Longmans & Co., 1895. (With an appendix containing letters of Madame Blavatsky.)

opinion, real manifestations of the imperfectly investigated spiritual powers of man." Quite opportunely, when thus engaged, he came across a recent book of Madame Blavatsky's, and a copy of the *Matin* containing a notice of her arrival in Paris. Having obtained an introduction from a friend at St. Petersburg, Mr. Solovyoff called a few days later. He found Madame Blavatsky lodged in a small, poorly furnished apartment, in a long, mean street, and was at first repelled by the "plain, old, earthy-coloured face" of the Prophetess herself. But they were both Russians, and in a strange land; Mr. Solovyoff received a frank and kindly greeting, and in a few minutes found himself talking as to an old friend.

Their first interview, whilst productive of much high spiritual converse, was not wholly barren of "phenomena." Madame Blavatsky left the room for a few minutes—to attend to some domestic duty, as she explained,—and shortly after her return the silvery peal of the famous astral bells was heard in the air. A few days later, after receiving an assurance that no religious dogma was involved, and that the study of Oriental literature was the chief object aimed at, Mr. Solovyoff was initiated in due form into the Theosophical Society. Shortly afterwards, he made the acquaintance of Colonel Olcott and the celebrated turban given to him in New York by an astral visitant from the Himalayas.

A few days later Mr. Solovyoff was himself privileged to witness a manifestation of a remarkable

kind. He called upon Madame Blavatsky by appointment one morning. There were present Madame Blavatsky, her sister, Madame Jelihovsky, and others. To them thus assembled there came a ring at the outer door. The door was opened by the serviceable Babula, Madame Blavatsky's Hindu servant, who was seen by Solovyoff to take a letter from the postman's hand, and lay it, securely sealed, on the table. The letter was for Miss X., an elderly lady staying in the house, who had not yet left her room. It occurred to Madame Blavatsky that the letter, thus unexpectedly introduced, afforded an excellent opportunity for a test. She placed the unopened letter against her forehead and slowly wrote down its contents, uttering them aloud at the same time, amidst expressions of scepticism from Madame Jelihovsky. Irritated no doubt by this wanton display of domestic unbelief, the Prophetess vouchsafed further proofs of her power. With a red pencil she drew on the paper a theosophical symbol, and at the same time underlined—"obviously with a great effort of will"—a word in her copy of the letter. Miss X. then came in and read the letter in their presence. The contents of the letter were identical with the copy made by Madame Blavatsky: even the theosophical sign and the underlined word occurred in their proper place in the original.

This phenomenon appears to have considerably impressed Solovyoff. Some other miracles, however, were not so successful: but he still continued

on friendly terms with Madame Blavatsky, and appears to have been regarded by her as a likely convert.

Finally, in the late summer or autumn of 1885, Mr. Solovyoff went to Würzburg at Madame's invitation. He found her alone, save for one Hindu attendant, in ill-health, and depressed by the recent publication of Mr. Hodgson's Report. A phenomenon which she attempted with the unskilful co-operation of poor Babajee resulted in a ludicrous fiasco. She was alone, and seems to have felt the need of sympathy and counsel. At last an accident precipitated the crisis. Solovyoff went by Madame's invitation to get a photograph from a drawer, and found there a packet of the Chinese envelopes already familiar to him, in which letters "astrally" conveyed from Thibet had been wont to appear. Then came the dramatic moment. Madame Blavatsky unbosomed herself completely. "What is one to do," she said, "when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them"; when they will not accept even the doctrine of *Isis Unveiled* without the sanction of miracles; when their very stupidity invites trickery, for "almost invariably the more simple, the more silly, and the more gross the phenomenon, the more likely it is to succeed"? Then followed much more about the imbecility of her dupes, and of the world in general, and something about the syndicate of scribes who wrote the celebrated Koot Hoomi letters; of Olcott's blundering but well-intentioned assistance in

"phenomena," and his acquittal by the S. P. R. of anything worse than stupidity—a verdict which Madame seems to have regarded as a personal insult. The strange interview terminated with an exhibition of the "astral bell," and an invitation to Solovyoff to co-operate in the manufacture of Koot Hoomi letters.

On the same day there followed a second interview, in which Madame Blavatsky tried by various means to obliterate the impression which she had made. First, she alleged that it was a black magician, and not she herself, who had spoken through her mouth; then, that the Master had designed to try the faith of his would-be disciple. Next, she used alternate threats and promises. Finally, she sent to Solovyoff an extraordinary document headed, *My Confession.*

Mr. Solovyoff contented himself, at the time, with laying before the Theosophical Society in Paris the proofs thus acquired of Madame Blavatsky's fraud. It was not until 1892, after her death, that he published his narrative to the world.

Of the later history of the Theosophical movement, and of the revelations made by Mr. Edmund Garrett in *Isis very much Unveiled*, it is not necessary to speak here. And it would be rash to prophesy even now—notwithstanding all the damning evidence of fraud, notwithstanding the loss of the unique personality of the foundress—that the movement is near dissolution. To most men who have given themselves over to a false

belief there comes a time when the ears are deaf and the eyes are closed and the heart is hardened, so that they will not believe even the testimony of the false prophet against himself. For are there not, as we have seen, black magicians and other powers of darkness who may transform themselves into the likeness of angels of light? With such men and against such a contention, argument is no longer even possible. *Decipiantur.*

CHAPTER VII.

EXPERIMENTAL THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE.

THE first hints of the possibility of the communication of ideas without the intermediary of the normal channels of sense appear in the writings of the mesmerists in the early part of this century. In particular we find scattered through the pages of the English writers, Esdaile, Elliotson, Gregory, and their contemporaries, various observations of what they called "community of sensation" between the operator and his mesmerised subject. But none of the earlier writers appear to have realised the full significance of the facts observed; they gave their attention by preference, on the one hand, to the more practical side of mesmerism, the induction of sleep and various healing processes; and on the other to various novel observations which seemed to open up a wider vista of discovery, the alleged phenomena of clairvoyance, obsession, and spirit communication. So that these indications of a new mode of sensory affection appeared by comparison humble and unattractive, and remained sterile; until, mainly as an indirect consequence of the discovery of chloroform, mesmerism and all its attendant marvels

passed for a time into disuse and disrepute. At a later period public exhibitions of "thought-reading" and the introduction of the "willing" game brought the question once more to the front. There can be little doubt that to the wide interest excited by these performances we owe the rediscovery of phenomena which, whatever may prove to be their ultimate interpretation, appear to indicate a new mode of thought-transmission. The drawing-room amusement of fifteen or twenty years ago has played the part of alchemy in the birth of our new chemistry. In suggesting such an analogy, however, it is important to note an essential difference. When the alchemist reduced some metallic oxide in his crucible he had in fact, however erroneous his interpretation of what he saw, assisted at a genuine chemical reaction. But the willing game and the thought-reading of the platform were not ordinarily demonstrations of genuine "thought-transference" at all. The success attained in such exhibitions is to be attributed to the sometimes unconscious, sometimes skilful interpretation by the performer of various hints given in look, gesture, or barely perceptible movement, by the unwitting agent or spectator. It is not until we have excluded all contact or other normal means of communication between "agent" and "percipient,"—in other words, until we have eliminated the very conditions upon which the platform conjurer depends for his success,—that we have any justification for invoking a new mode of

sensory communication. Our modern alchemist did but shape the crucible, and left it to others, working on the hint so given, to purge the silver.

In considering the evidence upon which the hypothesis of a new mode of sensory or super-sensory communication is founded, we have to guard against errors of another kind than those which render nugatory the testimony to the physical phenomena with which the last five chapters have been concerned. In most experiments in thought-transference, the opportunities for trickery are limited by the conditions, and the grosser inducements to fraud are absent in cases where the subjects are unpaid. Of course all experimental results assume the good faith of the experimenters themselves. There are, no doubt, circumstances in which the assumption would be unjustified. As already indicated, there are cases where we have detected, or seen good reason to suspect, trickery on the part of persons whose position should have placed them above suspicion. But in adults, cases of disinterested deception are probably rare. Indeed the whole of our social structure is based on the assumption that normally constituted men and women will not cheat or lie without sufficient motive; without, that is, some hope of gain, not necessarily, indeed, of a material kind. The glory of perpetrating a successful hoax would no doubt for some minds constitute a sufficient motive. Instances of such hoaxes have occurred in other fields; and in the course of our researches we have

met with several cases of wilful deception, and have seen reason to suspect it occasionally when direct proof was not possible. But the perpetrators of such hoaxes are for the most part young persons; or have carried into later life some of the defects of immaturity. What might be a pardonable mystification in a party of schoolboys or of girls in their teens would be dishonourable—and I may add rarely credible—in the same persons when they had reached their full moral and intellectual stature.

However, apart from the extreme hypothesis of a conspiracy amongst the experimenters themselves to present the world with fraudulent results of a singularly tame and uninspiring kind, fraud is scarcely a possible explanation of any of the experiments on which a careful investigator would place reliance; and for this reason. Results which are capable of being explained by collusion between agent and percipient stand self-condemned. The real danger against which our experimenters have to guard is that the agent may give information to the percipient unconsciously, and the precautions which are sufficient to guard against this source of error are necessarily more than sufficient as a rule to preclude collusion. In the accounts which follow of various typical sets of experiments the precautions taken are described. It will suffice, here, therefore, to point out that we are bound to assume, when dealing with hypnotised persons, a preternormal activity of the special senses. It is well known that the hypnotic can frequently hear sounds

which are quite inaudible to those around him who are concentrating their attention in the very effort to hear; and there are cases on record in which the vision of the hypnotic has been proved greatly to exceed the normal limits.[1] But it will probably be conceded that even a hypnotised hyperæsthetic subject cannot see behind his back; nor hear through walls or ceilings a whisper inaudible to the straining ears on the other side; nor catch the murmur of the agent's quickened pulses at a distance of half a mile.[2] One more precaution—desirable though not essential—should be noted. In our own experiments we have always been careful, so far as circumstances permitted, to draw cards or diagrams, or select a number, at random, so as to avoid the disturbing operation of association of ideas. When this precaution is omitted, it is conceivable that the success attained by the percipient may in some cases be due to a lucky guess at what the agent would be likely to choose. Whether this explanation can plausibly be made to serve for any of the results quoted below, the reader will be in a position to judge for himself.

Thought-Transference in the Normal State.

The following is a record, taken from notes written at the time, of some experiments made on

[1] See for instance M. Bergson, in *Revue Philosophique*, Nov., 1887; and Dr. Sauvaire, *id.*, March, 1887.

[2] This has actually been suggested as a possible explanation of Professor Janet's successful experiments (quoted below) in inducing sleep at a distance.

the 28th of April, 1892, in which Dr. Blair Thaw of New York was the percipient and Mrs. Thaw the agent. Dr. Thaw's eyes were blindfolded, and —since blindfolding is at the best a very imperfect means of preventing sight—the objects, we are told, were in each case held in such a position as to be outside the percipient's range of vision had his eyes been open. Further, Dr. Thaw's ears were muffled and Mrs. Thaw and a friend, Mr. Wyatt, who were the only persons present, kept silence, except when it was necessary to state the nature of the experiment. The objects were in all cases actually looked at by the agent, the "colour" being a coloured disc, and the numbers being printed on separate cards. It is not stated how the objects were selected, but the numbers, cards, and colours appear to have been taken at randon.

April 28th

Dr. Thaw, Percipient. Mrs. Thaw, Agent. Mr. M. H. Wyatt present.

1st Object. SILK PINCUSHION, in form of Orange-Red Apple, quite round.—Percipient: *A Disc.* When asked what colour, said, *Red or Orange.* When asked what object, named *Pincushion.*

2nd Object. A SHORT LEAD PENCIL, nearly covered by the nickel cover. Never seen by percipient.—Percipient: *Something white or light. A Card. I thought of Mr. Wyatt's silver pencil.*

3rd Object. A DARK VIOLET in Mr. Wyatt's button-hole, but not known to be in the house by percipient.—Percipient: *Something dark. Not very big. Longish. Narrow. Soft. It can't be a cigarette because it is dark brown. A dirty colour.* Asked about smell said: *Not strong, but what you might call pungent; a clean smell.*

Percipient had not noticed smell before, though sitting by Mr. Wyatt some time, but when afterwards told of the violet knew that this was the odour noticed in the experiment.

Asked to spell name, percipient said : *Phrygian, Phrigid, or first letter V if not Ph.*

4th Object. WATCH, dull silver with filigree.—Percipient : *Yellow or dirty ivory. Not very big. Like carving on it.* Watch is opened by agent, and percipient is asked what was done. Percipient says : *You opened it. It is shaped like a butterfly.* Percipient held finger and thumb of each hand making figure much like that of opened watch. Percipient asked to spell it said : *I get r-i-n-g with a W at first.*

PLAYING CARDS.

Chosen.

KING SPADES.—*Spades. Spot in middle and spots outside. 7 Spades. 9 Spades.*

4 CLUBS.—*4 Clubs.*

5 SPADES.—*5 Diamonds.*

NUMBERS OUT OF NINE DIGITS.

Chosen.

4.—Percipient said : *It stands up straight. 4.*

6.—Percipient said : *Those two are too much alike, only a little gap in one of them. It is either 5 or 6.*

3.—*3.*

1.—Percipient said : *Cover up that upper part if it is the 1. It is either 7 or 1.*

2.—*9, 8.*

From acting so much as agent in previous trials, I knew the shapes of these numbers printed on cardboard, and as agent found the 5 and 6 too much alike. After looking hard at one of them I can hardly tell the difference, and always cover the upper projection of the 1, because it is so much like a 7.

The numbers were printed on separate pieces of cardboard, and there were about a hundred in the box, being made for some game.

COLOURS, CHOSEN AT RANDOM.

Chosen.	1st Guess.	2nd Guess.
BRIGHT RED	*Bright Red.*	
LIGHT GREEN	*Light Green.*	
YELLOW	*Dark Blue*	*Yellow.*
BRIGHT YELLOW....	*Bright Yellow.*	
DARK RED	*Blue*	*Dark Red.*
DARK BLUE	*Orange*	*Dark Blue.*
ORANGE	*Green*	*Heliotrope.*

These successes with cards, numbers, and colours are the most remarkable of all. The percipient himself told the agents to change character of object after each actual failure, thus getting new sensations.

Percipient was told to go into next room and get something.

1st Object. SILVER INKSTAND chosen.—Percipient, without moving, says: *I think of something, but it is too bright and easy. It is the silver inkstand.*

Percipient told to get something in next room.

2nd Object. A GLASS CANDLESTICK.—Percipient went to right corner of the room and to the cabinet with the object on it, but could not distinguish which object.

Percipient had handkerchief off to be able to walk, but was not followed by agents, and did not see them. Agents found percipient standing with hands over candlestick undecided.[1]

It should be added that this record includes the whole of the experiments made on this particular evening with Dr. Thaw as percipient. Experiments such as that last described, in which the percipient has to execute some movement, can rarely be of a crucial kind. As the professional "thought-reader" has proved, it is not difficult in such a case for the subject of the experiment to guide himself

[1] *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. viii., pp. 428–9.

by the indications unconsciously given by the agent, and often, probably, unconsciously received by himself. An alteration in the breathing, or the slightest gesture, may serve to tell him whether he is "hot" or "cold." But such an explanation will hardly apply to some of the other results. It will be observed, too, that the perception appears in many cases to have come gradually, and in a visual form: a circumstance which does not favour the supposition that the experimenters unconsciously whispered, or gave other audible indications of the object looked at.[1]

The next case is extracted from a report by Mr. H. G. Rawson, Barrister-at-law, of some experiments conducted by him with two ladies, Mrs. L. and Mrs. B., sisters. The following account gives the whole of the trials with diagrams made on this particular occasion. The account given is based on contemporary notes.

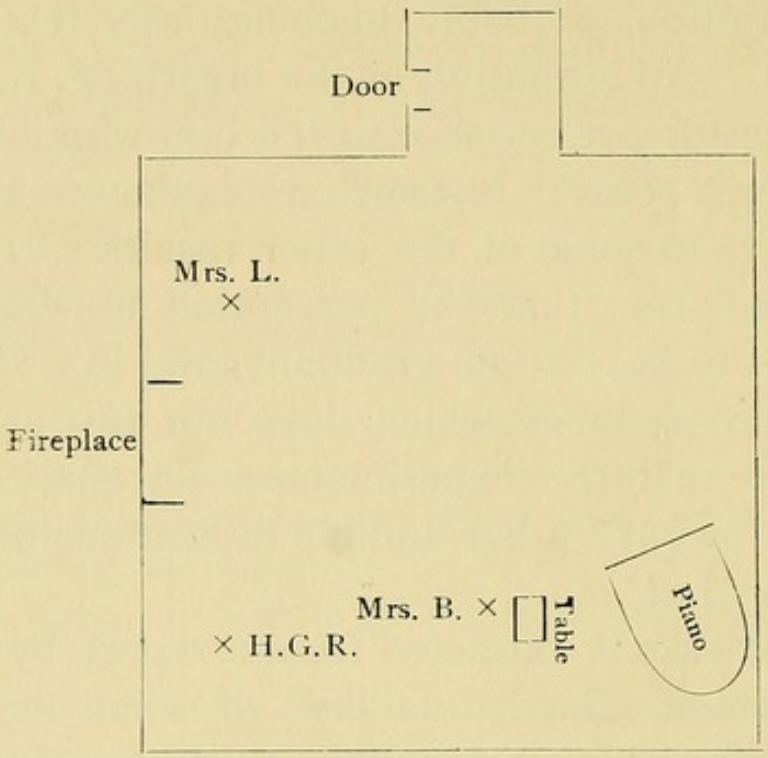
December 12, 1894. Present: Mrs. L., Mrs. B., and myself.

We tried first experiments with drawings, all of which are reproduced below. The annexed plan shows the relative positions of the sitters :—

The originals of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 were drawn by Mrs. L.; in some cases Mrs. B. had finished her thought copy almost as soon as Mrs. L.

[1] It should be noted, however, that there is evidence to show that information unconsciously received through the medium of one sense may be presented in the consciousness as images of another sense—cards identified by touch, for instance, will be visualised. See Mrs. Verrall's experiments, *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. viii., p. 480; vol. xi., pp. 174, *et seqq.* But it should be added that we have no evidence that unconscious whispering is a *vera causa* in such cases.

SKETCH OF ROOM.



Mrs. L. on chair facing towards piano, writing on lap. Mrs. B. sitting at table, back to Mrs. L., 11 feet distant. H.G.R. facing Mrs. L.

The originals of Nos. 4, 5, and 6 were drawn by Mrs. B., in each case at my suggestion.

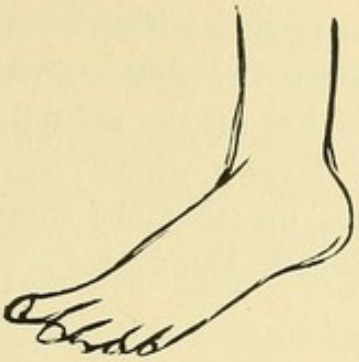
I have recorded all that was said.

(No. 1) Shortly after Mrs. L. began drawing this (a nose) Mrs. B. said, "I can think of nothing; I can only hold my nose." At that time I did not know what Mrs. L. was drawing. In some ten seconds Mrs. B. began drawing, and was finished within fifteen seconds of Mrs. L.

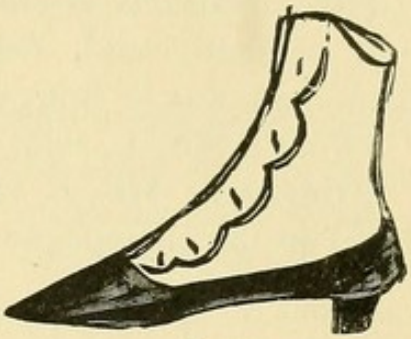
(No. 2) This was more like a foot at first, but while waiting for Mrs. L. to begin a fresh subject Mrs. B. began shading the boot—without thinking—and this accentuates the dissimilarity. This and the case mentioned on November 24th, are the only instances in which the drawing was touched after the original had been seen.

(No. 4) Mrs. L. said almost at once—after, say, ten seconds—"Now I know what it is; I am sure; I can see it."

O. 1 R. 1

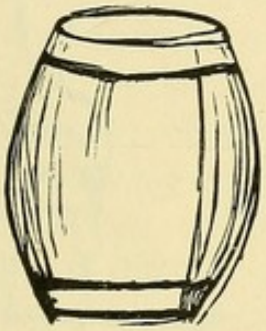


O. 2

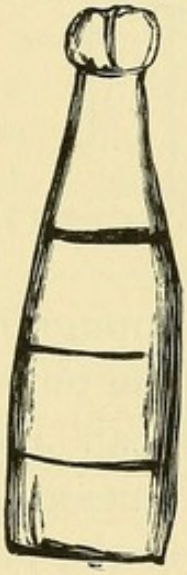


R. 2

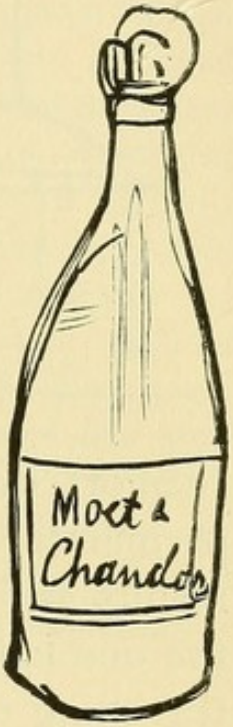
O. 3



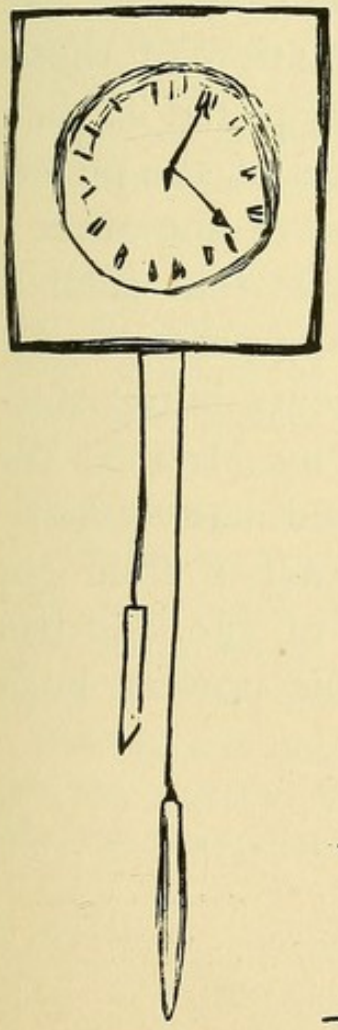
R. 3



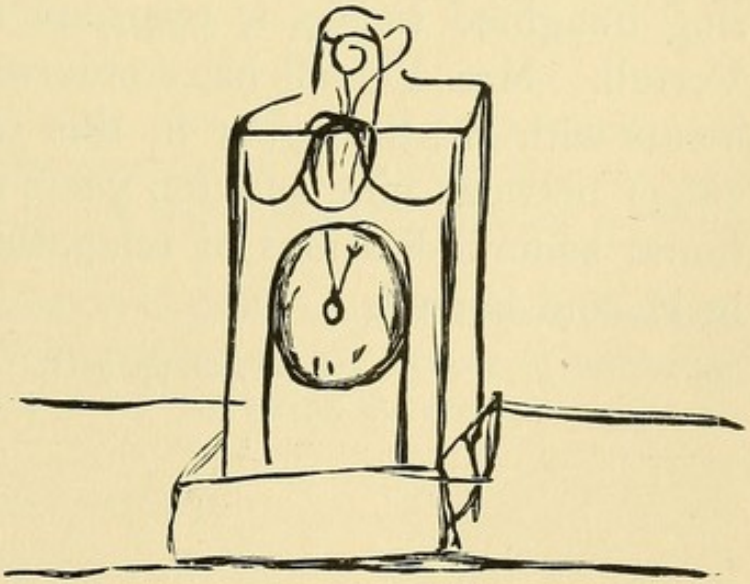
O. 4



R. 4



O. 5



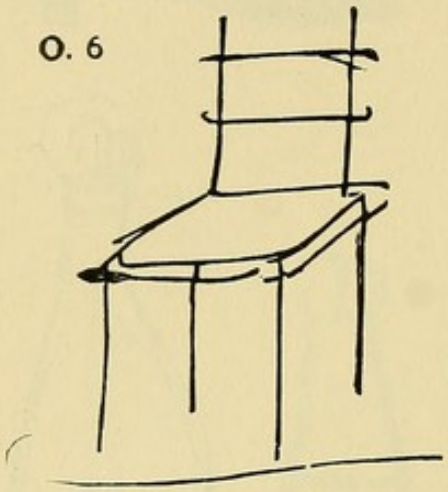
R. 5

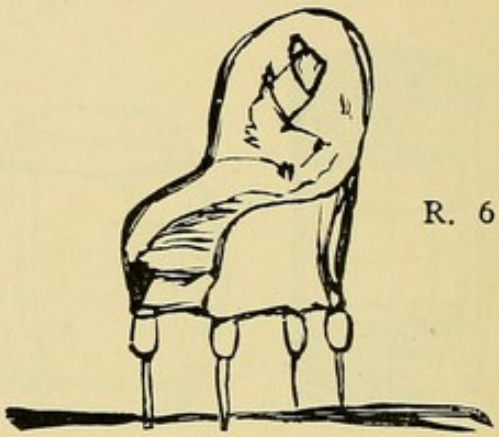
(No. 5) Mrs. L. began drawing within ten to fifteen seconds, and presently said, " I am drawing something I can see." The clock was in front of her on the mantelpiece.

(No. 6) Mrs. L. said, " I know what it is."

Afterwards Mrs. B. told me that she thought of putting a label on the champagne bottle she drew (No. 4.)[1]

O. 6





R. 6

Short of impugning the good faith of the experimenters, the only normal explanation of these results which can apparently be suggested is, that the one lady guessed from the sound of the pencil travelling over the paper the subject of the other's drawing. But it is scarcely credible that such a power could be acquired without long practice.

An interesting series of experiments in transferring imagined scenes is recorded by Mrs. A. W. Verrall. Mrs. Verrall has conducted many experiments with H., the agent in this case, a child (in 1893) between nine and ten years of age, and has found some indications of telepathic powers, both in H. and herself.

[1] *S. P. R.*, xii, pp. 9–11.

Apparent Thought-Transference of Clearly Visualised Scenes, I Being Percipient.

In the autumn of 1893 we tried to transfer visualised scenes ; in this I believe myself to have had some slight success as percipient with other people. H. and I sat in the same room, at some distance, back to back ; she thought of a scene or picture, I looked at the ceiling, described what I saw, and drew it. There was not complete silence, but no leading questions were asked, and very few remarks made. I took down at the time, on one occasion [Experiment (*d*) given below], every word that was said, and am sure that no sort of hint is given by H., other than the inevitable one of satisfaction or disappointment, of which I am conscious, though it is not expressed. After my description and drawing were complete, H. made rough outlines in some cases where her description was not definite enough to please her. She did this before seeing my drawings. We have made in all seven attempts, besides two where I had no impression of any kind. Out of these seven, in two cases H.'s visualisation was not clear enough to enable her to draw anything, and in these two cases I failed completely. In one case, there may have been a connection between my impression and H.'s mental picture ; the four remaining cases I will describe in detail.

(*a*) My description was as follows :

Darkish centre, perhaps brown ; light or white side pieces ; like an odd-shaped chandelier or a gigantic white butterfly. Most conspicuous vivid blue background, as if the object were seen against a bright blue sky. My drawing is reproduced on the Plate, marked P. 1.

H.'s picture, in her own words :

Ship leaving Port Gavin, very tall, brown, central mast, white sails — the whole showing against a brilliant blue sea, with dark brown rocks on one side. For H.'s drawing, *see* Plate, fig. A. 1.

She had seen this on the Cornish coast, when on a visit without me, and had been struck with the beauty of colouring. She was disappointed at my not seeing the rocks.

(*b*) My description :

Fat insect—no, child—child with its back to me, and arms and legs stretched out ; colour reddish brown in the centre ; shiny bright head, very solid body. (*See* Plate, fig. P. 2.)

H.'s picture :

Baby——, in a passion, standing in the corner with his face to the wall.

The child in question had very shining, bright hair, much brighter, as H. said, than his frock, which was white (not brown). He stood with legs and arms outstretched.

(*c*) My description :

Large globe on the top of a pillar—base indistinct—cannot see colour of globe ; it is light, has reflections, is dazzling and bright—perhaps an electric light on the top of a pillar. (*See* Plate, fig. P. 3.)

H.'s picture :

Sun setting behind point of hill, so that a little notch is taken out of the disc of the sun by the point of the hill. The whole scene is distant, lower ranges of hills leading up to the highest, behind this is the setting sun. Mist over the lower part. (*See* Plate, fig. A. 3.)

(*d*) My description, verbatim. H.'s comments in italics.

" Scene, outdoors—colour, green. *Yes.*

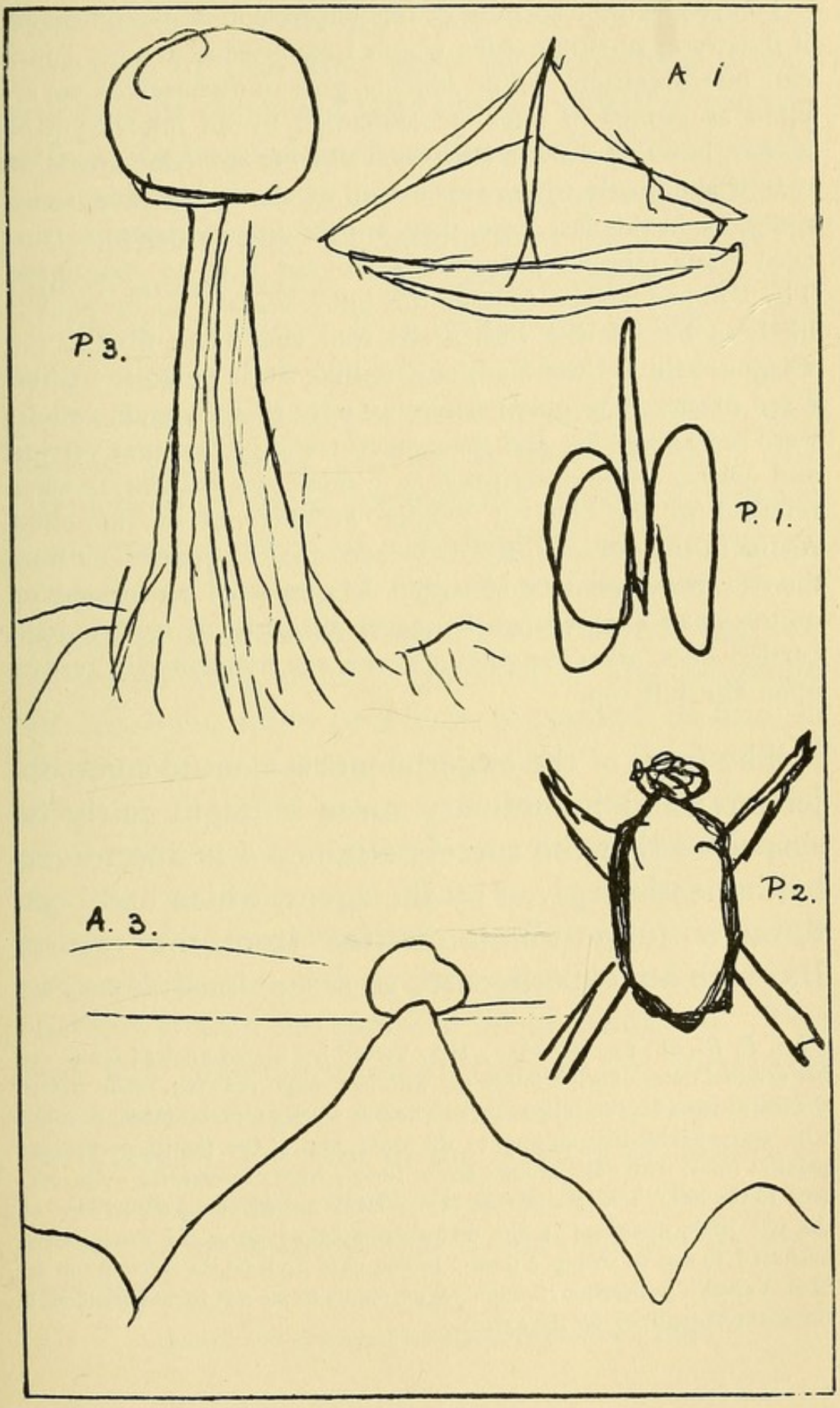
" Right hand definite, left hand undefined, *e.g.*, on right hand, mountain or hill, line of trees, house. *Which ?*

" Right hand, hill—green hill, clear outline. Something at bottom of hill, behind it sea—or before it. Purplish flat surface fills middle of picture. Object [at foot of hill] not natural—mechanical, geometrical in outline. *How large ?*

" Can't see size ; colour, white and red. No horizontal lines ; [lines] vertical and aslant."

H.'s picture :

Dieppe as seen from the steamer (6 months before ; H.'s first impression of a French town). Cliff sharply defined on right ; on left, view cut off by the steamer. Red and white houses below the white cliff in the green hill, all seen across a dull bluish sea.


A 1
P. 3.
P. 1.
P. 2.
A. 3.

I have given the account of this impression in detail because it illustrates the difficulties which I experience in what I may call interpretation. The objects present themselves to my mind as groups of lines, accompanied by an impression of colour, but there are no external objects for comparison, so that it is difficult to get any notion of their size—and sometimes, as in this last case, they appear in succession, so that even their relative proportions are not easy to determine. The "object at the foot of the hill" seemed to be equally likely to be a house with a red roof and white front, a red waggon with a white load, or a child's white pinafore against a red dress. The only certainties were that the main colours were red and white, and the general trend of the lines vertical and aslant. The description is, I think, not inaccurate when referred to the view of Dieppe at the foot of the cliffs. Again in the 3rd case, it will be seen that in general outlines the two drawings are similar, but I interpreted my impression on too small a scale when I suggested a globe of electric light carried on a pillar for what was the sun momentarily resting upon the hill top.[1]

The form of the experiments is open to some objection : and in ordinary cases it might fairly be suspected that the success attained was due to verbal indications given by the agent, which had been through forgetfulness omitted from the record. But with an experimenter so scrupulously exact as

[1] *S. P. R.*, xi., pp. 180–181. Mrs. Verrall has kindly allowed me to see her original notes of experiment (*d*) with her rough drawing, made before she learnt from H. the subject set. There is a clear representation of a hill with scarped cliff-like outlines to the right, and at the foot three upright parallel lines, with oblique lines above them ; lines representing a flat surface to the left. I may add that Mrs. Verrall has given me an account of the two trials described in the text as complete failures. I should have hesitated to use so strong a term ; in one case at least the description of Mrs. Verrall's impression, though vague, seems to me not inconsistent with the scene thought of by the agent.

Mrs. Verrall, I am not disposed to think that allowance of this kind need be made, and it will probably be conceded that the coincidences are too striking to be explained as the result of the natural concurrence of ideas between mother and child.

A curious case of involuntary experiment in thought-transference has been recorded by Dr. Quintard.[1] Ludovic X., a robust and healthy child, at the age of five was able to solve the most complicated arithmetical problems instantaneously, and shewed promise of proving another Inaudi. The infant prodigy could, for instance, give in a moment the correct answer to a multiplication sum whose product ran into eight figures, and involved transformation of the unit from kilomètres into leagues. He would even, though ignorant of any language but his own, solve problems presented to him in English, Latin, Greek, or Spanish. It appeared however, that his powers of answering depended absolutely on his mother being present and knowing the answers, and that in her absence the secrets of the multiplication table and the Latin grammar were proof against assault, and the child Œdipus shared the common lot of childhood. The case was communicated in 1893 to the Société de Médecine d'Angers, and has been investigated by Dr. Pétrucci, Director of the Asylum of Maine-et-Loire, and several other medical men, who appear to have been satisfied that Ludovic's powers were genuine.

[1] *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, Nov.-Dec., 1894.

Thought-Transference in Sleep.

During the winter of 1892-3 a long series of experiments in the induction of telepathic dreams was carried out by Dr. Ermacora, of Padua, one of the Editors of the *Rivista di Studi Psichici.* The agent in these experiments was Signorina Maria Manzini, living at Padua with her mother, Signora Annetta; the percipient was Angelina Cavazzoni, of Venice, a cousin of the agent, a little girl aged between four and five years. Angelina was staying in the same house as Signorina Maria, but slept in a different room. The method of the experiment was generally as follows: Dr. Ermacora would come to the house after Angelina was in bed and would set a subject for a mental picture to Signorina Maria, such as a regatta seen from the Rialto at Venice, with the winners dressed in red. Angelina next morning would relate that she had had a dream to this effect.[1] If we may assume the good faith of the experimenters—a point upon which Dr. Ermacora has no doubt—the success attained in this series of experiments is certainly very striking; and the precautions taken to keep Angelina and Signorina Maria apart—sealing of doors, etc.—were apparently sufficient to exclude

[1] Actually the procedure was somewhat more complicated. The subject was set to Sig^na^ Maria in somnambulism, and it was her dream-personality, "Elvira," who professed to impress the dream on the mind of the sleeping child. And Angelina, through shyness, related her dream, as a rule, not to Dr. Ermacora, but to Signora Annetta, who was, however, ignorant of the nature of the experiment. For some account of the nature and significance of these dream-personalities, see Chapters XII and XIII.

unconscious communication, as in somnambulism. But the later experiments of the series seem to be independent of the good faith of the persons concerned. In some of these experiments Dr. Ermacora shewed to Signorina Maria an actual drawing from a scientific journal of some complicated instrument or machine, chosen out of a large number of similar plates included in the same journal. Next morning the whole series of plates would be put before Angelina, in the absence of Signorina Maria, and she would, as a rule, pick out the correct one. It is certainly incredible that these drawings could have been described so as to be distinguishable from other similar drawings by anyone unfamiliar with the machines represented.[1]

Thought-Transference with Hypnotised Subjects.

But the most striking results in thought-transference have been observed when the percipients are in the hypnotic trance. The hypnotised subject is, of course, more amenable to suggestion of other kinds than the same person in the normal

[1] Dr. Ermacora sent us all the plates used in these experiments. Some of them are reproduced in the account of his experiments published in the *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. xi., p. 235. In a further set of trials the impossibility of a verbal description becomes still more apparent. Dr. Ermacora placed a drop of specially prepared ink on a piece of paper, doubled the paper, and then cut it in half along the crease. This gave him a pair of symmetrical but specularly inverted figures. He made five pairs of these figures for each experiment. He selected by lot one particular figure, and shewed it, for a period of about forty or fifty seconds, to the entranced Signorina Maria. He then took away with him the whole ten figures, and in the morning they were taken to Angelina to choose from. The successes attained in the later trials, though partial, were, I think, decidedly greater than chance would account for.

condition, and it may be that the superior susceptibility to telepathic suggestion is merely a special instance of this general law. But, as suggested in a later chapter, the cause may lie deeper. There are some indications that telepathy is a vestigial faculty, atrophied because our modern civilisation has no longer an imperative need of it, which regains something of its lost power during the temporary restoration, in the hypnotic trance, of a more primitive stage of consciousness. At any rate the most fruitful and the best established results have been obtained from entranced percipients.

In the summer and autumn of 1889, Professor and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, with the assistance of Mr. G. A. Smith, conducted a long and careful series of experiments with hypnotised percipients in the transference of numbers. The agent and hypnotist was Mr. G. A. Smith, and the entranced subject sat in the same room, a few feet off, generally with his back to the experimenters. In all, there were 644 trials made with four different percipients. Of these, 117 were completely successful and in 14 cases the digits were given correctly, but in reverse order. The numbers—which were stamped upon small wooden counters—included the whole series from 10 to 90; and the most probable number of complete successes, if chance alone had operated, was therefore 8. In a later series of trials, subjects for mental pictures—such as a choir-boy, a mouse-trap, a barrow of fish, a "sandwich" man—were set to Mr. Smith, and the percipient, in a large

proportion of cases, succeeded in giving an accurate description of the imagined scene. From the curiously piece-meal way in which the percipient in many instances described what he saw, it is difficult to doubt that he actually had a hallucinatory picture before him.[1] From the precautions taken by the experimenters, it is clear that the only normal avenue of communication between agent and percipient in those trials was by the ear. That Mr. Smith should have unconsciously whispered, and that the subject should have caught the whisper, is, perhaps, conceivable. But it is very improbable, because Mr. Smith and the other experimenters were aware of this danger and on their guard against it; because no movements of the lips or other suspicious indications were observed; and lastly, because an analysis of the failures does not reveal any tendency to mistake one number for another similar in sound. Moreover, in the experiments with imaginary scenes, which were designed expressly to meet this objection, it is not easy to suppose that the detailed information required could have been so given, or if given, could have escaped detection.[2]

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vi., pp. 128–170; and vol. viii., pp. 554–577.

[2] This series of experiments has been criticised by Messrs. Lehmann and Hansen, of Copenhagen (*see* Wundt's *Philosophische Studien*, vol. xi., part 4), on the ground that the results could be explained by faint whispering *with closed lips* on Mr. Smith's part, coupled with auditory hyperæsthesia on the part of the percipients. That such whispering is possible Messrs. Lehmann and Hansen seem to have proved. Professor Sidgwick, however, in discussing their paper (*Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. xii., pp, 298, etc.), points out that they have not shewn that whispering of this kind can take place involuntarily; that to assume it in this instance argues hyperæsthesia

It is scarcely possible, however, to apply this explanation to a later series of experiments, conducted as before by Mrs. Sidgwick, in concert with Mr. Smith and Miss Alice Johnson. In some of these experiments the agent and percipient were on different stories of the house (an "arch" on the beach at Brighton), separated by a wooden floor covered by a thick Axminster carpet. In others, the percipient was in a room at Mrs. Sidgwick's lodgings with the doors closed, and the agent, Mr. Smith, was outside in the passage, the distance between them varying from ten to fifteen feet and upwards. Both agent and percipient were under close observation throughout the trials, and it seems incredible that any sound which escaped the notice of the observer who sat close to the agent and watched him continuously could have been perceptible to a person sitting at a considerable distance, and with a closed door or a ceiling and carpet intervening. Nevertheless, in one series alone, out of 252 trials with double numbers, complete success was obtained 27 times, and the correct digits were guessed in reverse order 8 times. The subjoined table gives details of this series. The percipient in all the 252 trials here quoted was a young lady, Miss B——.[1]

on the part of the subjects, of which the experimenters did not at the time succeed in finding any evidence; and lastly, that an analysis of the mistakes does not—as the Danish investigators contend—lend any support to the hypothesis that the information was conveyed by auditory channels. Whatever view may be taken, however, of the arguments brought forward by Messrs. Lehmann and Hansen, it will probably be conceded that their hypothesis can scarcely apply to the results quoted in the text, in which agent and percipient were in different rooms, with door or ceiling intervening.

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. viii., pp. 536–552.

(1) PLACE, THE ARCH. PERCIPIENT UPSTAIRS; AGENT DOWNSTAIRS.

Date 1890.	Quite right.	Digits reversed.	First Digit only right.	Second Digit only right.	Wrong.	Totals.	Notes.
Jan. 6...	..	..	6[1]	..	2	8	Professor Barrett present in addition to the usual party.
" 7...	1	1	10	1	4	17	
" 8...	..	1[2]	2	..	3	6	This set was done under very unfavourable conditions, as there were three other percipients in the room guessing at the same time, which was very confusing.
" 11...	1	1[2]	8	..	10	20	
" 12...	9	1	13	2	8	33	
Mar. 17...	3	..	2	1	6	12	
" 18...	1	1	1	1	4	8	
" 22...	1	..	5	1	4	11	Drs. Myers, Penrose, and Lancaster present in addition to the usual party.
" 23...	2	..	6	..	10	18	Drs. Myers and Rolleston present in addition to the usual party.
July 8...	..	..	..	1	2	3	
" 9...	..	..	1	3	2	6	
Nov. 6...	1	..	1	1	..	3	Dr. Myers present.
" 10...	1	..	..	..	2	3	
Totals ..	20	5	55	11	57	148	

(2) PLACE, THE ARCH. PERCIPIENT DOWNSTAIRS; AGENT[3] UPSTAIRS.

Mar. 17...	..	..	4	1	13	18	
" 23...	..	..	2	3	7	12	
June 16...	..	..	1	..	2	3	Miss McKerlie present.
Totals ..	..	..	7	4	22	33	

[1] Two of these were given completely right first and then changed.

[2] The first digit of the number drawn was guessed first.

[3] It will be seen that out of the 181 trials made at the arch the agent was *downstairs* in 148, and that the successes—20—were all obtained under these conditions. The difficulty of any signals imperceptible to the vigilant onlookers being given by the agent under such circumstances is, of course, almost insuperable.

(3) PLACE, MRS. SIDGWICK'S LODGINGS. PERCIPIENT IN ROOM, AND AGENT IN PASSAGE.

Date 1890.	Quite right.	Digits reversed.	First Digit only right.	Second Digit only right.	Wrong.	Totals.	Notes.
Mar. 19...	..	..	1	..	2	3	
Dec. 17...	2	..	11[1]	2	12	27	These guesses were made by table-tilting, Miss B. normal, having her hands on the table. Miss Robertson present on December 17, 19, and 20.
" 19...	2	1	3	1	..	7	
" 19...	..	..	..	1	4	5	Agent in room across passage, but only one of the two intervening doors closed.
" 20.	1	1	2	..	..	4	Guesses made verbally by Miss B. hypnotised, having her hands on the table.
	..	..	1	1	2	4	Guesses tilted by the table, at the same time as the above.
" 20...	1	..	1	1	4	7	Miss B. hypnotised, guessing in the usual way.
	1	1[2]	4	2	6	14	Guesses made by table-tilting, Miss B. normal, having her hands on the table.
Totals ..	7	3	23	8	30	71	
Totals of (1), (2), and (3) together.	27	8	85	23	109	252	

Production of Movements and Other Results.

The telepathic impulse may influence the percipient's organism in various ways. A case is cited in Chapter XIII. (Mrs. Newnham's) in which writing produced by planchette betrayed a knowledge of facts, unknown to the writer, which were

[1] Two of these were guessed right first and then changed.

[2] This was given completely right first and then changed.

within the cognisance of other persons present in the room. Many similar cases have been reported to or observed by us. Or, again, the movements of a table may be unconsciously guided by the hands of the sitters, who may, in their turn, be influenced by the unspoken thought of some person sitting at a distance.[1] A very curious result was obtained in some experiments by the late Edmund Gurney, which were continued after his death by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick. The subject's hands were placed through holes in a high screen, so that he could not see them ; one particular finger would be selected, and the agent (Mr. G. A. Smith), by the direction of his attention to the finger in question, would cause it to become rigid and insensitive. It would take too long to describe here the precautions adopted to ensure that the subject should not know the finger selected for operation. They were, I think, sufficient. The genuineness of the anæsthesia could hardly be open to doubt. The results are noteworthy because the effects produced were, of course, beyond the power of the subject to imitate by conscious effort.[2]

Thought-Transference at a Distance.

Compared with the mass of evidence for thought-transference at close quarters, the record of experiments when agent and percipient are separated by

[1] See *Proc. S. P. R.*, ii., pp. 247 *et seq.* ; *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, pp. 96 *et seq.* ; and case II. in the next chapter.

[2] For a full account of these experiments see *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. v., 14–17 and 254–259, and vol. viii., 577–596.

a considerable distance is but a meagre one. Probably this circumstance is partly due to the much greater difficulty of conducting such experiments; the larger demands made upon the time of the experimenters; and the difficulty of maintaining a vivid interest in experiments of a somewhat tedious nature, when the results cannot be immediately ascertained. Something is also probably due to the effect produced by the distance upon the percipient's imagination. But, of course, independently of such adventitious drawbacks, we should expect, on the analogy of the physical forces, to find the efficiency of telepathy to diminish rapidly as the distance increases. But on the other hand there are many phenomena—examples of which will be cited in the next chapter—which seem to indicate that the telepathic impulse may, on occasion, penetrate across very great distances. It is probable, however, that the spontaneity of the impulse in such cases lends it greater efficacy.

Of experiments at a considerable distance, the best known are probably those conducted with Madame B.[1] by Dr. Gibert and Professor Pierre Janet, at Havre. Madame B. had for some time been a patient of Dr. Gibert's, who had been in the habit of placing her in the hypnotic trance. He had observed indications that the exercise of his will was a necessary condition of the successful, or at least of the speedy, induction of the trance, and

[1] For an account of Madame B. as a hypnotic subject see later, Chapter XII.

this led him to attempt to hypnotise his patient at a distance, without her knowledge. In all twenty-five trials were made between the beginning of October, 1885, and the 6th of May, 1886. In some of these trials Dr. Gibert was the operator, in others Professor Janet. Mr. F. W. H. Myers and the late Dr. A. T. Myers were present at several of the experiments. I quote from the former's account of what took place :

"(II.) On the morning of the 22nd we again [1] selected by lot an hour (11 A.M.) at which M. Gibert should will, from his dispensary (which is close to his house), that Madame B. should go to sleep in the Pavillon. It was agreed that a rather longer time should be allowed for the process to take effect ; as it had been observed (see M. Janet's previous communication) that she sometimes struggled against the influence, and averted the effect for a time by putting her hands in cold water, etc. At 11.25 we entered the Pavillon quietly, and almost at once she descended from her room to the *salon*, profoundly asleep. Here, however, suggestion might again have been at work. We did not, of course, mention M. Gibert's attempt of the previous night. But she told us in her sleep that she had been very ill in the night, and repeatedly exclaimed : ' Pourquoi M. Gibert m'a-t-il fait souffrir ? Mais j'ai lavé les mains continuellement.' This is what she does when she wishes to avoid being influenced.

"(III.) In the evening (22nd) we all dined at M. Gibert's, and in the evening M. Gibert made another attempt to put her to sleep at a distance from his house in the Rue Séry,—she being at the Pavillon, Rue de la Ferme,—and to bring her to his house by an effort of will. At 8.55 he retired to his study ; and MM. Ochorowicz, Marillier, Janet, and A. T. Myers went to the Pavillon, and waited outside in the street, out of sight of the house. At 9.22 Dr. Myers observed Madame

[1] The experiment of the previous day had proved inconclusive.

B. coming half-way out of the garden-gate, and again retreating. Those who saw her more closely observed that she was plainly in the somnambulic state, and was wandering about and muttering. At 9.25 she came out (with eyes persistently closed, so far as could be seen), walked quickly past MM. Janet and Marillier without noticing them, and made for M. Gibert's house, though not by the usual or shortest route. (It appeared afterwards that the *bonne* had seen her go into the *salon* at 8.45, and issue thence asleep at 9.15 ; had not looked in between those times.) She avoided lamp-posts, vehicles, etc., but crossed and recrossed the street repeatedly. No one went in front of her or spoke to her. After eight or ten minutes she grew much more uncertain in gait, and paused as though she would fall. Dr. Myers noted the moment in the Rue Faure ; it was 9.35. At about 9.40 she grew bolder, and at 9.45 reached the street in front of M. Gibert's house. There she met him, but did not notice him, and walked into his house, where she rushed hurriedly from room to room on the ground-floor. M. Gibert had to take her hand before she recognised him. She then grew calm.

"M. Gibert said that from 8.55 to 9.20 he thought intently about her ; from 9.20 to 9.35 he thought more feebly ; at 9.35 he gave the experiment up, and began to play billiards ; but in a few minutes began to will her again. It appeared that his visit to the billiard-room had coincided with her hesitation and stumbling in the street. But this coincidence may of course have been accidental. . . .[1]

"(V.) On the 23rd, M. Janet, who had woke her up and left her awake, lunched in our company, and retired to his own house at 4.30 (a time chosen by lot) to try to put her to sleep from thence. At 5.5 we all entered the *salon* of the Pavillon, and found her asleep with shut eyes, but sewing vigorously (being in that stage in which movements once suggested are automatically continued). Passing into the talkative state, she said to M. Janet, 'C'est vous qui m'avez fait dormir à quatre heures et demi.' The impression as to the hour may have been

[1] Experiment IV. was a suggestion given at close quarters.

a suggestion received from M. Janet's mind. We tried to make her believe that it was M. Gibert who had sent her to sleep, but she maintained that she had felt that it was M. Janet.

"(VI.) On April 24th, the whole party chanced to meet at M. Janet's house at 3 P.M., and he then, at my suggestion, entered his study to will that Madame B. should sleep. We waited in his garden, and at 3.20 proceeded together to the Pavillon, which I entered first at 3.30, and found Madame B. profoundly sleeping over her sewing, having ceased to sew. Becoming talkative, she said to M. Janet, 'C'est vous qui m'avez commandé.' She said that she fell asleep at 3.5 P.M."[1]

Of the whole 25 trials, 18 were complete, and 4 doubtful, or partial, successes; *i. e.*, on two occasions Madame B. was found washing her hands to ward off the trance, and in two instances the trance supervened twenty minutes or more after the time fixed. During the period of these experiments it is to be noted that Madame B. only once fell into ordinary sleep during the daytime, and twice was spontaneously entranced; and that on the only three occasions on which she left the house in the evening she did so in apparent response to a mental suggestion. There is little ground, therefore, for attributing the successes claimed to chance coincidence.

A later series of 35 trials, undertaken by Professor Janet in the autumn of 1886, was less successful.[2] Similar experiments have been made on various subjects by Professor Richet, Dr. Dufay, Dr. Héricourt, and many others. The experiments

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv., pp. 133-135.

[2] *Revue de l'Hypnotisme*, Feb., 1888.

in action at a distance made by English observers have consisted mostly of attempts to transfer diagrams, pictures, objects, and so on. The Rev'd A. Glardon, of Tour-de-Peilz, Vaud, Switzerland, has conducted many experiments of the kind with a friend, Mrs. M. I select for reproduction here a series of six trials carried out in May and June, 1893. The agent throughout was at Tour-de-Peilz; the percipient during the first four trials was in Italy, in the 5th at Vevey, and in the 6th was in the same house as the agent, but in a different room. The original diagrams drawn by both agent and percipient, carefully dated, with the notes written on them at the time of the experiments, have been sent to us, and are reproduced (with a few exceptions, noted in the text) in the accompanying plates. Appended is an extract from an account of the experiments.[1]

"In all cases, the letter O on the Plates denotes the drawings of the agent and the letter R those of the percipient; and the dotted lines mark off the drawings belonging to each experiment.

"In the first two experiments, the agent was at Tour-de-Peilz, and the percipient at Florence, and the former notes '10 p.m.' on his sheet of diagrams as the hour of the experiments, also that he used the diagram O 1 on May 8th and 9th, [1893] and O 2 on May 10th and 11th.

"The percipient made one drawing, reproduced as R. 1, a, on May 8th. On May 9th she made eight attempts, of which the one most nearly resembling O 1 is given as R 1, b. On her paper is noted '1893, Tuesday, May 9th, 10.15.' On May 10th, she attempted nothing. The whole of what she

[1] *Journal, S. P. R.*, Dec., 1896.

drew on May 11th is reproduced as 'R 2'; her paper being marked, 'May 11, '93; 10 p.m.'

"Experiments 3 and 4.—The diagrams O 3 and O 4 were used in experiments in which the agent was at Tour-de-Peilz and the percipient at Torre Pellice, Italy; O 3 was used on May 19th and O 4 on May 22nd and 23rd; in all cases at 10 p.m. R 3 represents all the drawings made by the percipient on May 19th; her paper is marked '19 May, 1893; 10 p.m'; and also bears the note:—'a small very bright design or object.' On May 23rd, at 10.5 p.m., she made three drawings, two of which are reproduced as R 4. It will be observed that the bracket in the agent's drawing seems to be reproduced in the second of these, but this may be a mere chance resemblance.

"Experiment O 5 is the diagram used by the agent on June 2nd at 10 p.m., he being still at Tour-de-Peilz and the percipient at Vevey. She made no drawing on this date, but notes:—'June 2nd, 1893; 10 p.m. See nothing but a sort of frame and a *crown;* too sleepy to draw it.'

"Experiment 6.—In this experiment, the agent and percipient were both in the same house at Tour-de-Peilz, but in different rooms. It occurred on June 7th, 1893, and Mr. Glardon gives the following account of it:

"'GRYON-SUR-BEX, VAUD, June 27, 1893.

"'Mrs. M. was sitting alone in a room adjoining the one I was in. I drew the diagram and fixed my attention on it. After two or three minutes, Mrs. M. called aloud, saying, "I am too much excited to-day, don't go on"; and on my entering the room, she said, "I can see nothing but the design of the embroidery I have been working at this morning, and I will not draw it because I think it too silly."

"'She sent me afterwards that design; you can judge for yourself. The fact is that, unawares, I had drawn a diagram resembling closely that design.'"

"Mrs. M. sends us also the following note, with regard to this series of experiments:

"'GRYON-SUR-BEX, June 27, 1893.

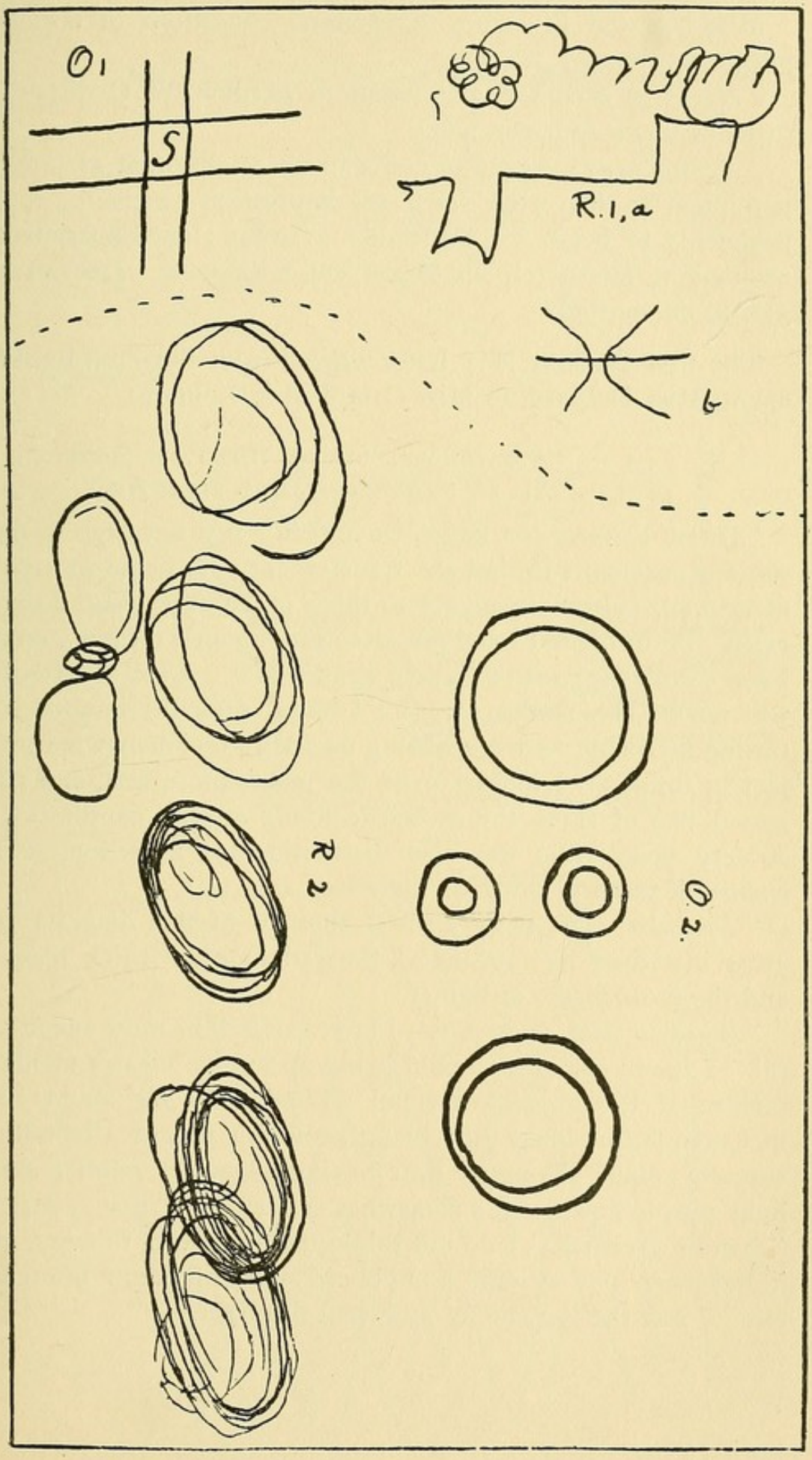
"'DEAR SIR: I wish to add a few words to Mr. Glardon's communication of even date.

"'I would say that during the latter part of the experiments which Mr. Glardon and I made after sending off the first results to you, I was on a visit and was frequently disturbed; in fact, I often found it impossible to keep the appointment as desired.

"'May I add that I think if my friend had made but one single drawing on a page instead of many, the impression on my mind might have been more distinct. Of this I cannot be sure, but it may be worthy of consideration.'"

The exact value of the coincidences in such a case it is difficult to estimate; but experiments 2, 3, and 6 may, I think, be counted as successful. Moreover, as regards the rest, it is important to note that the percipient employs a straight line when the original diagram consisted of straight lines, and curved lines when the original was curved. The description given of figure 5, if incomplete, is roughly accurate so far as it goes. Several experiments of the same kind, partly with objects and partly with diagrams, have been carried out by Miss Campbell and Miss Despard.[1] The following is an account of a few recent experiments by these ladies. The accounts, it will be seen, are written independently, and without any communication between agent and percipient. All the letters in the case, and the envelopes corresponding to the first two of them, have been sent to the Society.

[1] See *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, pp. 127–129, and *Journal, S. P. R.*, April, 1896.


O1
S
R.1,a
b
R 2
O2

Miss Despard describes the general conditions of the experiments thus :

"Agent in Surbiton, Percipient in London, W. C. district, distance about fourteen miles.

"*Agreed upon :* Agent to concentrate attention at 11 p.m. ; percipient to then write down any impression received. Experiments to begin on December 27, 1895 ; one experiment each night, alternately an object and a diagram. December 31st to be omitted."

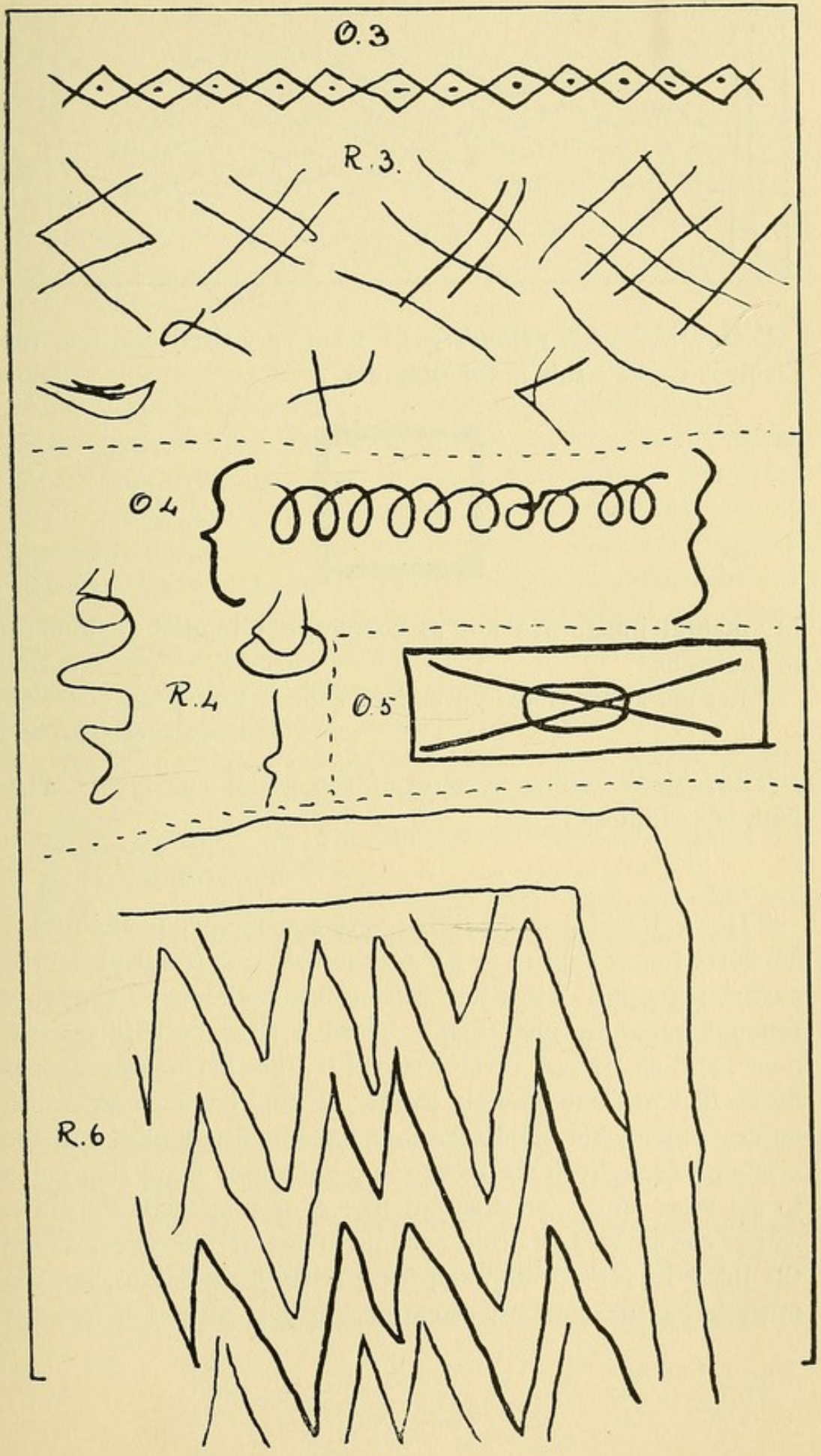
The first account is a letter written from Surbiton by the agent, Miss Despard, to Miss Campbell in London:

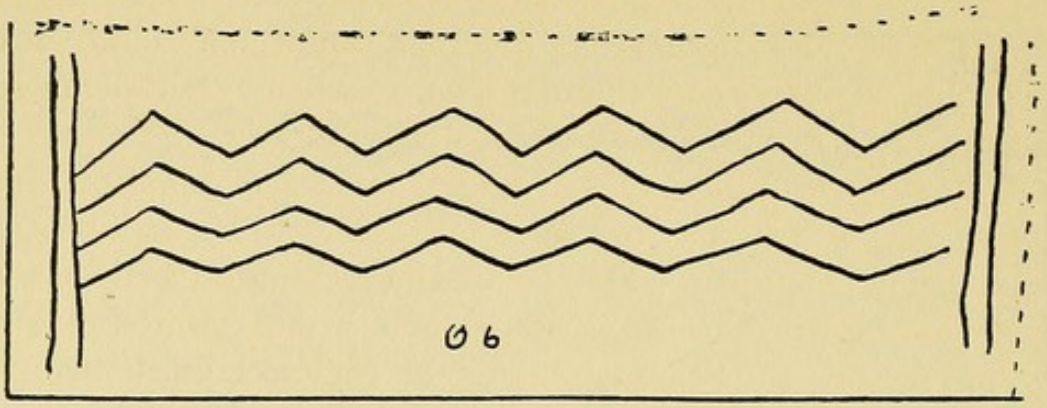
"STRATHMORE, SURBITON HILL PARK, SURBITON,
"*December* 27, 1895. 11.30 P.M.

"DEAR K.—As you know, we agreed a few days ago to try some experiments in thought transference,—to begin to-night at 11 p.m.,—alternate nights to think of an object and a diagram. So to-night I fixed my attention, about 11.4 p.m., on a brass candlestick with a lighted candle in it. I feel the result will not be very satisfactory, for I found difficulty in concentrating my mind, and not having decided previously what object to think of, I looked over the mantelpiece first, and rejected two or three things before fixing on the candlestick. A very noisy train was also distracting my attention, so I wonder if you will think of that.

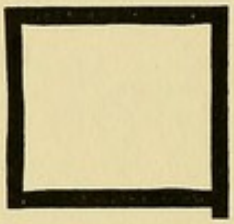
"*December 28th*, 11.45 *p.m.*—I thought of this diagram [a cross inscribed in a triangle], the [triangle] in thick black, and the cross inside in lighter.

"*December 29th*, 11.40 *p.m.*—I hope this will be more successful. I found to-night I could bring up a much clearer mental picture of the object,—a small *Bristol ware jug* about six inches high, the lower part being brownish red, of a metallic coppery colour, the upper part having a band of reddish and light purple flowers of a somewhat conventional rose pattern —handle greenish. I do not think you have seen this jug, as it has been put away in a cupboard and only lately brought out. I saw the jug chiefly by bright fire light.


O.3
R.3.
O.4
R.4
O.5
R.6



"*December* 30*th*, 12 *midnight.* I am very tired and fear the result is vague; this is the diagram.



My mental image was not as correct, but tended to slope up to the right.

"Let me know your impressions soon. Yours, etc.,

"R. C. DESPARD."

The corresponding account of the percipient, Miss Campbell, is as follows:

"77 CHESTERTON ROAD, W.,
"*December* 29, 1895.

"DEAR R.—I have nothing very satisfactory to report. I am sorry to say I quite forgot on the 27th about our projected experiments until I was just getting into bed, when I suddenly remembered, and just then I heard a train making a great noise, and as I have never noticed it like that before, I wondered if it was one of your trains. I could not fix my mind on any object, but clock, watch, bath, all flitted past, and the circle of firelight in the front room; the only word that came to me was 'sand' and a sound like *k* or *q* at beginning of a word (you know I as often hear the name of the object as see the thing itself). I stopped, for it seemed ridiculous, but *you* must have attracted my attention, for just after I stopped I

heard the clock here strike the half hour, and found next morning it was twenty minutes fast, so when I "suddenly remembered," it must have been just after eleven.

"Last night I believe *you* forgot, for I had no strong impression, but you see the paper enclosed.[1] The scribbles in corner my pencil did without me; the rectangle I believe was a guess; as for the circle, my pencil would go round and round in the centre making that spot, the circle itself being a very shadowy impression.

"11.15 *p.m.* The first thing that came into my mind was a sponge, but I think that was suggested by the sound of water running in the bath-room, and next I had more distinctly an impression of a reddish metallic lustre, and I thought it must be the Moorish brass tray on May's mantelpiece; but at last I saw quite distinctly a small jug of a brownish metallic appearance below, with above that a white band with coloured flowers, lilac and crimson, on it. I can't be sure what it was like at the top, for that seemed to be in shadow and seemed to be darkish,—perhaps like the bottom, but I saw no metallic gleam. I don't remember anything like this among May's things, but the impression was so vivid I describe it.

"30*th*, 11.15 *p.m.* Thought vaguely of a triangle and figure

like this, but no vivid impression; if you were thinking of any figure at all, were also thinking of something else.

"31*st*. I send you this as far as it goes, and shall be glad to hear from you with your accounts.

"Yours,

"C. M. CAMPBELL,

"15 Heathcote Street, W. C."

One other class of experimental—or quasi-experimental—evidence must be briefly noticed here. In a few instances persons who believed themselves to have the power of impressing others, or of being impressed, telepathically, have kept

[1] The diagram enclosed is not at all similar to the agent's figure.

diaries of their experiences, which they have submitted to Mrs. H. Sidgwick and other members of the Society. A diary of this nature was kept through the greater part of the year 1888 by the lady who writes under the pseudonym of Miss X., and by her friend D. Full extracts from these diaries will be found in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., pp. 377–397. The amount of correspondence with the facts as revealed by the diaries is very striking. In D.'s diary there are twenty entries recorded before the event was known to her. Of these, fourteen purport to relate to music which Miss X.—in another part of London—was playing at the moment, and two to the reading of books. Of the sixteen telepathic impressions thus recorded, fourteen were correct, even to the extent of naming the composer of the music played, and one was partially correct. The four entries which related to other events were also correct. Of the twenty-seven entries made beforehand in Miss X.'s diary, twenty-four appear to have been correct, though in two cases the correspondence with the fact was very likely accidental. Two other diaries of the kind, one kept by a physician of San Francisco when on a short absence from his wife, and one by Signor Bonatti, are quoted in *Proc. S. P. R.*[1] A remarkable diary has recently been sent to us[2] by

[1] Vol. xi., pp. 455 and 477.

[2] *Journal, S. P. R.*, October and November, 1896. The analysis of the diary given in the text must be regarded as only approximately correct. Some of the entries are ambiguous, and it is not always practicable to draw the line between complete and partial fulfilment. But I think the figures given represent the general results with fair accuracy.

Dr. Thomas Duke, of Bilton Road, Rugby, kept by a lady patient of his own. The entries cover the period from December 22, 1893, to December 27, 1894. Excluding some doubtful cases, I find in the diary 122 entries referring to definite events, of which 117 corresponded with the facts; of these 117, 26 are recorded as having been written before the event. There were thus only five failures. Most of the entries relate to visits or the receipt of letters from various friends, and especially to the visits of Dr. Duke. Many of them also relate to the arrival of the patient's medicine. In a few cases the entries in the diary are attested by letters written to the diarist by Dr. Duke, announcing the receipt of the telepathic message. The writer of the diaries played sometimes the part of agent, sometimes of percipient.

It will be seen that the proportion of successes in this case is very high. *Per contra*, it must be borne in mind that the commonplace nature of the events recorded leaves a very large scope for chance and lucky guessing. But the proportion of successes recorded seems too high to be fully explained in this way. And the example of the diarist is certainly to be commended for imitation by those who believe themselves to be the recipients of telepathic impressions or presentiments.

CHAPTER VIII.

TELEPATHIC HALLUCINATIONS.

IN dealing first with the experimental evidence for telepathy we have sacrificed the historical for the logical order; for the more impressive spontaneous phenomena—apparitions of the dying, warning dreams, and so on—have attracted attention from very early times; and even in our own generation it was these which first suggested the possibility of the action of mind upon mind at a distance. But it is doubtful whether any generalisation founded upon them alone could have won even such qualified recognition as is now accorded to the hypothesis of telepathy. The position may be illustrated from another field of research. So long as the exponents of the "germ theory" could support their position only by arguments derived from the distribution of certain diseases, their manner of propagation and development, their periodic character—phenomena which, although sufficiently striking, are not in themselves susceptible of exact interpretation,—the doctrine remained a more or less plausible hypothesis. It was not until the germs, whose existence had been so long suspected, were actually isolated in the laboratory, and on being introduced

into other animal bodies had reproduced the disease, that the connection of certain maladies with the presence of specific organisms in the body became an accepted conclusion of Science. So here, the theory of telepathy does not rest primarily upon the spontaneous phenomena, impressive though these are to the imagination, whose seasons and operation we can neither forecast nor control, but on a great mass of experimental work, of which a few recent examples have been given in the preceding chapter, and on those telepathically induced hallucinations, of which an example is quoted below (Case V.). But when we have seen reason from the study of this experimental evidence to infer the possibility of such action at a distance, we shall find in the phenomena now to be considered valuable confirmation of our conclusion, and ultimately, no doubt, indispensable aid in explaining the nature of the new power which we surmise, and correlating it with the rest of the physical world.

Before we proceed to consider the evidence in detail, a few words may be said as to the precautions necessary in collecting it and in appraising its value. Of wilful deception there is in most cases little danger. A Jew, if we may trust an old Rabbinical saying, will not make salt-spoons from his father's bones; and, apart from any other consideration; the fact that many of these narratives, and those for the most part which are evidentially the strongest, are concerned with death or disaster, forms a sufficient safeguard in most cases against

deliberate mis-statement. As a matter of fact, the few instances of hoaxing which have come to our knowledge have been concerned with cases where no exceptional crisis was involved, and in which, therefore, the coincidences were usually of an inconclusive kind.

Nor has chance unadorned much to say in the matter, at least in that part of the spontaneous evidence on which our case mainly rests—the coincident hallucinations. Hallucinations amongst the sane are events sufficiently uncommon for a numerical estimate of the chances to be made with approximate accuracy. Nor are we driven to make shift with conjectural statistics. Professor Sidgwick's Committee, at the instance of the International Congress of Experimental Psychology which met in Paris in 1889, took measures to ascertain the relative frequency of casual hallucinations amongst sane and healthy persons by questioning some 17,000 adults. The results of this census will be found set forth in their Report,[1] to which reference should be made by those interested in the question. But, as a matter of fact, no one doubts that if these occurrences are correctly reported, something beyond chance coincidence is involved. If the evidence for death apparitions and similar phenomena is not accepted at its face value, it is because the public in general feel a distrust, founded on experience in other fields, for dramatic recitals of personal experience. It may be admitted at once

[1] Published in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. x., pp. 25–422.

that our own investigations go some way to confirm this distrust. It has been shown from the analysis of the evidence quoted in Chapter V., and again in that dealt with in Chapters IX., X., and XI., that there is a marked tendency for an experience of this kind to become more impressive in the narration as the event recedes into the distance; and this process of simplification and dramatisation goes on not only without, but against, our conscious will, as all are aware who have tried to free themselves from its pernicious activity.

The corroborative testimony of others will of course do something to lessen this danger. But the same causes which affect the testimony of the chief witness will, though in a less degree, tend to impair the recollection of those who shared in his experience at second-hand. No doubt, when the account is corroborated by independent witnesses, and the events themselves are not remote in time, we may often have a reasonable assurance that the central incident at least is correctly reported. But the only corroboration which can be regarded as conclusive is that which is afforded by a written note made before the event, to which his experience is presumed to have reference, was known to the narrator; and evidence of this kind is rarely forthcoming. This circumstance has been made use of to discredit testimony on these matters altogether. Such an inference, I submit, is unwarrantable. There is a certain amount of evidence of the kind desired, the evidence, that is, of contemporary letters

and diaries; and each year adds to the sum. That there have not been more such cases in the past is due to a combination of several causes, carelessness and indolence in many cases, in some a superstitious dislike of seeming to attach importance to a vision of death or disaster by recording it. Again, there are the numerous chances of ordinary life which operate to prevent a note or letter being written at the moment, or which interfere with its ultimate preservation. But enough have been preserved to make the oft-recurring statement of the narrator, "I made a note or wrote a letter at the time but it cannot now be found," more plausible than it has seemed to some critics of the evidence.

Ideas and Waking Impressions.

We have evidence of various kinds for the spontaneous occurrence of some mental action between persons at a distance. The following case illustrates the transference of an impression, apparently from the mind of the mother, which assumed a quasi-visual form in the percipient's consciousness. The narrator, it should be added, is a well-known scientific draughtsman. He has had many other apparently telepathic experiences, some like this of a trivial kind, others in connection with events of a graver nature.

I.—From Mr. Keulemans.

"October 16, 1883.

"My wife went to reside at the seaside on September 30th last, taking with her our youngest child, a boy 13 months old.

"On Wednesday, October 3rd, I felt a strong impression that the little fellow was worse (he was in weak health on his departure). The idea then prevailed on my mind that he had met with a slight accident; and immediately the picture of the bedroom in which he sleeps appeared in my mind's eye. It was *not* the strong sensation of awe or sorrow, as I had often experienced before on such occasions; but, anyhow I fancied he had fallen *out of the bed*, upon chairs, and then rolled down upon the floor. This was about 11 a.m., and I at once wrote to my wife, asking her to let me know how the little fellow was getting on. I thought it rather bold to tell my wife that the baby had, to my conviction, really met with an accident, without being able to produce any confirmatory evidence. Also I considered that she would take it as an insinuation of carelessness on her part; therefore I purposely wrote it as a *post scriptum*.

"I heard no more about it, and even fancied that this time my impression was merely the consequence of anxiety. But on Saturday last I went to see my wife and child, and asked whether she had taken notice of my advice to protect the baby against such an accident. She smiled at first, and then informed me that he had tumbled out of the bed upon the chairs placed at the side, and then found his way upon the floor, without being hurt. She further remarked, 'You must have been thinking of that when it was just too late, because it happened the same day your letter came, some hours previously.' I asked her what time of the day it happened. Answer: 'About 11 a.m.' She told me that she heard the baby fall, and at once ran upstairs to pick him up.

"I am certain, without the shadow of a doubt, that I wrote immediately after the impression; and that this was between 11 and 11.30 in the morning."

Mr. Gurney adds: "I have seen the letter which Mr. Keulemans wrote to his wife. The envelope bears the postmark of Worthing, October 3rd; and the postscript contains the following words:

"'Mind little Gaston does not fall out of bed. Put chairs in front of it. You know accidents soon happen. The fact is, I

am almost certain he has met with such a mishap this very morning.'"

Mrs. Keulemans' aunt supplies the following testimony :

"36, TEVILLE STREET, WORTHING.

"Mrs. Keulemans (my niece) and her baby are staying at my house. The baby had fallen out of bed the morning of the day the letter [*i. e.*, Mr. Keulemans' letter] was received.

"C. GRAY."

In the next case the information reached the percipient's consciousness through a more circuitous channel. Professor Alexander, the narrator, was holding some sittings for table-turning with some friends in Rio de Janeiro. The information was conveyed by tilts of the table, as in some experiments referred to in the last chapter, the thought-impulse apparently received from the anxious friends at home being thus externalised through the muscles of the percipient.

II.—FROM PROFESSOR ALEXANDER.

RIO DE JANEIRO, March, 1892.

"On the 21st of September, 1891, I was seated at the table with Dr. Barcellos, his niece Sylvia, and Donna Maria Barcellos, when the words came, "The vase is broken." We asked what vase. "[The vase] at your house, the vase of phenic acid." I demanded the hour, and the reply was, "At eight o'clock." Of this an immediate note was take at my request by one of the children seated at another table. I transferred this note to my pocket-book where it reads as follows :

"*21st of September, 1891.*—O vaso se quebrou—De sua casa —O vaso de acido phenico—As 8 horas."

It was as a matter of fact just 8 P.M. Donna Maria shortly afterwards went home ; and on a sub-

sequent occasion Dr. Barcellos told Professor Alexander that

"the message had been confirmed. "I wrote down a *résumé* of his statement, which I now copy from my note-book :

"'Donna M. on arriving home was being told of fright, when she interrupted them, telling them what had come through table. They had just remarked time (eight o'clock) and went to give food to sick child—when noise of breakage. They exclaimed, "O vaso de acido phenico se quebrou." In truth, the jug had been upset by the dog, and had fallen against the vase of phenic acid, making the noise.'"

Neither the vase in question, which was of porcelain, nor the water-jug was really broken. The cause of the accident was a dog that had got into the room where the sick child lay. The animal had, no doubt, endeavoured to drink out of the jug, which was standing on the floor near a chair.

The house where Donna Maria was then living is situated about a kilometre's distance from Dr. Barcellos' residence."

The coincidence in each of these cases is no doubt trivial enough, but the multiplication of well attested coincidences of the kind would lead most of us to readjust our conceptions of the possible and the actual.

Telepathic Dreams.

Inferences based upon dreams can rarely reach a high level of probability. The great number and variety of our dreams and their general lack of definite outline afford of course wide scope for coincidence. But when a dream is so realistic and coherent as in the following case, and makes so marked an impression on the dreamer as to lead him

to record it in his diary on waking, it may fairly be said to rise above the common crowd of phantasms which throng through the gate of ivory.

III.—From Mr. Fred. Wingfield.

"Belle Isle en Terre, Côtes du Nord, France,

"20th December, 1883.

"On the night of Thursday, the 25th of March, 1880, I retired to bed after reading till late, as is my habit. I dreamed that I was lying on my sofa reading, when, looking up, I saw distinctly the figure of my brother, Richard Wingfield-Baker, sitting on the chair before me. I dreamed that I spoke to him, but that he simply bent his head in reply, rose, and left the room. When I awoke I found myself standing with one foot on the ground by my bedside, and the other on the bed, trying to speak and to pronounce my brother's name. So strong was the impression as to the reality of his presence, and so vivid the whole scene as dreamt, that I left my bedroom to search for my brother in the sitting-room. I examined the chair where I had seen him seated, I returned to bed, tried to fall asleep in the hope of a repetition of the appearance, but my mind was too excited, too painfully disturbed, as I recalled what I had dreamed. I must have, however, fallen asleep towards the morning, but when I awoke, the impression of my dream was as vivid as ever—and I may add is to this very hour equally strong and clear. My sense of impending evil was so strong that I at once made a note in my memorandum book of this 'appearance,' and added the words, 'God forbid.'

"Three days afterwards I received the news that my brother, Richard Wingfield-Baker, had died on Thursday evening, the 25th of March, 1880, at 8.30 p.m., from the effects of the terrible injuries received in a fall while hunting with the Blackmore Vale hounds."

Later, Mr. Wingfield sent to Mr. Gurney his note-book containing, amongst various business

memoranda, the following entry: "Appearance, Thursday night 25th March, 1880 R.B.W.B.[1] God forbid." Mr. Wingfield adds that he has never experienced a sensory hallucination, nor any other dream of this vivid and distressing character.

The Prince de Lucinge Faucigny writes that he heard an account of this dream and the attendant circumstances from Mr. Wingfield on the 4th April, 1880, *i. e.*, within ten days of the occurrence.

It will be observed that in this case the dream occurred some hours after the death. This is a feature which is found not seldom in the spontaneous instances of telepathy. The deferment of the impression is, however, no real obstacle to the telepathic explanation; though of course it to some extent lessens the evidential value of a case. We find indications of similar delay in the emergence of a telepathic impression in many of the experimental examples. A more exact parallel, however, is presented by the emergence in crystal vision, and generally in states of partial dissociation, of impressions, not necessarily of telepathic origin, received hours and even days beforehand, which have waited for a favourable opportunity to present themselves, occasionally in a hallucinatory form, to the percipient's consciousness.[2]

[1] Mr. Wingfield explains that when he wrote the initials he intended them to stand for his brother—Richard Baker—and another friend, William Bigge, to whom also the apparition bore some resemblance. It was not until afterwards that he realised that all four initials really represented his brother's full name, Richard Baker Wingfield-Baker. See *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., pp. 199–201, for a full account of this case.

[2] See the discussion on this subject in Chapter XII. below.

Telepathic Hallucinations.

But the strongest evidence for mental action at a distance is to be found in the coincidence of a hallucination with the death or some other crisis in the life of the person represented. The evidence in such a case is strong, not because a waking hallucination differs in kind from a dream; both in fact may be regarded as psychical phenomena of the same class; a hallucination is a waking dream, and a dream such as that just quoted is a hallucination which occurs in sleep. But whilst dreams are habitual and often commonplace experiences, a sensory hallucination is a comparatively rare event.

As a matter of fact, not more than one Englishman in ten[1] can expect to have a well-defined hallucination in the whole course of his life. It is clear, therefore, that the occurrence of an exceptional experience of this nature in close connection with an exceptional crisis in the life of a distant friend is a much more noteworthy coincidence than the occurrence of such a dream even as that reported above. Again, the hallucination, since the percipient is awake at the time, and since the false sense perception enters into competition with the real sensations from without, and may be compared and associated with external events, is much more likely to be remembered correctly. On all grounds, therefore, the evidence of telepathic hallucinations is

[1] More precisely 7.8 per cent. of English men and 12 per cent. of English women. See *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. x., p. 39. This estimate, however, assumes that all hallucinations are remembered, which is not the case. See the discussion on this point in the Census Report, *loc. cit.*, pp, 60–69.

much to be preferred to the evidence derived from such feebler and less definite impressions as we have hitherto described in this chapter.[1] I will begin by quoting an auditory case, which originated, it would appear, in a dream, and was continued as a waking experience.

IV.—From Miss M. A. King.

(The account was written during the first half of the year 1889.)

"Belle Vue, Exeter.

"I heard a voice say, 'Come to me, I 'm so ill, come to me.' This happened at five in the morning, one day in October of

[1] In a book on hallucination and illusion, published in Leipzig in 1894 (*Ueber die Trugwahrnehmung*), which is shortly, I understand, to appear in an English translation, Herr Edmund Parish essays to prove that all hallucinations occur in a state of partial dissociation of consciousness; that their occurrence may, indeed, be regarded as symptomatic of such dissociation. In discussing the cases quoted in the Census Report already referred to, he endeavours to shew, not, I think, with entire success, that there are to be found, in the narratives of the percipients, other indications of such dissociation, or dream-consciousness. The point in itself is not of great evidential importance, since we rely on the evidence for telepathy furnished by coincident hallucinations, not so much because they are presumably *waking* experiences, as because they are (1) exceptional, and (2) of such a nature that the exact time of their occurrence is clearly fixed and likely to be correctly remembered. A coincident dream which chanced to occur in the course of a five minutes' nap would furnish equally good evidence, if it could be proved that it was as definite and as exceptional. But Herr Parish goes on to draw the conclusion that "it would be ridiculous to reckon the number of dreams by the number remembered, but it is scarcely less misleading to apply the same method of calculation to the waking hallucinations with which the International Census is concerned." This conclusion seems to me entirely unwarranted, mainly, in addition to the reasons above given for drawing a line between dreams and waking hallucinations, on two grounds: (1) that it is inconsistent with the facts ascertained in the course of the Census inquiry as to the rate at which hallucinations are forgotten; (2) that it is inconsistent with Parish's own admission, that the dissociation of consciousness, which is the chief cause of forgetfulness, in the case of what are commonly called waking hallucinations, is less profound than in ordinary sleep.

1888. I was lying awake having been, dreaming vividly. My health was perfect, and I was in no grief or anxiety at the time.

"[The impression was that of] some one with whom I was most intimate, but whom I had not seen for two months. She was at the time 200 miles away, and at that exact time was undergoing a severe attack and spoke the same words that I heard.

"No other person was present.

"I have not had any other experiences of this sort definite enough to describe.

"M. A. KING."

Miss King later informed us that she wrote at once to Miss Ridd, the friend whose voice she believed herself to hear, giving an account of her experience. This letter has not, unfortunately, been preserved, but Miss Ridd has confirmed to us Miss King's account of its contents. Miss Ridd wrote at once in answer to Miss King. The following paragraph in this letter from Miss Ridd, which has been forwarded for our inspection, refers to Miss King's account of her experiences.

"I didn't mean to tell you about it, but the coincidence is so strange I must. Sunday morning about four o'clock I had awfully bad pain, thought I was going to die for a few minutes, and when I could speak I stretched out my arms to your photo and said, 'My Trix, come to me, I 'm so ill, come to me!' Wasn't it strange?"

It will be seen that the evidence in this case that Miss King had an unusual and impressive experience about the time when her friend was seized with a sudden attack of illness is fairly complete.

The exact coincidence in time is not clearly proved; since Miss King in her original account gave 5 A.M. as the hour of her experience, whilst Miss Ridd was taken ill at 4 A.M. Miss King has had no other auditory hallucination.[1]

But it is the visual hallucinations, and especially the apparitions of the dying, which as they are the most striking are also the most commonly misinterpreted phenomena of this type. This misinterpretation has probably more than any other cause prejudiced the reception of the evidence under this head brought forward by the Society for Psychical Research. The unconscious heritage of a pristine animism has led many to regard, or to assume that we regard, such hallucinations as in some sense a part of the dying man, a double, an astral body, a visible soul. But in most cases at any rate we find no justification for regarding the vision as other than purely subjective. It is just a dream, the product of the seer's own phantasy. That in some cases it coincides with the death of the person whose image is seen does not make the image more real. That remains a dream image—but a dream initiated by an impulse received from the brain of the dying man.

It may indeed be objected that the transition from the experimental instances of apparent telepathy dealt with in the last chapter to the apparitions now to be discussed is too violent. For the spontaneous apparitions differ from the mass of the experimental

[1] For a full account of the case see *Proc. S. P. R.*, x., pp. 289–291.

cases in three points: (1) in the much greater distance at which the telepathic energy is assumed to act; (2) that, whereas the effects produced by experiment for the most part fall below the level of actual sensation, the apparitions clearly involve a sensory element; (3) that in those it is the idea actually present to the mind of the agent which intrudes into the consciousness of the percipient, whilst in these the actual percept represents what can at most have occupied but a subordinate place in the thoughts of the presumed agent. As regards the first point, indeed, we find every gradation of distance between agent and percipient in the spontaneous examples. (Compare, for instance, Case VII., in the present chapter with Cases VI. and VIII.) On the second point, it is to be remarked that in some of our experiments there is evidence that the transferred impression reached the level of a sensory hallucination. And both as regards this point and as to the manner in which the received impression is, *ex hypothesi*, modified by the percipient's consciousness, we have the analogy of dreams to guide us. For dreams present every possible degree of externalisation, from faint inward impressions to quasi-hallucinatory vividness, as in Case III. above; and in dreams it seems clear that the dreamer must habitually clothe the nucleus of external impression—telepathic or normal—with appropriate imagery. But fortunately we are in a position to offer direct evidence for the position here taken: that the spontaneous apparitions of the dying may be classed in the same gen-

eral category as the experimental transference of the images of cards, numbers, or diagrams.

Some of the most remarkable apparitions of which we have authentic record have been produced experimentally.[1] One instance may be quoted here. The narrator is a friend of my own, who had read accounts of similar successful experiments published in *Phantasms of the Living*. The letter, from which the following extract is taken, is dated 16th November, 1886.

V.—From the Rev. Clarence Godfrey.

"I was so impressed by the account on p. 105 that I determined to put the matter to an experiment.

"Retiring at 10.45 [on the 15th November, 1886], I determined to appear, if possible, to a friend, and accordingly I set myself to work with all the volitional and determinative energy which I possess, to stand at the foot of her bed. I need not say that I never dropped the slightest hint beforehand as to my intention, such as could mar the experiment, nor had I mentioned the subject to her. As the 'agent' I may describe my own experiences.

"Undoubtedly the imaginative faculty was brought extensively into play, as well as the volitional, for I endeavoured to *translate myself*, spiritually, into her room, and to attract her attention, as it were, while standing there. My effort was sustained for perhaps eight minutes, after which I felt tired, and was soon asleep.

"The next thing I was conscious of was meeting the lady next morning (*i. e.*, in a dream, I suppose?) and asking her at once if she had seen me last night. The reply came, 'Yes.' 'How?' I inquired. Then in words strangely clear and low, like a well audible whisper, came the answer, 'I was sitting

[1] See *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., pp. 101–120, *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, pp. 226–246, and *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. x., pp. 28–30, etc.

beside you.' These words, so clear, awoke me instantly, and I felt I must have been dreaming; but on reflection I remembered what I had been 'willing' before I fell asleep, and it struck me, 'This must be a *reflex* action from the percipient.' My watch showed 3.40 A.M. The following is what I wrote immediately in pencil, standing in my night-dress: 'As I reflected upon those clear words, they struck me as being quite *intuitive*, I mean *subjective*, and to have proceeded *from within, as my own conviction*, rather than a communication from any one else. And yet I can't remember her face at all, as one can after a vivid dream!'

"But the words were uttered in a clear, quick tone, which was most remarkable, and awoke me at once.

"My friend, in the note with which she sent me the enclosed account of *her own* experience, says: 'I remember the man put all the lamps out soon after I came upstairs, and that is only done about a quarter to four.'"

Mr. Godfrey received from the percipient on the 16th November an account of her side of the experience, and at his request she wrote as follows:

"Yesterday—viz., the morning of November 16th, 1886—about half-past three o'clock, I woke up with a start and an idea that some one had come into the room. I heard a curious sound, but fancied it might be the birds in the ivy outside. Next I experienced a strange restless longing to leave the room and go downstairs. This feeling became so overpowering that at last I rose and lit a candle, and went down, thinking if I could get some soda water it might have a quieting effect. On returning to my room I saw Mr. Godfrey standing under the large window on the staircase. He was dressed in his usual style, and with an expression on his face that I have noticed when he has been looking very earnestly at anything. He stood there, and I held up the candle and gazed at him for three or four seconds in utter amazement, and then, as I passed up the staircase, he disappeared. The impression left on my mind was so vivid that I fully intended

waking a friend who occupied the same room as myself, but remembering that I should only be laughed at as romantic and imaginative, refrained from doing so.

"I was not frightened at the appearance of Mr. Godfrey, but felt much excited, and could not sleep afterwards."

On the 21st of the same month I heard a full account of the incident given above from Mr. Godfrey, and on the day following from Mrs.——. Mrs.——told me that the figure appeared quite distinct and lifelike at first, though she could not remember to have noticed more than the upper part of the body. As she looked, it grew more and more shadowy, and finally faded away. Mrs.——, it should be added, told me that she had previously seen two phantasmal figures representing a parent whom she had recently lost.[1]

Mr. Godfrey at our request made two other trials, without, of course, letting Mrs.——know his intention. The first of these attempts was without result, owing perhaps to the date chosen, as he was aware at the time, being unsuitable. But in a trial made on the 7th December, 1886, complete success was again attained. Mrs.——has had no visual hallucinations except on the occasions mentioned.

It will be noticed that the dress of the apparition represented that in which the percipient was accustomed to see Mr. Godfrey, not the dress which he was actually wearing at the time. If the image

[1] These details are taken from notes made by me immediately after the interview.

in these cases is in fact nothing but the outward expression of the percipient's thought, this result is of course what we should naturally expect to find. In a more recent case of the kind the agent, Mr. F. W. Rose, made an attempt to impress two ladies, mother and daughter, living in the same house. On the first occasion, the ladies passed a disturbed night, but there was nothing to connect the disturbance with the agent; on the second occasion, the elder lady saw an apparition of Mr. Rose, and the younger lady was again restless and disturbed.[1]

We may now pass to the consideration of spontaneous telepathic hallucinations. In the first case to be quoted it is difficult to know whether to class the percipient's vision as an illusion or a hallucination. At any rate, it seems to have been exceptional if not actually unique in his experience.

VI.—From Prince Victor Duleep Singh.

"Highclere Castle, Newbury, *November* 8, 1894.

"On Saturday, October 21, 1893, I was in Berlin with Lord Carnarvon. We went to a theatre together and returned before midnight. I went to bed, leaving, as I always do, a bright light in the room (electric light). As I lay in bed I found myself looking at an oleograph which hung on the wall opposite my bed. I saw distinctly the face of my father, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, looking at me, as it were out of this picture; not like a portrait of him, but his real head. The head about filled the picture frame. I continued looking and still saw my father looking at me with an intent expression. Though not in the least alarmed, I was so puzzled that I got

[1] *Journal, S. P. R.*, May, 1896.

out of bed to see what the picture really was. It was an oleograph commonplace picture of a girl holding a rose and leaning out of a balcony, an arch forming a background. The girl's face was quite small, whereas my father's head was the size of life and filled the frame.

"I was in no special anxiety about my father at the time, and had for some years known him to be seriously out of health; but there had been no news to alarm me about him.

"Next morning (Sunday) I told the incident to Lord Carnarvon.

"That evening (Sunday), late, on returning home, Lord Carnarvon brought two telegrams into my room and handed them to me. I said at once, 'My father is dead.' That was the fact. He had had an apoplectic seizure on the Saturday evening at about nine o'clock, from which he never recovered, but continued unconscious and died on the Sunday, early in the afternoon. My father had often said to me that if I was not with him when he died he would try and come to me.

"I am not subject to hallucinations, and have only once had any similar experience, when, as a schoolboy, I fancied I saw the figure of a dead schoolboy who had died in the room which I slept in with my brother; but I attached no importance to this.

"VICTOR DULEEP SINGH."

Lord Carnarvon writes:

"I can confirm Prince V. Duleep Singh's account. I heard the incident from him on the Sunday morning. The same evening, at about 12 p.m., he received a telegram notifying him of his father's sudden illness, and death. We had no knowledge of his father's illness. He has never told me of any similar previous occurrence.

"CARNARVON."

The Maharajah Duleep Singh died on Sunday, October 22, 1893.

In the next case we seem to have one of those completely externalised apparitions which cheat

the senses by a lifelike counterfeit of the human figure. The percipient's own account of the vision, it will be seen, is corroborated by an entry in a diary made within 24 hours of the occurrence. That the entry was not made until the fact of the death was known is of course to be regretted, but it can hardly be contended that this circumstance detracts materially from its evidential value.

VII.—From Miss Berta Hurly.

"Waterbeach Vicarage, Cambridge, *February*, 1890.

"In the spring and summer of 1886 I often visited a poor woman called Evans, who lived in our parish, Caynham. She was very ill with a painful disease, and it was, as she said, a great pleasure when I went to see her; and I frequently sat with her and read to her. Towards the middle of October she was evidently growing weaker, but there seemed no immediate danger. I had not called on her for several days, and one evening I was standing in the dining-room after dinner with the rest of the family, when I saw the figure of a woman dressed like Mrs. Evans, in large apron and muslin cap, pass across the room from one door to the other, where she disappeared. I said, 'Who is that?' My mother said, 'What do you mean?' and I said, 'That woman who has just come in and walked over to the other door.' They all laughed at me, and said I was dreaming, but I felt sure it was Mrs. Evans, and next morning we heard she was dead.

"Berta Hurly."

Miss Hurly's mother writes:

"On referring to my diary for the month of October, 1886, I find the following entry: '19th. Berta startled us all after dinner, about 8.30 last evening, by saying she saw the figure of a woman pass across the dining-room, and that it was Mrs. Evans. This morning we heard the poor woman is

dead.' On inquiring at the cottage we found she had become wandering in her mind, and at times unconscious, about the time she appeared to Berta, and died towards morning.

"ANNIE ROSS.

"*February* 25, 1890."

It will have been observed that in each of the cases last quoted the vision occurred within twelve hours, or a little more, of the death of the person represented. The fact that a man can die but once gives a coincidence of this kind a high evidential value, for the probability that anyone will die on a given day, according to the tables of mortality, is but one in 19,000. And since we have, in the Census Report already referred to, trustworthy estimates of the frequency of casual hallucinations, the necessary data are at hand for calculating what are the indications that the coincidence of such apparitions with death could be due to chance. It is in fact shewn in the Report[1] that the hallucinations coincident with death reported in the course of that inquiry are about 400 times more numerous than chance would allow. This estimate takes no account of hallucinations occurring more than twelve hours from the death. But though the coincidence in these cases is not so striking, it is still sufficiently remarkable, and the instances sufficiently numerous, to lead one again to look for some other explanation than chance.

The following case is a good example. The apparition, it will be seen, occurred within thirty-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. x., pp. 245–251.

two hours of the death, during a brief fatal illness of which the percipient had no knowledge.

VIII.—From Miss Hervey.

"9, Tavistock Crescent, W., *April* 28, 1892.

"I saw the figure of my cousin (a nurse in Dublin) coming upstairs dressed in grey. I was in Tasmania, and the time that I saw her was between 6 and 7 p.m., on April 21, 1888.

"I had just come in from a ride and was in the best of health and spirits. I was between 31 and 32 years of age.

"I had lived with my cousin, and we were the greatest of friends, but my going to Tasmania in 1887 had, of course, separated us. She was a nurse, and at the time I saw her in April, 1888, she was dying of typhus fever, a fact unknown to me till 6 weeks after her death. Her illness lasted only 5 days, and I heard of her death at the same time as of her illness.

"There was no one present with me at the time, but I narrated what I had seen to the friend with whom I was living, and asked why my cousin, Ethel B., should have been dressed in grey. My friend said that was the dress of the nurses in that particular hospital; a fact unknown to me.

"The impression of seeing my cousin was so vivid that I wrote a long letter to her that night, saying I had had this vision. The letter, arriving after she was dead, was returned to me and I destroyed it.

"Rose B. E. I. Hervey."

"I called on Miss Hervey on the 21st July, 1892. She was staying at the time of her experience with Lady H. Miss Hervey and Lady H. had just returned from a drive, and Miss Hervey was leaving her room to cross the upper landing to Lady H's room to have tea. On passing the stairs she saw the figure coming up. She recognised it at

once and ran away to Lady H., without waiting to see the figure disappear, and told her what she had seen. Lady H. laughed at her, but told her to note it in her diary. This Miss Hervey did. I saw the entry: 'Saturday, April 21st, 1888, 6 p.m. Vision of [nickname given] on landing in grey dress.' The news of death did not arrive till June."[1]

Lady H. writes:

"*July* 30, 1893.

"DEAR SIR,—Your letter dated April 6th has followed me back to England, and I should have answered it a week or two sooner, but I thought my son from Tasmania might be able to throw some light on your search for a definite corroboration of Miss Hervey's account of an apparition which she tells you she saw when in Tasmania with us in 1888. He, however, can do little more than I can for its confirmation. He recollects that Miss Hervey made such a statement at the time, and I seem to remember something about it, but nothing really definite."

From a copy of the letter announcing the fact, we learn that the death occurred at 4.30 P.M. on Sunday, April 22nd. The writer speaks of Miss B. as having been "heavy with fever all through." The difference of time between Tasmania and Dublin is about ten hours, and the vision therefore preceded the death by thirty-two hours. It should be added that the dress of the nurses of the hospital in question consists of a white, blue, and red check cotton, producing a somewhat greyish effect at a little distance. Miss Hervey has had one other visual

[1] This extract is copied from my notes made immediately after the interview.

hallucination, as a child of ten. This vision also is believed to have coincided with a death.

There is a detailed account given by Mme. de Maceine in a letter to Professor Richet [1] of the apparition of Rubinstein five days before his death. The case is interesting because the apparition, though distinct and clearly recognised, was seen only out of the "corner of the eye," and as Mme. de Maceine turned round to face the spot where the apparition seemed to be it vanished. The vision appeared three times at intervals of a few minutes.

In the cases of hallucination hitherto cited, with the doubtful exception of Miss Hervey's narrative, there is no evidence that the impression telepathically transferred included any element beyond the simple idea of the agent. Given such an idea, the percipient's mind would be equal to the task of clothing it with the appropriate imagery. But on the analogy of many experimental cases, and of such spontaneous incidents as Mr. Keulemans' vision of the child falling out of bed, we should anticipate that hallucinatory visions would occasionally embody the agent's thoughts in a detailed form. And there are a few well attested cases that would seem to require such an explanation.

If the following incident is correctly described, it is difficult to suppose that the dress and accessories of the figure could have been derived from the percipient's imagination.

[1] *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, May–June, 1896.

IX.—From Frances Reddell.

"Antony, Torpoint, Devonshire.

"*December*, 14th, 1882.

"Helen Alexander (maid to Lady Waldegrave) was lying here very ill with typhoid fever, and was attended by me. I was standing at the table by her bedside, pouring out her medicine, at about four o'clock in the morning of the 4th October, 1880. I heard the call-bell ring (this had been heard twice before during the night in that same week), and was attracted by the door of the room opening, and by seeing a person entering the room whom I instantly felt to be the mother of the sick woman. She had a brass candlestick in her hand, a red shawl over her shoulders, and a flannel petticoat on which had a hole in the front. I looked at her as much as to say, 'I am glad you have come,' but the woman looked at me sternly, as much as to say, 'Why wasn't I sent for before?' I gave the medicine to Helen Alexander, and then turned round to speak to the vision, but no one was there. She had gone. She was a short, dark person, and very stout. At about six o'clock that morning Helen Alexander died. Two days after, her parents and sister came to Antony, and arrived between one and two o'clock in the morning; I and another maid let them in, and it gave me a great turn when I saw the living likeness of the vision I had seen two nights before. I told the sister about the vision, and she said that the description of the dress exactly answered to her mother's, and that they had brass candlesticks at home exactly like the one described. There was not the slightest resemblance between the mother and daughter.

"Frances Reddell."

In a letter dated 31st December, 1883, after giving details of the illness and repeating Frances Reddell's account of the apparition, Mrs. Pole-Carew proceeds as follows:

"Reddell told me and my daughter of the apparition, about an hour after Helen's death, prefacing with, 'I am not superstitious or nervous, and I wasn't the least frightened, but her mother came last night,' and she then told the story, giving a careful description of the figure she had seen. The relations were asked to come to the funeral, and the father, mother and sister came, and in the mother Reddell recognised the apparition, as I did also, for Reddell's description had been most accurate, even to the expression, which she had ascribed to annoyance, but which was due to deafness. It was judged best not to speak about it to the mother, but Reddell told the sister, who said the description of the figure corresponded exactly with the probable appearance of her mother if roused in the night; that they had exactly such a candlestick at home, and that there was a hole in her mother's petticoat produced by the way she always wore it. It seems curious that neither Helen nor her mother appeared to be aware of the visit. Neither of them, at any rate, ever spoke of having seen the other, nor even of having dreamt of having done so.

"F. A. POLE-CAREW."

Frances Reddell states that she has never had any hallucination, or any odd experience of any kind, except on this one occasion. The Hon. Mrs. Lyttelton, of the Vicarage, Eccles, who knows her, tells us that "she appears to be a most matter-of-fact person, and was apparently most impressed by the fact that she saw a hole in the mother's flannel petticoat, made by the busk of her stays, reproduced in the apparition."

In this case we may suppose that the vision may have reflected a dream of the dying girl's. There are other recorded visions at the bedside of the dying which may probably have a similar explanation.

Collective Hallucinations.

So far we have dealt with subjective impressions of a single percipient. It is to be noted indeed that hallucinations are commonly experienced only when the percipient is alone ; the mental preoccupation caused by the presence of others being no doubt unfavourable to their occurrence. Miss Hurly's case, quoted above, is quite exceptional in this respect. It does, however, occasionally happen that an impression is shared by two or more persons. Sometimes the percipients are at a distance from each other and their impressions are different. Thus, Sir Lawrence Jones and his brother, the one being at Bury St. Edmunds, the other in Westminster, each had an unusual experience on the night of their father's death. Sir L. Jones awoke from sleep with the exclamation, "Something dreadful is happening"; whilst Mr. Herbert Jones was awakened, hearing his name called twice, and afterwards heard a sound as of something heavy being carried down the stairs. The house was in fact quite silent.[1] In other cases—and this is the common type—the percipients are together, and in such a case their impressions are generally of the same kind. If one sees a figure, *all* see a figure, if one hears a voice, *all* hear a voice.

In the Census Report already referred to there are included accounts of no less than 95 collective visual hallucinations, of which 67 took the form of realistic apparitions of the human figure. Of these,

[1] *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, pp. 293–295.

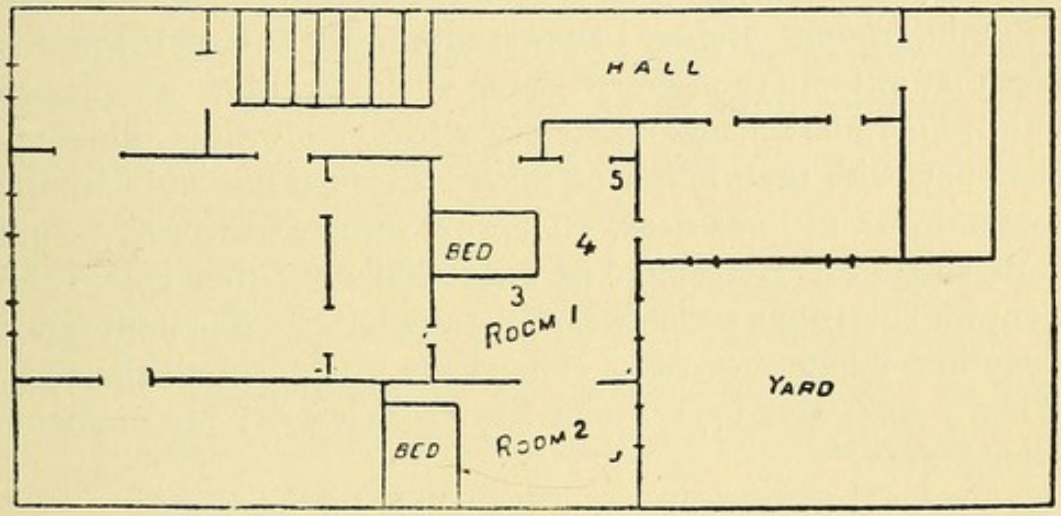
27 represented living persons. Many of these cases are, no doubt, of doubtful value, either from the length of time which had elapsed between the event and its record, or because the circumstances under which the apparition was seen rendered it conceivable that it might have been a real figure which eluded observation in disappearing. Enough well authenticated cases remain, it may fairly be held, to make it probable that collective percipience of hallucinatory impressions does occur. I select as an example the following case, partly because the record was written within a few days of the experience, partly because the difference in the impressions of the two percipients—a rare feature in the cases reported to us—is interesting and instructive.

X.—From Dr. W. O. S.

Dr. W. O. S. writes to Dr. Hodgson from Albany, New York, on the 10th September, 1888, giving an account of an apparition which he had seen on September 3rd. He and his wife occupy two adjoining bedrooms; the door between the rooms is wide open, the outer doors are locked. On the date in question, he writes,

"I undressed and went to bed about 11, and soon was asleep. In the neighbourhood of 4 A.M. I was awakened by a strong light in my face. I awoke and thought I saw my wife standing at Fig. 3, as she was to rise at 5.30 to take an early train. The light was so bright and pervading that I spoke, but got no answer. As I spoke, the figure retreated to Fig. 4, and as gradually faded to a spot at Fig. 5. The noiseless shifting of

the light made me think it was a servant in the hall and the light was thrown through the keyhole as she moved. That could not be, as some clothing covered the keyhole. I then thought a burglar must be in the room, as the light settled near a large safe in my room. Thereupon I called loudly to my wife, and sprang to light a light. As I called her name she suddenly awoke, and called out, 'What is that bright light in your room?' I lit the gas and searched (there had been no light in either room). Everything was undisturbed.



"My wife left on the early train. I attended to my work as usual. At noon, when I reached home, the servant who answers the door informed me that a man had been to my office to see about a certificate for a young lady who had died suddenly early that morning from a hemorrhage from the lungs. She died about one o'clock—the figure I saw about four o'clock. There was but little resemblance between the two, as far as I noticed, except height and figure. The faces were not unlike, except that the apparition seemed considerably older. I had seen the young lady the evening before, but, although much interested in the case, did not consider it immediately serious. She had been in excellent health up to within two days of her death. At first she spit a little blood, from a strain. When she was taken with the severe hemorrhage, and choked to death, she called for help and for me.

"This is the first experience of the kind I have ever had, or

personally have known about. It was very clear—the figure or apparition—at first, but rapidly faded. My wife remarked the light before I had spoken anything except her name. When I awake I am wide awake in an instant, as I am accustomed to answer a telephone in the hall and my office-bell at night."

FROM MRS. W. O. S.

"ALBANY, *September* 27, 1888.

"On the morning of September 4 I was suddenly awakened out of a sound sleep by my husband's calling to me from an adjoining room. Before I answered him I was struck with the fact that although the green shade to his window was drawn down, his room seemed flooded by a soft yellow light, while my chamber, with the window on the same side as his, and with the shade drawn up, was dark. The first thing I said was, 'What is that light?' He replied he didn't know. I then got up and went into his room, which was still quite light. The light faded away in a moment or two. The shade was down all the time. When I went back to my room I saw that it was a few moments after four."

In answer to further questions, Mrs. W. O. S. adds:

"*October* 16, 1888.

"In regard to the light in my husband's room, it seemed to me to be perhaps more in the corner between his window and my door, although it was faintly distributed through the room. When I first saw the light (lying in bed) it was brilliant, but I only commanded a view of the corner of his room, between his window and my door. When I reached the door the light had begun to fade, though it seemed brighter in the doorway where I stood than elsewhere. My husband seemed greatly perplexed, and said, 'How strange! I thought surely there was a woman in my room.' I said, 'Did you think it was I?' He said, 'At first, of course, I thought so, but when I rubbed my eyes I saw it was not. It looked some like Mrs. B——' (another patient of his,—not the girl who died that night). He, more-

over, said that the figure never seemed to look directly at him, but towards the wall beyond his bed; and that the figure seemed clothed in white, or something very light. That was all he said, except that later, when he knew the girl was dead, and I asked him if the figure at all resembled her, he said, 'Yes, it did look like her, only older.'" [1]

Collective percipience forms one of the most interesting problems presented by this inquiry. It need hardly perhaps be said that we do not regard it as evidence that the thing seen is in any sense objective. If we may infer, as in such cases as that last quoted we seem entitled to infer, that the vision was not merely an illusion, and was not suggested by one percipient to the other verbally, we have two alternative hypotheses: (1) that each percipient is affected independently by a distant mind; or (2) that the hallucination, originating telepathically or otherwise in one percipient, is transferred telepathically to his co-percipient. The first explanation seems the simplest and most probable when the two percipients are a considerable distance apart. But instances of this kind, as already said, are rare. The second explanation is that which is to be preferred in most cases, for several reasons; of which the chief is that the impressions of two percipients when in the same locality are, as said, nearly always similar; whereas if independently originated we should expect them to be frequently dissimilar, since we have reason to suppose that the precise form in which the telepathic impulse presents itself to consciousness is determined, as a rule, not by the

[1] *Proc. American S. P. R.*, pp. 405–408.

nature of the impulse itself, but by the idiosyncrasy of the percipient. Moreover, collective hallucinations occasionally take grotesque shapes, forms of animals, vague lights, and inanimate objects. Further instances of collective hallucinations are quoted in the next chapter, and a full discussion on the points raised will be found in the Census Report already referred to.

From this brief review of the evidence—experimental and spontaneous—for telepathic communication, many topics of interest have necessarily been excluded. In the present chapter the examples have been selected mainly from the class of visual hallucinations, because these phenomena are in themselves more impressive, and explanation by chance coincidence is more obviously precluded. But the narratives here quoted, though they represent the evidence, either as regards its amount or its variety, very imperfectly, are sufficient to afford some idea of the character and importance of the problems to be solved. First amongst these problems is the nature of the agency by which the results are brought about. On this question there has been speculation enough, from the first crude analogy of two tuning-forks sounding in unison, to elaborate theories, with experimental demonstration, of radiant neuric force, or a comfortable belief in the omnipotence of the ether. But in truth we know neither the medium by which the telepathic impulse is conveyed, nor the organ by which the impulse is originated or received. By some,

indeed, it is held that telepathy is but one of a group of transcendent faculties, which point to a world beyond the world of sight and touch: the germ of powers which cannot reach their full growth until man has ceased to be man. Such a view is perhaps little more than the expression of the difficulties involved in any physical explanation. That mind should reach to mind over miles of intervening space without discoverable apparatus may, indeed, appear to call for supernatural means. But so to the peasant might appear the discovery of rayless stars, the analysis of the sun's photosphere, or the familiar miracles of the electric current. The properties of the ether and the mechanism and functions of the nervous system, it may be suggested, are still imperfectly explored; and it would be rash to assert that the nerve-changes which are the presumed accompaniment of thought could not be conveyed by ethereal undulations to a kindred brain over distances at least as great as those which are indicated by some of our thought-transference experiments. Even the greatest distance vouched for in the spontaneous cases of death-apparitions—even the whole diameter of the earth—would be an insignificant fraction of the distance traversed by the waves of ether which strike upon our retina the image of a star.

CHAPTER IX.

GHOSTS.

THE subject-matter of this and the following chapter will be those apparitions and hallucinatory phenomena which, whilst bearing some marks of an origin external to the percipient's organism, are not *primâ facie* connected with the agency of any living person. Such apparitions are roughly described in popular parlance as Ghosts. The present chapter will deal mainly with isolated, non-recurrent phantasms—ghosts at large; whilst the next will treat of phantasms tending to recur in connection with particular localities—Haunted Houses. The classification may not be a scientific one; it is possible that the same category may, with fuller knowledge, be found to include remotely related phenomena. But it is practically convenient in the present stage of the inquiry, in default of the materials for a scientific grouping, to adopt the intelligible if superficial classification ready to hand.

The primitive hypothesis that "ghosts" are the spirits of deceased persons, walking the earth in quasi-material forms, capable of uttering expressive sighs, of holding familiar intercourse with their

survivors, and of displacing the household furniture, would probably find scanty support, if thus crudely expressed, amongst educated persons. Certainly it would be difficult for anyone familiar with the evidence amassed by the Society for Psychical Research to acknowledge such a view in its original simplicity.

It is not that this hypothesis has fallen by the weight of argument and evidence arrayed against it ; it has merely shared in that general euthanasia which has overtaken many other pious opinions found inadequate to the facts. It has silently dropped out of view. But, nevertheless, in the belief certainly of many of those who have contributed experiences of their own to our collection, and of nearly all those who have recorded for us experiences related to them by others, the "ghost," the thing seen or heard, manifests intelligence, is capable of purposive action, and bears a definite relation to some deceased person.

Probably the conception of that relation held by some of those who have narrated for us their personal experiences differs but little from that of the Theosophists, who talk glibly of "astral bodies" and "decaying shells." By those, however, who have realised the enormous practical difficulties incident to any physical explanation, however attenuated, the relation is no doubt conceived as similar to that suggested in the previous chapter to exist between the apparition seen at the time of a death and the person whom it resembles. It is

vaguely recognised, in short, that the phenomena are hallucinatory, but it is held that the hallucinations are in some sense due to the agency of a deceased person; that they are the reflection of a conscious personality, the expression of a deliberate attempt on the part of a spirit to communicate with us, or, if that conception should be found too definite, that they represent in some way the incoherent dreams, the vague reminiscences of another state of existence.

In examining the evidence for what purport to be phantasms of the dead, it is essential to bear in mind the pre-existence in popular belief of some theory of this kind. It is certain that many of the witnesses, whose testimony is cited, believed that the things which they described are to be attributed to the agency of spirits, more particularly of spirits of dead men and women. It can be demonstrated, from a comparison of narratives written down long after the event, and of second-hand accounts, with good recent first-hand cases, that a belief of this kind has frequently operated, wherever indistinctness of memory or a lessened sense of personal responsibility has afforded the occasion, to sophisticate the record and shape it into conformity with itself.[1] It is probable that, even in quite recent cases, the presence of some such half-recognised belief has had its influence in giving definition and colour to experiences in themselves dim and elusive.

[1] See the discussion at the beginning of the next chapter on this point.

To us at any rate these phenomena are hallucinations in the first instance, whatever else they may be. And, in the absence of any corroborative circumstance, we have no ground for regarding them as having more significance than dreams, the mere creatures of the percipient's own imagination. But though, no doubt, the great mass of apparitions of this kind, such as those occurring shortly after the death of a friend,[1] when the memory of him is still vividly present with those who survive, must be regarded, from an evidential standpoint, as purely subjective appearances, there are cases which afford evidence of some external cause. This evidence may be of several kinds.

Collective Apparitions. (*a.*) *Unrecognised.*

1. The phantasm, visual or auditory, may be perceived by two or more persons simultaneously. The collectivity of a percept is not, indeed, in itself a proof of the reality of the thing perceived. As we have seen in the last chapter, the explanation of collective hallucinations which presents the least theoretical difficulties, and is, perhaps, most in accordance with the facts at present known, is that an impression originates primarily in one of the percipients and is transferred from him to his co-percipients. In the case of phantasms of the living, there are grounds in some cases for attribut-

[1] See, however, the discussion in the Report on the Census of Hallucinations (*Proc. S. P. R.*, x., pp. 376–7) for a presentation of the evidential aspect of apparitions occurring at about the time of death.

ing the hallucination in the original percipient to an impulse received from some living person at a distance. But in other instances the phantasm would seem to be as purely subjective as the hallucinations of delirium. Many collective cases certainly do not suggest external agency of any kind. Thus some are concerned with inanimate objects. The late Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., and Mrs. Ward on one occasion saw in their bedroom two small pear-shaped lights which afterwards broke up into small luminous fragments.[1] Another narrator, Mrs. Savile Lumley, writes: "Many years ago, while taking a lesson in drilling, in the forenoon, I and another girl distinctly saw a chair, over which we felt we must fall, and called out to each other to avoid it; but no chair was there."[2] Another lady, Miss Foy, tells us that she was troubled for some time with a hallucinatory skeleton, which on one occasion appears to have been perceived by some one in her company, to whom no hint of any kind had been given. The Rev. A. T. S. Goodrick and a friend, walking "across a moor in Sutherlandshire, saw a ball of fire, about the size of an eighteen-pound cannon-ball, of an orange-red colour, which moved forward a few inches in front of them"[3]; and the records of haunted houses contain many instances of lights seen by several persons simultaneously, which in some cases at any rate appear to have been hallucinatory. Collective

[1] *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., p. 193.
[2] *Proc. S. P. R.*, x., p. 323 (footnote).
[3] *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, p. 279.

hallucinations of animals are not infrequent. Thus Mrs. Greiffenberg and her daughter-in-law on two occasions saw a spectral white cat with green eyes and an uncanny appearance.[1] Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Potter saw a large beast like a bull, which came close to them, and disappeared like a shadow when struck at.[2] There are several other cases of the kind in our collection. Cases such as these clearly suggest the transference of a purely subjective hallucination rather than the vision of some spiritual reality. There is a curious case of which we received an account in 1882, which may appropriately be quoted here :

No. I.—Mrs. E. F. writes (Feb. 7, 1882,) that she and her sister with a maidservant were returning from church one Sunday evening, ten or twelve years previously. There was a thick fog, and the moon was at the full. Mrs. E. F. saw a man close to them and pulled her sister's sleeve, whispering to let him pass. " As I spoke, the man disappeared—it seemed into C.'s dress ; neither C. nor the maid had seen him, and he had made no sound. In another moment we were all bewildered at the sight around us ; it was as if we were in a crowded street ; innumerable figures were around us, men, women, children, and dogs ; all were moving briskly about, some singly, others in groups, all without a sound ; they appeared mist-like. There was a broad strip of grass on our right, and a narrow strip on our left ; the figures were hidden directly they got on either of these dark strips, or when they passed *into* ourselves ; but as we walked on they came from every quarter. Some seemed to rise out of the grass on either side of us ; others seemed to pass through us, and come out on the other side. The figures all seemed short, dwarf-like, except *one*, of whom I write after. The women were dressed in by-gone fashion, high bonnets, big

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, x., p. 305. [2] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., p. 240.

cloaks or shawls, and large flounces on their dresses, such as I remember my mother wearing when I was a child. We three were never mistaken as to the identity of the different shapes ; if one saw a man, all saw a man ; if one saw a woman, all saw the woman ; and so on. Overhead it was perfectly free of them ; they were all walking on the ground, as we ourselves were. We saw two men (at different intervals) that had sparks all round their faces ; they appeared to grin. As we saw the second of these, looking hideous, close to us, one of my companions said, 'I can't pass that,' and I answered : 'Look at the sky, you don't see them then.'" Mrs. E. F. goes on to describe a tall man—twice as tall as any of the other figures—who walked close beside them, with long, noiseless strides, on the road, never swerving, but walking as with a purpose. This figure kept with them when all the rest had vanished, and finally walked on when they turned in at their own gate.

Miss C. M. B. corroborates her sister's account.[1]

It is not easy to regard this curious phantasmagoria as an illusion. But the fact that it occurred in a fog, and is, moreover, unique in our collection, certainly points to such an explanation. Possibly, as Mrs. Sidgwick suggests, the tall figure was a real man walking in goloshes, and the rest of the spectral company were born of the fog. On the whole, the most probable view is that this vision was a collective hallucination on a basis of illusory perception. In any case, it may be pointed out, it is difficult to reconcile with any theory of post-mortem activity.

The majority of collective visual phantasms do, indeed, represent the human figure, but rarely a

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, iii., p. 77.

recognised figure of the dead. Two instances of unrecognised apparitions may be quoted.

No. II.—Mrs. Willett, of Lindfield, writes (Dec., 1886): "On Saturday, December 11th, my eldest child Dorothy, aged nearly thirteen, was standing in the hall talking to Miss S——, the Schoolmistress at Scaynes Hill, when they both saw what appeared to them to be a little child in a white pinafore running along the gallery, but they heard no sound of footsteps."

Dorothy went to meet the child, but found no one. Both percipients have written confirming Mrs. Willett's account.[1]

No. III.—Miss Du Cane writes (July 31, 1891) that on the night of 1st November, 1889, between 9.30 and 10 p.m., she had gone up to her bedroom, the door between which and her mother's room was open. "There was no light beyond that which glimmered through the Venetian blinds in each room. As I stood by the mantel-piece I was awestruck by the sudden appearance of a figure gliding noiselessly towards me from the outer room. The appearance was that of a young man, of middle height, dressed in dark clothes and wearing a peaked cap. His face was very pale, and his eyes downcast as though deep in thought. His mouth was shaded by a dark moustache. The face was slightly luminous, which enabled me to distinguish the features distinctly, although we were without a light of any kind at the time. The apparition glided on towards my sisters who were standing inside the room, quite close to the outer door, and who had just caught sight of it, reflected in the mirror. When within a few inches from them it vanished as suddenly as it appeared. As the figure passed, we distinctly felt a cold air which seemed to accompany it. One of my sisters did not see the apparition, as she was looking the other way at the moment, but felt the cold air."

Miss Du Cane's three sisters append their signatures to the account.[2]

[1] *Journal, S. P. R.*, October, 1889. [2] *Journal, S. P. R.*, March, 1892.

Collective phantasms of this kind, of which we have numerous examples in our collection, appear to differ from subjective hallucinations of the ordinary type in no other particular than the fact of their occurrence to two or more persons simultaneously. There were 95 collective visual hallucinations reported at first-hand to the Census Committee of the S. P. R., which were divided as shown in the following table :[1]

Realistic human apparitions of living persons	27
" " of dead persons	8
" " unrecognised	32
Incompletely developed apparitions	12
Apparitions, grotesque, horrible, or monstrous	3
" of animals	4
" of definite inanimate objects	1
" of lights	2
" of indefinite objects	6
Total,	95

Collective Apparitions. (*b*) *Recognised.*

If we turn now to the small minority of collectively perceived phantasms representing a deceased person recognised at the time by one or all the percipients, we shall find that they present the same general characteristics. The two cases which follow are examples of the ordinary type. We will begin with an auditory case.

No. IV.—Miss Newbold (May, 1892) was much attached to a little child of about four years, Florence N., who died on May 23, 1889. One morning in July of the same year Miss

[1] *S. P. R.*, x., p. 414.

Newbold was calling on Mrs. N., and talking of indifferent subjects, when she distinctly heard the child's voice call "Miss Boo" (her name for Miss Newbold). Miss Newbold said nothing, but Mrs. N. at once turned to her and asked if she had not heard the child's voice call "Miss Boo." The sound appeared to come from another room. *No other hallucinations.* Mrs. N. confirms the account. *No other hallucinations.*[1]

We now pass to visual cases. I received a *viva voce* account of the following incident from the two percipients in August, 1893; the account was put into writing, at my request, on the same day.

No. V.—Mrs. J. C. (August, 1893) about seven years previously awoke feeling some one near her. She saw a figure moving from the side of her bed to the wardrobe. She supposed it to be a burglar and lay perfectly still, fearing to awake her husband, lest he should attack the supposed burglar and receive serious injury. The figure moved on opposite Mr. J. C's bed. She then saw Mr. J. C. sit up and look at it. The figure then apparently passed to the door and vanished. The gas was burning during this scene. *No other hallucinations.*

Mr. J. C. (August, 1893) states that on the night in question he sat up suddenly in bed—he has no recollection of any previous dream—and saw, as he thought, his father move noiselessly across the room, and disappear through the door. He did not, however, see the face, but recognised the figure from its general appearance. *No other hallucinations.*[2]

In this case the fact that Mrs. J. C. did not speak or move makes it improbable that the hallucination seen by Mr. J. C. could have been started by suggestion of a normal kind. If the incident cannot

[1] *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, pp. 275–6.
[2] *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, pp. 281–2.

be cited as a strong proof of the agency of the dead, it at least indicates telepathy from the living.

The next case is of a more complicated kind. A figure resembling a lady who had died in the house a few months previously was seen by four of her nieces and by three other persons. Some of the apparitions were seen by two or three witnesses simultaneously. It does not appear, however, that the recognition was very clear; nor that the figure was recognised at all until—as Mrs. Sidgwick points out—the percipients had formed a theory on the subject. The fact of the apparition is, however, well attested.

No. VI.—From Miss C. N. (November, 1891): "When I first thought that I saw my aunt, I was twelve years old; it was in 1884, about two months after her death. I was playing in the drawing-room, when suddenly I noticed a tall figure in black leave the room. The others had also seen it; we were not frightened, only very much surprised, because we had not seen any one enter, and it was certainly no member of the family. When we ran out of the room to see where the person had disappeared to, there was no sign of her anywhere. Later on the same day, I was going upstairs, when I was again surprised by seeing the same person walking across the landing from one bedroom to another. Just at the same moment my sister and friend came up; they had also seen the figure.

"One evening at about seven o'clock, when everyone of the family were at dinner, I passed my mother's open door; there I saw the same figure standing in the doorway; her face was turned from me toward the room; I looked hard at her for one minute, then ran on. When I reached the top of the stairs I looked again, but she had quite vanished.

"Another evening I went up to my grandmother's room to speak to her; there was a long screen in front of the door, so that I could not see into the room when I first entered. I

stopped at the door for a second, for I heard what I thought was my grandmother walking about the room. Just as I was going to run past the screen, the same figure, dressed in black with a white shawl, passed me very quickly and went into the dressing-room, which was out of the bedroom. My first impulse was to follow her, but I heard such a strange noise in the dressing-room that I feared to enter. I do not remember being really frightened at the time, for I never saw the face distinctly."

Miss A. N. and Miss G., the sister and friend who were present on the first two occasions referred to, have written confirmatory accounts. Miss A. N. also describes two other appearances of the figure to her. The four other percipients saw the figure in each case when they were alone.[1] The figure in this case, it will be seen, was recurrent. Another instance of a recurrent apparition collectively seen and recognised is described at length in the next chapter.

The next case again is of an unusual type, though not without parallel in our collection.

No. VII.—Mrs. Davis (December, 1888) writes that on the night of 31st December, 1882, she was awakened by an unusual light in her room. She sprang up in a tremor, and saw gliding by her bed the figure of an elderly person. It passed through the closed door into Mr. Davis's room. The shutters were closed and curtains drawn, so that the room was quite dark. Mrs. Davis did not see the face; and is now not sure whether she at the time recognised in the general appearance of the figure a likeness to Mr. Davis's mother (deceased). *Has had other similar hallucinations.*

Mr. Davis writes (February, 1889) that on the same night

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, x., pp. 352–6.

he was awakened from a quiet sleep by a light which seemed to come from the door leading to his wife's room. A figure—in which he recognized his mother—appeared, approached the bed, leaned down as if to kiss him, and then suddenly vanished.[1]

II.—Solitary Apparitions. (a.) Conveying News of Death.

We may now pass to phantasms appearing to a single percipient, but distinguished by their content or the time of their appearance from purely subjective hallucinations. The largest class under this head consists of phantasms appearing before the fact of the death is known, and thus conveying information. Of course, as the interval between death and the appearance of the phantasm may vary from a single day to many weeks, the corroboration thus obtained is sensibly weaker than that afforded by such phantasms as those discussed in the last chapter, appearing within a few hours of the crisis. But, nevertheless, the comparative frequency of apparitions of the kind now to be discussed certainly suggests a causal connection of some kind with the death.

To begin with an auditory case.

No. VIII.—Revd. C. C. Wambey writes (1884):

"39 Canal, Salisbury.

"On the evening of Sunday, August 20, 1874, I was strolling on the downs skirting Marlcombe Hill, composing a congratulatory letter, which I proposed to write and post to my very dear friend W., so that he might have it on his birthday, the 22nd, when I heard a voice, saying, 'What, write to a dead

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., pp. 289–90.

man ; write to a dead man !' I turned sharply round, fully expecting to see some one close behind me. There was no one. Treating the matter as an illusion, I went on with my composition. A second time I heard the same voice, saying more loudly than before, 'What, write to a dead man ; write to a *dead* man !' Again I turned round. I was alone, at least bodily. I now fully understood the meaning of that voice ; it was no illusion.

"Notwithstanding this, I sent the proposed letter, and in reply received from Mrs. W. the sad, but to me not unexpected, intelligence, that her husband was dead.

"'What, write to a dead man ; write to a *dead* man !'"

In answer to inquiries, Mr. Wambey says : "I have an impression—but only an impression—that I have heard other voices, no visible person being near." [1]

A similar experience is described by Mr. Edward A. Goodall, the artist.[2] Three dreams belonging to this class are given in the S. P. R. *Journal* for May, 1893. In each of these cases the percipient dreamed that his friend was dead, and wrote before the news reached him, describing his dream, the letter being opened by the surviving friends. In the next case the information was conveyed in a dream of a vague but distressing kind.

No. IX.—Miss Kitching then in Saratoga, N. Y., on the morning of the 23rd August, 1888, had in a dream a painful impression of the death of her brother in Algeria. But the death had taken place on the 20th, and the cablegram announcing it had been designedly held over in New York ; from which town it was actually despatched to Saratoga, a few hours after the dream.[3]

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, iii., p. 91.

[2] See *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 453.

[3] *Journal, S. P. R.*, June, 1893.

In the cases which follow, the phantasm was of a visual character, presenting itself either as a waking hallucination or a dream. In the first case the shadowy figure of the dead man is accompanied by a symbolic coffin.

No. X.—Mrs. G. T. Haly writes (1884):

"122 Coningham Road, Shepherd's Bush, W.

"On waking in broad daylight, I saw, like a shadowed reflection, a very long coffin stretching quite across the ceiling of my room, and as I lay gazing at it, and wondering at its length and whose death it could foreshadow, my eyes fell on a shadowy figure of an absent nephew, with his back towards me, searching, as it were, in my bookshelf. That morning's post brought the news of his death in Australia. *He was six foot two or three inches* in height, and a book had been my last present to him on his leaving England, taken from that very bookcase."

Mr. Gurney saw Mrs. Haly in November, 1884, and learnt that this, and an appearance of lights, are the only hallucinations of sight Mrs. Haly has had, and that she clearly recognised her nephew's figure. The event occurred in the winter of 1872–3, some six weeks after the nephew's death.[1] It will be noted that, though the death had occurred several weeks previously, the phantasm was not seen until news of the event had reached England in the ordinary course of post. The same feature recurs in several other cases.

In the two cases which follow, the time selected for the apparition is still more significant.

No. XI.—Miss——(August, 1885) went on 2nd November, 1876, to stay at her brother's house. Shortly after mid-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, iii., p. 91.

night she had occasion to go down-stairs to fetch something that had been forgotten. "On returning and entering the corridor in which my room was, I saw, standing *beyond* my doorway, a figure. It looked misty, as if, had there been a light behind it, I should have seen through the mist. This misty figure was the likeness of a friend of ours whom I knew to have been on a voyage to Australia. I stood and looked at 'It.' I put my hand over my eyes and looked again. Still it was there. Then it seemed to pass away, how I cannot say. I went on and into my room. I said to myself, my brain was tired out; and I hurried to bed so as to get rest.

"Next day I told my sister-in-law what I had seen. We laughed about my ghost." *No other hallucinations.*

It was subsequently ascertained that the friend in question, F. G. Le Maistre, second officer of the barque *Gauntlet*, had fallen overboard on the 27th September, 1876, and that his body had been washed ashore on October the 22nd.[1]

No. XII.—Mr. George King (November, 1885) on the night of December 2, 1874, after being present at a Conversazione at King's College, London, dreamt that at a brilliant assembly his brother advanced towards him. He was in evening dress, like all the rest, and was the very image of buoyant health. "I was much surprised to see him, and, going forward to meet him, I said: 'Hallo! D., how are you here?' He shook me warmly by the hand, and replied: 'Did you not know I have been wrecked again?' At these words a deadly faintness came over me. I seemed to swim away and sink to the ground. After momentary unconsciousness I awoke, and found myself in my bed. I was in a cold perspiration, and had paroxysms of trembling, which would not be controlled. I argued with myself on the absurdity of getting into a panic over a dream, but all to no purpose, and for long I could not sleep." *No hallucinations and no other dreams of any kind.*

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 412.

The newspapers on the following morning contained an account of the foundering of *La Plata*, the ship in which Mr. King's brother had sailed, on November 29th.[1]

Now in each of these five cases it would appear that a certain piece of information—the death of a friend—was conveyed to the percipients by voice, dream, or visible phantasm before the news had reached them through the normal channels of sense; and in each of the last three cases, it is to be noted, the information purported to proceed from the dead man himself. Are we justified in assuming that the interpretation directly suggested by these appearances—communication with the dead—is the true one? To such a question there can, of course, be no certain answer. But a comparison of the times at which in each case the news reached the percipient certainly points to another interpretation of the facts.

Thus in Mrs. Haly's case (No. 10) it may be suggested that there is probably a connection between the appearance of the phantasm and the receipt of the annunciatory letter. It is at all events possible that the news had been received by other relatives of the deceased in England on the previous evening (by the same mail which brought Mrs. Haly's letter), and that her vision was due to some communication from their minds. If the vision were really due to the deceased, it must be regarded as singularly unfortunate, from

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 455.

the evidential standpoint, that he chose such a time for delivering his message; a time, moreover, peculiarly inappropriate for his own purposes, since it rendered that message practically superfluous. The same remarks apply to Case No. 9. In the next case, Mr. Le Maistre was drowned on September 27th; his body was recovered on October 22nd; and his apparition was seen by a friend on November 3rd. It can hardly be without significance that the message came, not in the course of the three or four weeks during which the dead man was supposed by his friends on shore to be alive and well, but after the fact of the death was *known*, and when the message itself could no longer serve any useful purpose. So again, in Case No. 12, Mr. King dreamt of his brother's death only on the fourth day after the wreck of the vessel, and *some hours after the news had reached England.*

Thus, in all these four cases—and I can find no clear instance to the contrary in our collection—in which the mere communication in due season of the fact of the death would of itself have afforded some evidence of the continued action of the dead, the communication was delayed until the intelligence had already reached others in the vicinity of the percipient by normal means, *i. e.*, until the possibility of thought-transference from the living had been established. That would seem to be something more than a coincidence.

It should, perhaps, be pointed out that, if in the absence of any clear indications from other sources

of the possibility of communication with the dead, we accept provisionally the explanation of these narratives here suggested, the fact of the communication having been received before the news reached the percipient by normal means remains to be accounted for. These narratives, if not proofs of the agency of the dead, are in the alternative valuable evidence for supersensuous communication from the living.

Solitary Apparitions. (b) Conveying Other Information.

Sometimes the phantasm is reported as giving information not merely of the fact of the death itself, but of the accompanying circumstances. Two or three examples of this kind may be quoted.

The first case is a dream of a "clairvoyant" character. The percipient is a member of the Society of Friends.

No. XIII.—Mrs. Green of Newry, writes (Jan. 21, 1885): "I saw two respectably dressed females driving alone in a vehicle like a mineral-water cart. Their horse stopped at a water to drink; but as there was no footing, he lost his balance, and in trying to recover it he plunged right in. With the shock, the women stood up and shouted for help, and their hats rose off their heads, and as all were going down I turned away crying, and saying: 'Was there no one at all to help them?' upon which I awoke, and my husband asked me what was the matter. I related the above dream to him, and he asked me if I knew them. I said I did not, and thought I had never seen either of them. The impression of the dream and the

trouble it brought was over me all day. I remarked to my son it was the anniversary of his birthday and my own also—the 10th of First Month, and this is why I remember the date." *No other dreams of the kind.*

Later it appeared that a niece of Mrs. Green, whom she had never seen, together with another young woman, had actually been drowned in Australia in the manner which she had seen in her dream. They had been driving in a spring cart, and had inadvertently driven into a deep hole in a dam; no one saw the accident, and the bodies were not recovered until some hours later. The accident apparently took place some twenty-four hours before the dream.

Mr. Green (Feb., 1885) was told of the dream at the time, and remembers that his wife was greatly distressed about it.

No. XIV.—Colonel H, writes (Feb., 1886) that two intimate friends, J. P. and T. S., were engaged in the Transvaal war. On the morning of the 29th (?) January, 1881, he awoke with a start. "The grey dawn was stealing in through the windows, and the light fell sharply and distinctly on the military chest of drawers which stood at the further end of the room, and which I had carried about with me everywhere during my service. Standing by my bed, between me and the chest of drawers, I saw a figure, which, in spite of the unwonted dress—unwonted, at least, to me—and of a full black beard, I at once recognised as that of my old brother-officer, J. P. He had on the usual khaki coat, worn by officers on active service in eastern climates. A brown leather strap, which might have been the strap of his field service glass, crossed his breast. A brown leather girdle, with sword attached on the left side, and revolver case on the right, passed round his waist. On

his head he wore the ordinary white pith helmet of service. I noted all these particulars in the moment that I started from sleep, and sat up in bed looking at him. His face was pale, but his bright black eyes shone as keenly as when, a year and a half before, they had looked upon me as he stood, with one foot on the hansom, bidding me adieu.

"Fully impressed for the brief moment that we were stationed together at C—— in Ireland, or somewhere, and thinking I was in my barrack-room, I said: 'Hallo! P., am I late for parade?' P. looked at me steadily, and replied: 'I 'm shot.'

"'Shot!' I exclaimed. 'Good God! how and where?'

"'Through the lungs,' replied P., and as he spoke his right hand moved slowly up the breast, until the fingers rested over the right lung.

"'What were you doing?' I asked.

"'The General sent me forward,' he answered, and the right hand left the breast to move slowly to the front, pointing over my head to the window, and at the same moment the figure melted away. I rubbed my eyes, to make sure I was not dreaming, and sprang out of bed. It was then 4.10 a.m. by the clock on my mantelpiece." *No other hallucinations.*

Colonel H. subsequently learnt that J. P. was wearing that particular uniform at the time of his death; that he had grown a beard, a fact which Colonel H. did not know; and that he was wounded through the right lung. The battle of Lang's Neck began on the 28th January, 1881, at about 9.30 A.M. Colonel H., in his original account, stated that his vision coincided with the time of the death, but that was clearly impossible. He states his conviction, however, that the vision occurred before the news of the death reached him.[1]

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 412.

There are other cases of the kind in our collection. Thus Mr. F. G., of Boston, relates that, eleven years after his sister's death, he saw a life-like apparition of her with a bright red scratch on the right side of her face. He learnt subsequently that his mother had accidentally caused a scratch of the kind on his sister's face, as she lay in her coffin, but had never mentioned the incident to anyone. Mr. F. G's father and brother confirm this account.[1]

Solitary Apparitions. (c.) Identified Subsequently.

Lastly, there is a small class of cases where an apparition is seen and subsequently recognised as resembling a dead person who in his lifetime was in some way associated with the locality where the vision was seen.

One of the best evidenced cases of this kind is the following:

No. XV.—Mr. John E. Husbands,—of Grimsby, writes (Sept. 15th, 1886):

"I was sleeping in a hotel in Madeira in January, 1885. It was a bright moonlight night. The windows were open and the blinds up. I felt some one in my room. On opening my eyes, I saw a young fellow about twenty-five, dressed in flannels, standing at the side of my bed and pointing with the first finger of his right hand to the place where I was lying. I lay for some seconds to convince myself of some one being really there. I then sat up and looked at him. I saw his features so plainly that I recognised them in a photograph which was shown me some days after. I asked him what he

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., p. 17. See also iii., pp. 95 *et seq.*

wanted ; he did not speak, but his eyes and hands seemed to tell me I was in his place. As he did not answer, I struck out at him with my fist as I sat up, but did not reach him, and as I was going to spring out of bed he slowly vanished through the door, which was shut, keeping his eyes upon me all the time.

"Upon inquiry I found that the young fellow who appeared to me died in that room I was occupying."

Miss K. Falkner, who was staying at the hotel at the time, writes (Oct., 1886) that Mr. Husbands told her the story on the following morning, and that she identified the figure from his description. Later she showed the photograph, which Mr. Husbands recognised, adding that the figure which he had seen was dressed differently.

Miss Falkner's sister-in-law adds that she also heard the story from Mr. Husbands, and that the date would be either the 3rd or 4th February, 1885.[1]

There are several other cases reported to us, in which a phantasm was recognised from a photograph or picture.[2] One such instance may be summarised here.

No. XVI.—Mrs.———(known to me) writes (Nov., 1882) that in 1872, sleeping one night at a friend's house, she awoke in a cold sweat, and saw in the dim light a man standing close to her bedside. The figure instantly disappeared, but reappeared three times the same night. It was apparently a tall, well-built, rather good-looking man, in a frock coat and with a long reddish beard. Next morning she saw in the dining-room a picture in which, after a little prompting, she recognised the face of her vision. It was the portrait of the late owner of the house, who had died of *delirium tremens* in the room in which Mrs. ——— had seen the figure.

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 416–17.

[2] Another case will be found in the next chapter There is a remarkable case quoted in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., p. 57. One other case will be found in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. i., p. 106.

Mrs. ——— adds that her cousin apparently had a similar experience in the same house ; but the cousin has declined to answer any questions on the matter.[1]

More generally, the recognition is effected merely from the description given by the percipient of his experience. A good case of this kind is the following :

No. XVII.—Mr. D. M. Tyre of Glasgow (October, 1885), with his sisters, took a house in the summer of 1874 in Dumbartonshire. "One afternoon, on returning after a short absence about 6 p. m., we found L. down the hill to meet us in a rather excited state, saying that an old woman had taken up her quarters in the kitchen, and was lying in the bed. We asked if she knew who she was. She said no, that the old wife was lying on the bed with her clothes on, and that possibly she was a tinker body (a gipsy), therefore she was afraid to go in without us. We went up to the house with L. ; my younger sister L., going in first, said, on going into the kitchen : 'There she is,' pointing to the bed, and turned to us, expecting that we would wake her up and ask what she was there for. I looked in the bed, and so did my elder sister, but the clothes were flat and unruffled, and when we said that there was nothing there she was quite surprised, and, pointing with her finger, said : 'Look, why there 's the old wife with her clothes on and lying with her head towards the window' ; but we could not see anything.

"Then for the first time it seemed to dawn upon her that she was seeing something that was not natural to us all, and she became very much afraid, and we took her to the other room and tried to soothe her, for she was trembling all over."

Two or three days later, "one afternoon, as we were sitting in the kitchen round the fire, it being a cold, wet day outside, L. startled us by exclaiming : 'There is the old woman again, and lying the same way.' L. did not seem to be so much

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iii., p. 101.

afraid this time, so we asked her to describe the figure; and with her eyes fixed on the bed and with motion of the finger, she went on to tell us how that the old wife was not lying under the blankets, but on top, with her clothes and boots on, and her legs drawn up as though she were cold; her face was turned to the wall, and she had on what is known in the Highlands as a 'sow-backed mutch,' that is, a white cap which only old women wear; it has a frill round the front, and sticks out at the back. She also wore a drab-coloured petticoat, and a checked shawl round her shoulders drawn tight. Such was the description given; she could not see her face, but her right hand was hugging her left arm, and she saw that the hand was yellow and thin, and wrinkled like the hands of old people who have done a lot of hard work in their day."

This vision was seen repeatedly by L., but by no other member of the household. Later they learned from a neighbour, Mrs. McP., that the description exactly fitted the wife of the previous tenant. This man had cruelly ill-used his wife, and one day beat her very severely and had to ask Mrs. McP. for help. "When Mrs. McP. went up to the house she found Kate, as my sister described, with her clothes on, and lying with her face to the wall, for the purpose, as Mrs. McP. said, of concealing her face, which was very badly coloured by the ill-treatment of her husband. The finish up was her death, she having never recovered."[1]

The percipient L. is now dead; and Mrs. McP. refuses to give her corroboration.

Other examples of the kind could be cited.[2] But most of the other cases which have come before us are remote, the accounts having been written down many years after the event, or rest upon the evidence of a single memory.

We have now passed in review the chief types

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 418–19.

[2] See *Proc.*, vols. v. and vi., articles on *Phantasms of the Dead*.

of these isolated apparitions. There remains to consider how far the evidence, of which samples have been given above, makes for the hypothesis that these apparitions are due to the influence, or are in some way representative, of deceased men and women. That this hypothesis is in many cases held by our informants was pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, and it is indeed obvious from the narratives themselves. But it will hardly be contended that the direct evidence for it is very cogent.

Leaving on one side the isolated apparitions which have no mark to distinguish them from purely subjective hallucinations, we find that the collective apparitions form numerically the strongest class. But collective apparitions include, as has been shown, cases of inanimate and even grotesque objects. And though the great majority represent the human figure, the proportion where the figure is recognised as that of a dead person is comparatively small. And in some even of these cases the recognition is doubtful on the part of one or both percipients.

It would be rash then to found on such evidence any strong argument for the agency of the spirits of the dead. The facts, indeed, suggest that the occurrence of such apparitions may be due to the telepathic transference of a casual hallucination.

Passing on to the non-collective cases, we find a considerable number of instances in which the phantasm is perceived before the death is known.

The evidence in some of these cases is good, and we are, perhaps, justified in assuming that the mythopœic tendency has not seriously affected the narratives. But, as has been pointed out, the coincidence in such cases is not of a very striking kind; since the interval between the death and the receipt of the information by the percipient extended in several cases over some weeks. The opportunity for chance coincidence is therefore so much the greater. Moreover, as has already been said, the possibility of thought-transference from living persons in the neighbourhood of the percipient, who were aware of the death, is indicated in every case which has come before us. Here also the evidence must be regarded as at best ambiguous.

If we turn now to the last two categories—the cases in which the apparition presents some peculiarity of dress or appearance previously unknown to the percipient; or is recognised only by subsequent description or from a picture, we encounter difficulties of another kind. The well-evidenced cases under either of these heads are as yet few. The narratives which have reached us are for the most part uncorroborated, or written down long after the event. Some are defective in both respects. Now the dramatic features present in narratives of this class are precisely those which are most likely to have been imported into the experience. If a man has a vivid dream or even a waking vision of this kind, which is not at once committed to writing,

there is a tendency for the tale to grow with each telling of it. The picture of the experience preserved in the memory is probably so dim and indistinct that it is not difficult without any conscious dishonesty for the narrator to read back into it details subsequently learnt, or even to embellish it with a quite free hand. We have evidence that this transforming process has taken place in several cases, of which the most apt instance for our present purpose is the case of Mr. X. Z., referred to in the next chapter. Mr. X. Z., a gentleman of some intellectual distinction, gave us an account of an apparition which he had seen in a haunted house on the anniversary of a double tragedy, and had subsequently recognised in a picture. The account was not written down until thirty years after the occurrence; and from our subsequent inquiries it is doubtful whether the picture-incident ever took place at all; it would appear, indeed, that Mr. X. Z., probably without conscious bad faith, had worked up a comparatively unsensational experience into a first-class ghost story. Indirect evidence pointing in the same direction is to be found in the frequency with which incidents of this kind—the presence of some article of dress, subsequently recognised, or the identification of a figure by description or from a picture—occur in second-hand narratives. In such cases the narrator, being free from a sense of personal responsibility, is of course much more likely to shape the story to fit his preconceived ideas of how a phantom should act and

what it should wear. The fateful anniversary, the appropriate garb, the solemn and pregnant utterance, the very image of the death-wound,—certissima mortis imago,— all these are characteristic of the second-hand ghost. We may thus learn from second-hand and traditional stories what are the features that impress the popular imagination, and what are likely therefore to be imported, with the lapse of time, into first-hand narratives. Tried by this test there is reason to question the details—and it is precisely upon the details that the significance of the narrative, as evidence for the agency of the dead, depends—in many of the more striking stories in this category.

But even were the evidence of this kind so copious and of such quality that we could no longer plausibly attribute the phenomena described to chance coincidence or unconscious misrepresentation, we should still scarcely be justified in regarding them as proofs of the action of the dead. It is at least conceivable that, following the analogy of one or two cases already quoted,[1] these phantasms may be simply images transferred from the mind of the living. Thus, the figure seen by Mr. Husbands (No. 15) may have been a reflection of the thoughts or dreams of other persons in the hotel, who had been familiar with the dead man a few months before ; and the vision seen by Mrs. Green (No. 13), it may be suggested, possibly had its

[1] See for instance the case of Frances Reddell quoted in the preceding chapter.

origin in the picture present to the mind of the bereaved father.

In any case, if we dismiss the hypothesis of post-mortem activity as at present not proved, it is clear that in many of these narratives there is evidence of the supernormal acquisition of information. Such cases as those of Mrs. Green or Mr. King (No. 12) may fairly be held to strengthen the evidence for the possibility of communication between mind and mind apart from the normal sensory channels.

CHAPTER X.

HAUNTED HOUSES.

BUT the word ghost, no doubt, most commonly suggests, not the isolated apparitions dealt with in the last chapter, but tales of phantoms and uncanny disturbances in the old manor house or the ruined castle. The Society has accumulated an enormous mass of evidence for phenomena of this class—a mass so great that it is practicable to offer only very brief samples of it in the present chapter. The samples given will consist exclusively of cases where we have the evidence of at least two witnesses at first-hand, and where the accounts, or one of them, have been written down within ten years of the events which they record. In order still further to reduce the bulk of evidence, and to exclude phenomena more readily explicable by normal causes, it is proposed to deal mainly with things seen, and to discuss disturbances of other kinds only so far as they accompany or are connected with visual apparitions. We have, indeed, received many accounts, from competent witnesses, of the occurrence, sometimes for a long period, of inex-

plicable noises—footsteps, loud crashes, shrieks, the banging of doors, and so on. But we should hardly be justified in assuming that these mysterious sounds were not of material origin, merely because a material cause eluded observation—even careful and prolonged observation—at the time. A ghost whose last word, like Nora in *the Doll's House*, is to slam the door, leaves little opening for effective investigation.

By this double process of selection the mass of several hundred narratives is reduced to some thirty or forty cases. In considering these cases, or such of them as it is practicable to quote here, it will be worth while to pursue the line of inquiry indicated at the end of the last chapter, and to compare the popular idea of a ghost, as exhibited in traditional accounts or narratives written down long after the event, with the facts set forth in trustworthy recent evidence. Some of the chief features in the popular conception of a ghost, then, may be briefly summarised under six heads: (1) The ghost, or figure, seen at different times by various occupants of the house is the same figure. (2) The figure is very generally identified with some deceased person. (3) He gives information on matters outside the percipient's knowledge, warns against danger, or otherwise manifests a purpose. (4) His presence in the haunted locality is generally associated with human remains, or (5) with a tragedy of some kind. (6) He appears by preference on some special anniversary.

(1) Now the first of these characteristics we do meet with in some fairly recent cases. We have in our collection several narratives in which we have received reports, professedly independent, from two or more credible witnesses, of similar apparitions seen by them in the same locality. Of the good faith of our informants there can be no reasonable doubt; and there are occasionally collateral circumstances, such as the anxiety to avoid alarm to children, servants, or nervous relatives, which furnish a sufficient reason for the original percipient keeping silence about his uncanny experience, and supply a kind of independent corroboration of his statement that he has done so—a statement which, if it rested on the mere memory of what he said or did not say some years previously, we might have hesitated to accept. Indeed it is precisely the existence of a certain amount of evidence of this type which justified our including the subject of "haunted" houses in our investigations. The mere occurrence of dissimilar and unrelated phantasms in a locality whose reputation as haunted had become notorious throughout the countryside, would not have appeared to us to demand inquiry on psychical grounds. The influence of suggestion and expectation might in such a case have been held sufficient to explain the portent. But the allegations, resting on testimony which we were unable summarily to reject, that similar phantoms had been seen in cases where the several percipients were unaware of any previous visitation of

the kind, seemed to us to call for some inquiry on our part.

In the three cases which follow there is apparently good evidence, not merely that the figures seen by different witnesses were very similar, but that the first witness, in each case, kept her experience to herself, and did not communicate what she had seen to the other inmates of the house. Two of the accounts in the third case, however, were not written down until ten years after the events recorded.[1]

I.—*Miss Kathleen Leigh Hunt* (June, 1884) spent the winter of 1881–2 with a cousin (Miss Laurence) at a house in Hyde Park Place, London. One day, about 10 A.M., when going up-stairs, she saw in front of her the figure of a servant in a light cotton dress (a white ground with a spriggy pattern all over it) and a servant's cap. The figure suddenly vanished on reaching the first floor. Miss Hunt searched the room with-

[1] The limits of space make it impracticable to give in full the narratives quoted in this chapter, which are in some cases very voluminous. I have therefore, in the abbreviated accounts which follow, given only the main incidents, employing in each case, especially in the descriptions of the figures seen, the narrator's own words as far as possible, and omitting or passing over briefly details which seemed to be irrelevant or capable of explanation by ordinary causes. A summary of this kind, however, can clearly not possess the same value for evidential purposes as the full account written by the eye-witnesses; and for those who desire to make a closer study of the evidence, references are given to the original narratives, which are printed at length, sometimes in the *Proceedings*, sometimes in the *Journal*, of the Society.

The name or initials printed in italic type at the commencement of each story or paragraph indicate the person from whose first-hand narrative the summary here printed is taken; the date in brackets is the date on which the account was written. When the year only is mentioned, it is generally to be understood that the account is taken from more than one letter bearing that date. When any incident is related at second-hand, the account is prefaced by words to that effect.

out result. She did not mention her experience, fearing to make her cousin nervous.

Two or three weeks later, in the morning, Miss Hunt heard a knock at the front door. She opened the dining-room door, wishing to speak to the servant as she passed to open the front door. Miss Hunt saw a figure, which she took to be that of the housemaid, pass within two yards of her towards the front door. From her position she could see only the side view, including part of the cheek. No door opened ; no figure returned ; and the housemaid, when questioned, denied having left the kitchen. Miss Hunt frequently heard noises as of persons walking about and moving articles in a room adjoining her bedroom. *No other hallucinations.*

Miss Laurence (June, 1884) lived in the same house from 1877 until the autumn of 1882. One morning, about 10.30, she was on her way to the third floor, the staircase of which was well lighted by a skylight. When she reached the second-floor landing, she saw a cotton skirt, of a light lilac shade and indefinite pattern, disappearing round the bend of the stairs leading to the top floor. Supposing it to be the housemaid, she called to her ; and the housemaid appeared from a door close to her on the second floor. The only other servant was the cook, who was downstairs. Miss Laurence told the housemaid of her experience, and the housemaid replied, "Oh, that 's nothing, Miss ; I often see a skirt go round that corner." *No other hallucinations.*

Mr. Paul Bird (July, 1884), coming home one evening about 7.30, was wiping his feet on the mat, when he saw one of the servants come towards him, and pass into the dining-room. The hall lamp was lighted. He followed into the dining-room to speak to her, and found no one there. There was no other door to the room. He thinks this may have been an optical illusion, and that the servant really came into the hall, but returned into the kitchen. He had not previously heard of the other figures seen in the house.

There is no evidence of previous hauntings.[1]

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, iii., p. 106.

In the next case we have the testimony of both narrators that the original percipient did not at the time mention her experience. In addition to this, however, we have the statement that the figure of a man was twice seen by a little boy, to whom it was, of course, very improbable that the previous apparitions would have been mentioned.

II.—*Mrs. W.* (Feb., 1885) went in June, 1881, with her husband, Surgeon-Major W., to live in a detached villa of modern date. About three weeks later, at 11 A.M., when playing the piano in the drawing-room, Mrs. W. saw a figure peeping round the folding-doors to her left. She jumped up, and it instantly vanished. The figure—the upper part only seen—seemed to be that of a tall man: the face, though momentarily, was distinctly seen; it was pale, with dark hair and moustache and a sorrowful expression. She did not mention the experience to any one.

In August, Mrs. W., going into the drawing-room about 8.30 P.M., saw the upper part of the same figure in the bay-window in front of the shutters, which were closed. The room was lighted only through the open door. Later in the same month, Mrs. W. was playing cricket in the garden with her little boy. She could see into the hall of the house through the open door. Round the kitchen door, which opened into the hall, she saw the face and upper half of the same figure. House searched without result. The same year Mrs. W. and her step-daughter both heard a deep, sorrowful voice say "I can't find it." (Miss W. confirms this statement.) In the same year, coming downstairs after dark, Mrs. W. felt a slap on the back. *No other hallucinations.*

Miss W. (Feb., 1885) in July, 1881, when playing the piano in the drawing-room about 11.30 A.M., saw the head and shoulders of a man peeping round the folding-doors. She jumped up and the figure disappeared. The face was pale and melancholy and the hair very dark. Miss W. had not previ-

ously heard of Mrs. W's experience. After this, they compared notes, and found their descriptions agreed. Both had even noticed that the hair was parted in the middle, and that a good deal of shirt front showed. (Mrs. W. confirms this.) A few weeks later Miss W., when playing bezique one evening about 11 P.M. with Mrs. W., saw the upper half of the same figure peeping round the half-open door. A few weeks later, about 11.30 A.M., when playing shuttlecock with her brother in his bedroom, she saw over her shoulder through the open door the same figure on the landing. Miss W. adds that her brother cried out, "There 's a man on the landing." In September, 1882, about 7.30 P.M. Miss W. saw through the dining-room window the figure of a tall man slipping into the porch. Miss W. adds that she had heard a vague statement of the house being haunted. *No other hallucinations.*

Surgeon-Major W. states that he received accounts of all these experiences, except the first, at the time ; and confirms generally the statements made by his wife and daughter.[1]

The next narrative comes very near the limit which we set ourselves at the beginning of this chapter, the record of the experiences in two cases not having been made until nearly ten years after the events. We have, however, the first-hand evidence of three witnesses ; and, as in the last case, it is alleged that a figure was also seen by a young child.

III.—*Miss H. C. S. B.* (May, 1883) one July morning in 1873 awoke about 3 A.M., and by the light of the dawn shining through the uncurtained window saw the figure of a woman, stooping down and apparently looking at her. Her head and shoulders were wrapped in a common grey woollen shawl. Her arms were folded and were also wrapped in the shawl. After an interval which may have been only seconds, the fig-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, iii., p. 102.

ure went backwards towards the window and grew by degrees transparent, so that through the shawl and the grey dress Miss B. could see the white muslin of the toilette table, until finally the figure vanished altogether. Miss B. did not mention what she had seen to any member of the household, for fear of alarming the servants or of being ridiculed by her brother.

Mr. H. B. B. (August, 1883), solicitor, brother of the last witness, about a fortnight later was awakened about 6 A.M. by a presentiment of approaching evil. He opened his eyes and saw distinctly the form of a darkly clad elderly woman bending over him with folded arms, and glaring with eyes of the most intense malignity. She silently receded backwards and seemed to vanish through the bedroom door.

Miss H. C. S. B. states that her brother told her at breakfast what he had seen, and that she recognised the figure as being like that seen by her.

Miss M. B. (July 1 1883) some years later was awakened, on the night of the 7th July, by some one speaking close to her. She then saw plainly, by the light coming through the uncurtained window, the figure of a woman, which silently moved away towards the closed door and disappeared. This was shortly before 2 A.M. Miss M. B. had heard of the figure previously seen.

Miss H. C. S. B. adds that the figure of a woman was also seen one evening in July by a little boy of four or five; and that sounds of heavy blows, of footsteps, knocking on doors, and of heavy objects being moved were frequently heard in the house by herself and others. She heard a report that the house had, previously to their tenancy, the reputation of being haunted, and that a woman had been murdered there.[1]

In the last case, it will be observed, there is an attempt at connecting the figure seen with a tragedy alleged to have occurred in the house. But the evidence for the tragedy rests on the narrator's memory of a conversation held some years before;

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. ii., p. 141.

and apparently no attempt was made at the time to verify the statement. To the evidence in general on this point we shall revert later.

I am bound to say, however, that these three cases cannot be regarded as typical. Whilst in second-hand and traditional narratives there is rarely any hint that the figure alleged to be seen by different persons is not indubitably the same figure, the identity or similarity of the figure is found from recent well attested narratives to be less commonly established than, antecedently to such a full inquiry and comparison as our large collection of evidence enables us to undertake, we had been led to suppose. Beyond the cases quoted in this chapter I doubt if there are more than half a dozen other narratives, resting on equally good testimony, in which the identity of the figure seen by different persons can plausibly be maintained. In most first-hand accounts the apparition assumes a different shape at different times; or, to speak more accurately, different figures are frequently seen in the same house. Thus, to quote various cases in our collection, the several witnesses see at one time in the haunted house the tall slender figure of a woman dressed in black, at another time a short lady in a green dress; or we hear of a clergyman dressed "in his clericals," and a woman; of a woman in white and a woman in green; a little girl "in white, with long streaming fair hair," "a man in a scarlet hunting-coat and top-boots," and a tall lady with a child in her arms; again we have

"a trim little page in antique costume," a man with blood-stained face, and a woman in short-waisted dress and broad frilled cap ; a man with a face "pale to sickliness," and a little old lady ; in yet another narrative we make the acquaintance, successively, of an old man, a large white "waddlewayed" dog, "a white figure" not more precisely described, a stout middle-aged woman with large flapping frills and a baby, and a shower of blood. In one of the best attested cases in our collection the dress of a female figure is variously described by different witnesses as "greyish or mauve," "a lilac print," "white," "light," "red," "slate coloured silk with red cloak" ; and the hair is described as "fair," "dark," "brown," and "brownish." The events occurred in the years 1885–6–7, and the accounts were written, in some cases, within a few weeks of their occurrence. If a longer interval had been allowed to elapse between the events and their record it would seem not improbable that this more than Homeric latitude of colour epithets might have been reduced to uniformity. From the same narrative it appears that, in addition to the polychromatic figure or figures referred to above, there were seen in the same house, by various percipients, a man with an evil face in a white working suit, "a dark swarthy-looking man with very black whiskers dressed like a merchant sailor," and a "devilish face" and hands with no body attached. In two, at least, out of the very small number of cases in which we have been able to trace the occurrence of visual

phenomena in the same house through two or more successive tenancies, the character of the figures is found to vary.

Again, in other cases it is by no means clear that the apparitions seen on different occasions bore any marked resemblance. And, speaking generally, the similarity of the figures seen in many cases, where the differences are less striking, is rather assumed from the absence of recorded variations than demonstrated by any detailed agreement in the accounts received by us; the descriptions given by different witnesses being frequently too vague to admit of any precise comparison.

(2.) The identification of the phantom is naturally a point upon which the imagination fastens, and in traditional accounts the ghost is very generally recognised directly, or by inference. Moreover, in two first-hand cases which we have seen reason to reject as untrustworthy, the figure is asserted to have been recognised. In authentic, and especially in recent narratives, recognition or identification of the figure is rare. A few such cases, of non-recurrent phantasms, have been cited in the previous chapter. In the two cases which follow, a recurrent phantasm of the local type is recognised or, at least, identified with some plausibility.

In the first case there are some grounds for thinking that the figure seen, by several witnesses, bore a resemblance to a child who had died in the house many years before. But the identification rests on description only; since none of those who

saw the face of the phantasm had seen the supposed original.

IV.—*Mrs. H.* (1883?), wife of Dr. H., writes that twenty years or more previously, Dr. H., running up-stairs one night about 9 P.M., saw a little child run in front of him into Mrs. H.'s room. The landing was lighted by gas. He mistook the figure for his own child, aged two or three, but, on searching, found the child fast asleep. Mrs. H. was at once told by Dr. H. of his experience. Dr. H. has from time to time heard loud knocks and other unaccountable noises in the house. Dr. H. writes later that *he has had one other visual hallucination*, and has heard unaccountable noises.

Mrs. A. (formerly Miss H.) (1883?) rose one morning (June, 1877) between five and six A.M., with her sister, to read. Looking towards her sister's room, which adjoined her own, Mrs. A. saw a little figure in white standing near the table. She did not see the face, possibly because she is shortsighted. Miss G. H. had already left her room. Mrs. A., being nervous, ran out of the room. *No other hallucinations.*

Miss G. H. (1883?), on the same occasion and at about the same moment, passing the room of another sister, saw through the half-open door the figure of a child standing inside the room about eighteen inches from the door. Miss G. H. shut the door, thinking at the moment that the figure was her sister; but opened it again at once, and found the figure gone, and her sister asleep. The figure had a dark complexion, hair, and eyes, a thin oval face, and a mournful look as if full of trouble. It appeared to be about nine or ten years old. *No other hallucinations.*

Miss J. A. A. (1880) was staying with the H's in July, 1879. One morning about dawn, when she was awake, the door of her room opened and shut quietly. She said "Come in." Then the door opened again, the curtains of a hanging wardrobe rustled, and she felt a strange unearthly sensation that she was not alone. A few minutes later she saw at the foot of the bed a child of seven or nine years old. The figure

glided towards her on the bed—a little girl in her night-dress, with dark hair and a very white face. Miss A. saw the face clearly; the hands were clasped, the eyes had a look of entreaty and of great trouble. Then the figure touched Miss A. with an icy cold hand and vanished. Miss A. had not, at the time, heard of the previous apparitions in the house. She told her friends, however, what she had seen, and later received from them an account of their experiences.

Mrs. H. adds that when they originally took the house (about 1850) it was divided in two: in the smaller part lived a Mr. M. and his little girl J. M. J. M. had fine dark eyes, black hair, oval face, and a pale olive complexion. She died in the house—in the room where Mrs. A. saw the figure—on January 21, 1854, aged ten years. (Mrs. H. enclosed a certificate of the death.)

Mrs. H. adds that some time after the appearance to Miss A. she described J. M. to her daughter G., who at once exclaimed that the description answered to the figure which she had seen.[1]

In this case, again, there is a reasonable presumption that none of the percipients had heard of any experience previous to her own. The similarity of the various appearances, however, and their common resemblance to the deceased J. M., are not sufficiently established to bear a very close scrutiny. The first percipient, Dr. H., mistook the figure which he saw for that of his little boy of two or three, or his little girl of four years of age; and Mrs. A. did not see the face of the figure at all. Further it must be remembered that Miss G. H's description—the most detailed of all—was not written until some years after the event, and after the appearance of the figure had been discussed

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., pp. 270 *et seq.*

with Mrs. H., who held a theory of her own on the matter, and had, as she told us, given to her daughter a minute description of the dead child. It is impossible to avoid a suspicion that under the circumstances the definiteness of outline in Miss G. H's description may be due to a combination of her mother's narrative with her own experience. The same criticism applies to Miss J. A. A's account, which was not written until some months after the event, and after she had heard from her cousins of the previous appearances. Not much reliance can be placed on the *details* of a description written under such conditions. The most, it would seem, that can be said is, that in a house where a little girl is known to have died, a figure resembling a little child or young girl was seen on four different occasions by four apparently independent witnesses. That, of course, is a noteworthy series of coincidences.

A remarkable case of the same type is printed in the *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. viii., pp. 311–332. The appearances in this case were much more frequent. "Miss Morton," the principal percipient, saw the figure on many occasions; and it was seen—sometimes more than once—by several other inmates of the house. The figure, according to the descriptions given by the various witnesses, presented always the same appearance—a tall woman dressed in black, as if in widow's weeds; the face partly concealed by a handkerchief held in the right hand. (This last detail is mentioned by three witnesses

only out of the six whose accounts we have received.) Footsteps were also heard in the house by several persons. There were rumours that the house had the reputation of being haunted prior to the occupancy of the Morton family. The figure has been identified with Mrs. S., the widow of a former owner of the house, mainly on the ground that several people who had known Mrs. S. professed to recognise her in the figure described by the Mortons. Apart from any question of the identification of the figure, however, the case is evidentially valuable, being substantiated by a series of contemporary letters written by "Miss Morton" to a friend.

Another case of the same kind, though of inferior evidential value, will be found in *Proc.*, iii., pp. 133–6. In this case the apparition followed the family from one house to another.

(3) Exclusive of the instances cited in the previous chapter, I have examined twenty cases in our collection, in which information outside the possible range of the percipient's knowledge is said to have been given by a phantasm, or in a dream purporting to represent a deceased person; and three others in which a catastrophe has been averted by similar means. Of these twenty-three cases, two only are undoubtedly at first-hand. The first gives an account of the discovery of the dead body of a suicide through a dream. The evidence here is insufficient; the person who was in a position to give the most conclusive corroboration to the percipi-

ent's narrative declined to answer any questions, or give any information whatever. And the place where the body was found—a neighbouring summer-house—seems not beyond the range of conjecture, unconscious or otherwise. In the second case[1] a skeleton was actually discovered in a spot indicated by the percipient, which he stated was revealed to him in a dream. Unfortunately the percipient was dead some years before the story reached us, and we have had to rely upon his testimony as recorded. The discovery seems susceptible of a more commonplace explanation. Of the remaining twenty-one narratives, none of which, as said, are at first-hand, there are six cases in which a murder is alleged to have been revealed; two cases in which information is given as to the condition of a body lawfully buried; two cases in which the phantasm shows a laudable desire to discharge his just debts; and eight cases in which the apparition gives warning of impending death, indicates the whereabouts of important documents, or supplies some other information. Of these, one treats of a missing will discovered through the agency of a deceased uncle. The story was never published, and as, since its receipt, we have seen reason to doubt the good faith of the narrator, and as a critical examination has made it evident that the necessary attestations to the truth of the narrative, purporting to be written and signed by various

[1] Quoted and discussed in Mr. Myers's paper in *Proceedings*, vol. vi., pp. 35–41, and by me, vol. vi., p. 303.

persons, are in the same handwriting variously disguised, it is perhaps not unreasonable to conjecture that the story itself lacks objective foundation.

There can be no question that purposive or intelligent action, whilst it is a common attribute of the ghost as he exists in popular imagination, is not characteristic of the apparitions of which we have authentic reports.

Nearly all the twenty-three narratives above referred to, however, are concerned with non-recurrent apparitions. The case given below is, I think, unique in our records as an instance of a phantasm of the "local" type manifesting an intelligent purpose. It will be seen that in this narrative also the figure is asserted, with some plausibility, to have been recognised as that of a former occupant of the house.

V.—The house in this case stands in the suburb of a large town in the west of England. There is some evidence that it had the reputation of being "haunted" as far back as 1865 or thereabouts. But it is stated that no rumour of the kind had reached the present occupier, Mr. Z., or his servants, prior to the events related below.

Mary G. (March, 1888), the nursemaid, three times in one evening saw the figure of a man in the dressing-room. Later, in November, 1885, she saw, about 8 P.M., in a dimly lighted passage, a woman in a light dress coming towards her. Thought it was the kitchen maid. But when the figure came up to her it moved through her and disappeared. Features not seen. Mary G. saw the same figure on the following night in the same place, and once again in March, 1886, in full gas-light, outside the dressing-room door. The figure seemed this time very tall, taller than a man. On another

occasion she saw a woman in a brown dress. She also heard many unaccountable noises in the house. *No other hallucinations.*

W. L. (July, 1888), butler, entered Mr. Z.'s service in October, 1885. Was much disturbed from the outset by loud noises —as of barrels rolling about, doors banging, men wrestling together, etc. On March 9, 1886, when coming out from the library, he saw standing before him a figure dressed in a brown garment with two tassels at the side. The head could not be seen, only a black mist in its place. He turned to run away, and felt a touch, as from a cold hand, on his left side, and was ill for the rest of the day. Later, when decorating the dinner-table with flowers, he looked up and saw the same figure. Some weeks later Mr. and Mrs. Z. and a few friends tried table-turning. W. L. coming up with the grog tray saw the same figure again.

The spirit communicating through the table then promised to appear at 11 P.M. one evening in the drawing-room, and W. L. was requested to be present. The gas was turned low and the drawing-room door left open. As the clock struck 11, "it" walked slowly in. The dress was of the same shape as in the apparition seen by W. L., with large loose sleeves and two tassels; it seemed as if made of light Japanese flowered silk. The face was haggard-looking, with a long thin nose; the hair fair and hanging over the shoulders. The figure remained for some minutes, disappeared when the gas was turned up; and then re-appeared after a short interval. W. L. followed the figure to the cellar, and the spirit indicated that treasure was buried there. Two days later, when W. L. was in the cellar, the figure again appeared and indicated the precise spot where the treasure was concealed. The floor of the cellar was dug up, but no treasure was found.

W. L. saw the figure on two or three other occasions. *Has had previous hallucinations, but not so definite as these.*

Mr. Z. (July, 1886) sent us an account of the séances. He himself had heard strange noises in the house. At the séances seven persons, including W. L., were present. Of these, three, W. L., Mrs Z., and another lady, saw the figure. The others

could see nothing. The figure appeared at the séances on four separate occasions.

Mrs. Z. has, unfortunately, so far declined to furnish a written narrative of her experiences. At a personal interview, however, in March, 1888, she gave me a very full account of her share in the matter, which entirely corresponded with that given by Mr. Z. and the butler. The séances referred to lasted for about six weeks in June and July, 1886. The woman's figure described by W. L. was, Mrs. Z. told me, also seen by her and by Mrs. M. during these séances, but at no other time. So far as she knew all three saw the same figure. Mrs. Z. saw the face distinctly, and subsequently recognised it in a photograph of a lady who had lived in the house a few years previously. Mrs. Z. did not come to the neighbourhood until some years after this lady's death, and had never previously seen her, or any picture of her. *She has had no other hallucination.*

As regards the recognition of the photograph, Mr. Z. writes in May, 1888 :

You ask me to tell you my account of the recognition of the photograph.

I think the butler's recognition does not amount to much.

It (*i. e.*, the photograph) was lying on my table one morning, and on his coming into the room I asked him if he had ever seen anyone like it. He said the eyes, forehead, and nose he knew, but that he somehow could not put a name to it, though he had seen the person several times. I told him who it was supposed to be, and then he said, "The eyes I should have known anywhere, but I have never seen the whole face so distinctly as this photo gives it," or words to that effect.

The second case is certainly more remarkable.

A gentleman in C., hearing of the supposed appearances and of my wife's having seen the apparition, brought over half a dozen photos, amongst others one of what is supposed to be the spirit, to test my wife. She was not present in the room when he arrived, but came in about a quarter of an hour later. We purposely refrained from mentioning the subject at all.

Taking up the photos I asked her if any of them reminded her of a friend, all the pictures being about twenty years old. She looked them through, and thought one an early one of a friend who was present.

I took up one and tossed it across the tea-table, and only uttered the words "Who 's that?" and she, after looking at it for a moment, said, "Oh, that 's the ghost, where on earth did it come from?"

We were all rather staggered at her recognition, especially the gentleman who brought the pictures, as he had laughed the whole thing to scorn.[1]

Under the conditions described it must be admitted to be possible that Mrs. Z. received unconscious indications, from the manner or look of those around, of the answer that was expected of her. But even so, her recognition of the photograph was certainly a remarkable incident. Our wonder, however, is somewhat diminished when we learn, as Mr. and Mrs. Z. informed me, that Colonel Y. had been acquainted with the deceased lady whom the phantasm was supposed to represent. Now Colonel Y. had been present at the various séances at which the figure had appeared; and as it appears, from Mr. Z.'s account, that those who were privileged to see the figure described at the time what they saw to the others, we can conceive it possible that the hallucination might take a definite outline under the guidance of leading questions and unconscious hints from the Colonel, who of all the spectators was likely to take the most interest in the details of the appearance.

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vi., p. 276.

The incident of the recognition of the photograph is thus deprived of much of its significance; but apart from this the story presents some remarkable features. The hallucinations in this case were unusually frequent and unusually persistent; and the appearance of a phantasm, on several distinct occasions, and for a period of certainly some minutes, to three persons simultaneously, is a phenomenon perhaps without parallel in our records. The appearance of a phantasm at a predicted time is also very unusual, if not unique, except when it is the result of post-hypnotic suggestion. There are some parallel cases of figures seen by several persons simultaneously at a séance, where there was no ground for suspecting fraud. Indeed, as already suggested,[1] it seems possible that the conditions of a Spiritualistic séance, admittedly favourable to the production of abnormal states, may also be favourable to the production and communication of hallucinations.

It will be noticed, moreover, that here also the phenomena began with noises, which appear to have exercised a very disturbing influence on the butler, W. L. Moreover, the two chief witnesses, and the only witnesses who saw any apparition when alone, appear to have been unusually subject to impressions of the kind, and were not highly educated persons.

(4) I have examined thirteen cases in our collection in which human remains are alleged to

[1] See *ante*, Chapter IV. *ad fin.*

have been discovered on the scene of unexplained ghostly manifestations. But in three instances only does the actual discovery rest upon unquestionable evidence.[1] In four other cases, the whole of the evidence is second-hand, or even more remote; and in one of these the discovery of the skeleton is explicitly contradicted on evidence which may be taken as authoritative. In the eighth case, the evidence for the finding of a skeleton rests on the uncorroborated memory of a child of six, who does not profess to have seen the skeleton dug up; this story appears to have been first committed to writing nearly fifty years after the alleged event. In the ninth case,[2] the evidence for the skeleton depends on the narrator's remembrance of a conversation held at least thirty years before; and in two other cases the authority for the alleged discovery is not given. In the twelfth case, the story, though first-hand, is from an illiterate person. In the last case,[3] the evidence for the finding of the skeletons is not first-hand, and the narrator is not inclined to attribute the apparition seen "to other than natural causes."

(5) In nearly all the second-hand narratives, and in a very large proportion of those which have been given to us by the actual percipients, a tragedy is reported to have taken place in the locality where the manifestations occurred. The tragedy may have been a premature death, a murder, a sui-

[1] One of these cases is quoted in *Proceedings*, vol. vi., p. 42.

[2] *Proc.*, vol. vi., p. 43.

[3] *Proc.*, vol. vi., p. 235.

cide, sometimes the death of a miser. The account of the tragedy is often very circumstantial; but it usually rests upon tradition alone, and we cannot safely assume the report to afford evidence of anything but the tendency of tradition to conform to preconceived ideas of the general fitness of things. In one case, indeed, the narrator states that he had himself searched the parish registers, and ascertained the date of the death, or rather deaths, the tragedy in this case taking the form of a murder, and the subsequent suicide of the murderer. The month and day were stated to correspond with the date of the appearance of the phantasm. A prolonged and careful search of the registers, however, failed to corroborate our informant's statement; and we have learnt from another source that the double event referred to never took place; and that the alleged murderer actually died in another part of the country, and at another time of year.[1] There are, however, a few cases in which we have sufficient evidence that the death did occur as alleged. In one such case[2] the evidence is furnished by a tombstone in a neighbouring churchyard; and it seems not unlikely that the tragedy, thus solidly and obtrusively attested, may actually have been the cause of the disturbances in the house, though not in the precise manner suggested in the narrative. Two other cases of the kind (Nos. IV. and V.) have already been quoted, in both of which

[1] See the account of this case given in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. i., pp. 106, 107, and *Journal*, vol. ii., p. 3.

[2] G. 182, *Journal*, vol. ii., September, 1886.

the facts of the life and death were within the knowledge of the percipients, and the person whom the phantasm was supposed to resemble had been known personally to some of those present in the house.

Two other cases in which a tragedy is alleged to have occurred are given below. In the first case the evidence for the tragedy—the robbery and murder of two ladies in the house—is of a very unsubstantial kind; and it is not unlikely that the legend was invented or adapted to account for the facts. But the appearance of hallucinatory figures throughout a long series of years is fairly well substantiated. It is to be noted that in both these cases the phenomena persisted through two separate tenancies of the house; in each case changed their character with the tenant; and finally ceased altogether with the third change of occupancy.

VI.—J—— House is an old Elizabethan manor house, in the west of England.

Mr. C. C. Massey writes (1885) that he had learnt from an old lady of seventy-five, a cousin of his, that when sleeping in the house in about 1835, with Mr. Massey's mother, both were disturbed by the sound as of clashing of chains and the rustling of a silk dress along the corridor. Mr. Massey adds that he had heard, prior to 1860, that the house was reputed to be haunted.

The Revd. Darrell Horlock writes (1884) that he took the house in 1861. He had previously heard reports of its being haunted, as had the servants also. From the first the servants complained of rumblings, whistlings, clankings, and displacements of furniture. One night in the spring or summer of 1862, Mr. Horlock suddenly awoke with an icy-cold shiver

and saw at the foot of the bed, in the cross light from two windows, distinctly visible by the moonlight, the figure of an old lady. She was attired in a black poke bonnet which extended far over the face, and a dark gown and grey shawl. Her eyes were hollow and shrunken and her face was wrinkled. Mr. Horlock sat up and studied the figure. He noticed that though the figure seemed to be opaque, yet through it he could distinctly see the knobs of the drawers in the wardrobe behind. After gazing at him for two or three minutes the figure suddenly disappeared. Mr. Horlock did not waken his wife, nor mention the circumstance to her until they had left the house. He told his sister-in-law, Miss Saward, under strict promise of secrecy. *No other hallucinations.*

Shortly after this the footman, bringing lights into the smoking-room one evening, stated in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Horlock and Miss Saward, that he had just seen a lady, whom he mistook for Miss Saward, come down the front stairs and go into the drawing-room.

After they had left the house in 1863, an old housekeeper, Mrs. P., told them that she had seen a ghost, and described a figure like that seen by Mr. Horlock. Mr. Horlock adds that dogs showed unaccountable terror in the house.

Mrs. Horlock (1873) and *Miss Saward* (1885) confirm generally Mr. Horlock's account of the apparition seen by himself and the stories told by the footman and Mrs. P., of the unaccountable noises heard in the house, of the uncanny feelings produced, and of the strange terror of the dogs.

After Mr. Horlock's departure in 1863, the house was occupied, apparently until 1864, by the D's, and then remained empty until 1867, when Mr. B. and his family entered on their tenancy. *Mr. B.* writes (1882) that he had heard rumours that the house was haunted, but had discredited them. On his first day in the house, however, he was engaged about 3 P.M. in unpacking books, when he heard a rustling sound, as of a lady's dress in the passage outside. Looking through the open door he distinctly saw walk along the passage until it disappeared behind the wall of the staircase the figure of a lady in a kind of blue gauze dress, with long hair hanging down her back.

He adds that Mary Ann, one of the servants, stated that when shutting up a window in a bedroom, she heard a rustling noise behind her, and turning saw a figure of a woman at the open door. She was looking at Mary Ann with a sad expression ; large earnest eyes, thin long face, sunken cheeks. She had a dark dress with short sleeves, and her hands and arms were very white. She then went partly up the staircase, to the door of a room, and vanished. On another occasion, Mary Ann said that she saw the figure going down the staircase to the same door.

In 1868, Captain H., a relative of the family, saw a lady in a blue dress, the hair dressed as in Hogarth's time, and wearing a sort of stomacher and long train. Very thin with sharp features, and her face extremely sad.

In 1873, S. H., one of the servants, twice dreamt that a tall woman, wearing a cap and a dark dress, with something white on the shoulders, and very white hands, appeared and bade her follow her to the library.

Mrs. Oliver, sometime governess in the house, writes (1884) that on the first Sunday in July, 1868, she was going up-stairs about 4 P.M. when she saw a lady dressed in blue come from Mrs. B.'s bedroom along the upper hall and into Mr. B.'s dressing-room. The figure passed close to her. The dress rustled as it went, and the feet of the figure were bare. In passing Mr. B.'s dressing-room door Mrs. Oliver saw the image of the figure reflected in a mirror. Mrs. Oliver supposed it to be a real figure, until a search was made of the house.

Mr. B. left J—— House in 1875. Considerable alterations were made to the house, and in 1876 the house was again tenanted. The present occupants up to 1883 had not been disturbed in any way.[1]

In the next case we have ascertained that a suicide had taken place in the house some years before the commencement of the disturbances ; but it does not appear that the fact was known to the occu-

[1] *Journal, S. P. R.*, ii., April, 1886.

pants of the house until afterwards. The case is a remarkable and instructive one in many ways, especially from the persistence and the great variety of the hallucinations. It will be noted that for some of the later manifestations we have the evidence of a contemporary diary.

VII.—Miss L. Morris (June, 1888) went in October, 1882, to live with an aunt in a small terrace-house at a town in the south of England. From the beginning of their tenancy they were much disturbed by the sound of heavy footsteps and other loud noises. About 5 P.M. one afternoon in November, 1882, when it was still light, Miss Morris, going into the back drawing-room to fetch some music, saw standing by the closed door the figure of a woman heavily robed in deepest black from head to foot ; her face intensely sad and deadly pale. Miss Morris uttered an exclamation, and the figure suddenly vanished. She told no one of her experience.

In the winter of 1885, Miss Morris again saw the figure of a woman clothed in black walk slowly down the hall in front of her and disappear.

Throughout their occupancy of the house, which ceased in December, 1886, she was continually disturbed by bangs, knockings on the doors, and other loud noises. For a period of some weeks, too, the front-door bell was rung so constantly that they removed it from the wire. *No other hallucinations.*

The house remained empty until November, 1887, when it was taken by Mrs. G., widow of an officer in the army, and her two daughters, aged about nine and ten.

Mrs. G. (June, 1888) was disturbed about a fortnight after their entry by sobs, moans, and the sound of a voice saying, "Oh ! do forgive me." Later came the tramping of feet, and loud noises like the movement of furniture. Loud knocks were also heard on bedroom doors. One morning Mrs. G. heard her elder daughter, "Edith," give a loud scream, and learnt from her that she had seen a dreadful white face peep-

ing round the door. Both children were much frightened by this occurrence, and by the strange noises which they, as well as Mrs. G., seem to have heard at night. Later, Edith said she had seen a little woman pass by her ; and that she often heard the sound of "pitter patter." Again, on Feb. 6, 1888, the younger child, "Florence," said that, in passing a room, she saw a man standing by the window, staring fixedly. He had blue eyes, dark brown hair, and freckles. (The note in the diary of this incident runs, "*Florence*[1] saw an apparition in brown at 7.30 A.M.") The children frequently saw lights in their bedroom ; and Florence once saw a white skirt hanging from the ceiling. On March 20th, on going up to bed, they saw a figure in white. On another occasion, Florence saw a figure crawling on the floor as if it would spring on her.

Mrs. G., when washing her hands one morning about 10 A.M., saw at her elbow two human faces which vanished instantly. She also heard a voice, which she thought was her child's, cry "Darling." The children, who were in another part of the house, had not spoken.

Finally, on May 8th, as the children were nervous and unwell, Mrs. G. left the house, a servant remaining behind with her mother and sister to keep her company. But the noises which they heard at night so frightened them that they also had to leave abruptly. *No other hallucinations.*

[Mrs. G.'s account was written in June, 1888 ; but most of the incidents were recorded at the time in a diary, which I was allowed to inspect.]

Anne H. (June, 1888), the servant, corroborates Mrs. G.'s statements as to the figures seen by the children, and the noises heard, especially after Mrs. G.'s departure from the house. Anne one night in her bedroom saw a strange shadow which went right along the window and passed on to the wall opposite. *No other hallucinations.*

I received from the two children, in July, 1888, a *viva-voce* account of their experiences, which agreed with that given by Mrs. G.

[1] This is not the real name.

Mrs. G.'s experiences became a matter of common talk in the town; and a few days after her removal from the house, three gentlemen paid visits to it on two different occasions.

Mr. W. O. D., barrister, and the *Revd. G. O.*—two of these gentlemen—write (July, 1888) that on May 23rd they heard bell-ringing and an unaccountable crash. Mr. O. also saw indistinctly a small column of misty vapour. On May 28th, about 9.30 P.M., as they stood in the hall, Mr. O. saw a form glide from the backroom to the front. Mr. D. saw only part of the dress of this "super-material being." After Mr. O. had said prayers for exorcism and rest for the soul, the party left.[1]

It should be added that it has been ascertained that in March, 1879, a woman hanged herself in the house. Rumours of this incident appear to have reached Mrs. G., though not until after the commencement of the disturbances.

An associate of the Society for Psychical Research, Mr. X. Y., and his wife occupied the house from August, 1888, to September, 1889, and about forty visitors slept in the house during this period. Nothing abnormal was seen during these thirteen months, but a few unaccountable noises were heard. Thus, one evening at 8.30, *Mr. X. Y.* was alone in the house, writing, when he heard a noise as if half a brick were being bumped about in the passage. The noise ceased when he went into the passage, but twice re-commenced. A search discovered nothing. On another occasion Mr. and Mrs. Y. heard the three gut strings of a guitar which hung on the

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vi., p. 256.

wall sound a chord three times in succession. On the last occasion, Mr. Y. was looking at the guitar and could detect no movement.[1]

In the next narrative, the figure, as described by one of the witnesses, was of a ghastly and terrifying kind. This is a rare feature in authentic ghost stories.

VIII.—Mrs. G. (May, 1888), in September, 1887, took a house in the west of London, part of which she let in lodgings. She frequently, especially at night, heard rustling noises as of ladies moving about in silk dresses. She was much frightened one night by sounds in her room and afterwards always kept her candles burning. One night at the end of November she awoke at 1 A.M. with the feeling that someone was in the room. Turning round she saw just opposite to her the figure of a woman, apparently about fifty, with dark hair and eyes, a red dress and a mob cap. The figure bent slowly back, and displayed what at first Mrs. G. thought to be a wide mouth, but which presently revealed itself as a gaping wound in the throat. Mrs. G. adjured the figure in the name of the Trinity without result. She then rapped on the wall separating her room from that of two lodgers : the two lodgers responded to the summons, and as they knocked at the door the figure slowly vanished like a shadow. The room throughout this scene was lighted by two candles.

Mr. I. Guthrie (May, 1888), one of the lodgers, woke up on the night referred to, which was about Christmas time, and heard a sound as of a woman in a silk dress moving away from the side of his bed into the adjoining room. Then he heard Mrs. G. speaking, and afterwards a rap on the wall. He and his brother went to the door, which was opened by Mrs. G., who appeared in a state of extreme agitation bordering on prostration.

Mr. Guthrie had previously heard the noises described by

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vi., pp. 311–2.

Mrs. G., and on at least one occasion he had seen a figure. He was mysteriously awakened, and saw in the middle of the room a moderately tall female form, clearly defined, as of a real body, which, as he looked, moved out of the room through the closed door with a rustling noise dying away in the distance. *No other hallucinations.*

Mr. D. Guthrie (May, 1888) confirms his brother's account of the disturbances, but had seen nothing himself.

Miss H. (28 June, 1888), a niece of Mrs. G., had also been disturbed by strange noises. On the night of Wednesday, the 20th June, 1888, when sleeping in the same bed with Mrs. G., she suddenly awoke to find herself sitting upright in bed. It was just dawning, and she saw close to her the figure of a tall woman, dressed in black. The figure disappeared into the wall. *No other hallucinations.*

Mrs. G. adds that a lodger on the first floor had also seen the figure of a woman in a red dress.[1]

In the summer of 1888, about ten or twelve persons, in succession, including myself, occupied the room in which Mrs. G. had seen her vision, but no unusual experience was recorded.

The last case which I shall quote is one of the few authentic accounts in the S. P. R. collection of a phantasmal figure being seen by successive witnesses in the same locality out-of-doors, and in full daylight.

IX.—Miss M. W. Scott (Feb. 20, 1893), when returning homeward between 5 and 6 P.M. on the 7th May, 1892, saw on a country road in Roxburghshire, a few yards beyond her, a tall man dressed in black. He turned a corner of the road, where she could still see his figure between the hedges, and then abruptly disappeared. A little distance on, Miss Scott met her sister, Miss Louisa Scott, who had also seen a corresponding

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., p. 251.

figure, and had been puzzled by its sudden disappearance. One day towards the end of July, about the same hour, Miss M. W. Scott and another sister saw the same figure. This time he faded away into the bank on their right. He was dressed entirely in black, long coat, gaiters, and knee-breeches, and his legs were very thin. Round his throat was a wide white cravat; and he wore a low-crowned hat. His face was thin and deadly pale. "He was dressed as a clergyman of the last century, and we have an old picture in the house for which he might have sat."

Miss Scott heard that two young girls, at about the same time, saw the figure in the same lane. They were frightened and ran away; but looking back saw the figure gradually fade away. It is reported that the apparition had been seen two years before by some boys; and that blue lights were seen on the same spot after dark.

Miss M. W. Scott (June 14, 1893) writes again that on June 12th, at about 9.50 A. M., in walking on the same road, she saw a figure in which she thought she recognised an acquaintance, some way ahead. She hurried to overtake it, and found that it was the same phantasmal figure, which seemed to float or skim away as she approached. He turned round twice and looked at her, and finally faded from view by the hedge to the right.

Miss Louisa Scott gives an account corresponding to her sister's of the first appearance, but she saw the figure in a slightly different position at a different time. She does not seem to have received so clear an impression of the whole figure. She describes the man as dressed like a clergyman.

Miss M. W. Scott adds that there is a legend that a child was murdered in the lane near the spot where the figure was seen.[1]

(6) The only evidence, so far as I am aware, in first-hand cases for a visible phantasm appearing on a particular anniversary is the narrative, already re-

[1] *Journal, S. P. R.*, Nov., 1893.

ferred to, given to us by Mr. X. Z., and withdrawn on account of serious discrepancies discovered in the evidence. There are one or two first-hand narratives in which inexplicable sounds are stated to have recurred on fixed dates, or at fixed hours; but the evidence for the supernormal nature of the sounds themselves seems insufficient.

There are other types of ghosts with which the reader is no doubt familiar—the Banshee, the ghost attached to a particular family and appearing in the form of a wailing woman, the rustle of paper, a mouse, a white bird, or other portent, to give warning of impending death; the phantom carriage which rolls up the drive by the light of the winter's moon; the small dark spectres which haunt the Cornish mines; the black hound; the headless horseman; the phantom cavalcade. But stories of this kind for the most part rest upon tradition only, and seem to belong to folk-lore rather than to psychical research. In no case is the evidence at present obtained sufficient to justify detailed consideration.

We may gather, then, from this brief survey of the evidence presented by the best attested narratives, that the authentic ghost brings no message from the dead to the living; that he rarely appears in recognisable or even constant shape; that his connection with skeletons and tragedies is obscure and uncertain. He is, in fact, a fugitive, irrelevant, and for the most part polymorphic phantasm. He flits as idly across the scene as the figure cast by a

magic-lantern, and he possesses, apparently, as little purpose, volition, or intelligence. The atmosphere of mystery which surrounds the ghostly figure is furnished by the traditional belief of the witnesses; they magnify a meagre reality with the eyes of faith:

> "Ah! what white thing at the door has cross'd,
> Sister Helen?
> Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?
> A soul that 's lost as mine is lost,
> Little Brother!"

Often, indeed, the appearance is so brief and so unsubstantial that it can be called little more than the suggestion of a figure. It bears as little resemblance to the aggrieved miser, the repentant monk, the unquiet spirit of the murderer or his victim, with whom the legends of our childhood and the dinner-parties of our maturer years have made us familiar, as the dragons whom Siegfried slew bear to the winged lizards whose bones lie buried in the Sussex weald.

Even when the several narrators represent the figures seen on different occasions as identical, examination of their evidence makes this identity doubtful. Impressions so momentary as these must of necessity be very vague and elusive in the subsequent memory. The details are likely to be filled in after hearing the descriptions of others; so that features discerned or believed to be common become more definite in recollection, and discrepancies tend to disappear. In short, the image

which remains in the memories of the percipients is apt to resemble a composite photograph, in which all the common features are emphasised, and details found only in individual cases are blurred or faintly indicated.

The best safe-guard against such sophistication of the records would be found in the comparison of accounts written by independent observers who had never had the opportunity of discussing their experiences with others. But evidence of this kind we have not yet succeeded in obtaining.

Moreover, it is doubtful how far we can trust the statements of our informants that their experiences were not communicated to other inmates of the house until they also had seen the figure. Memory is often treacherous on such matters: and, in fact, experience teaches that the memory is not apt to be tenacious of points which mar, either in recital or for private edification, the dramatic effect of an episode.

The explanation, then, of the phenomena which is suggested by a study of the authentic narratives is something of this kind. It will have been noticed that in all the cases here quoted[1]—and the rule is almost invariable—visible apparitions were associated with inexplicable and terrifying noises: and that in most cases these noises are reported to have preceded by weeks or months the visible phantasms. Because of these noises, or by reason of rumours that the house was haunted, the occupants seem generally to have been thrown into a nervous and

[1] Except Case IX., where the figure was seen out of doors.

expectant state. It is when this nervous state has been induced that the "ghost" appears. In two or three of the cases a general hallucinatory diathesis, almost comparable with that of the famous Mrs. A., appears to have been thus established. It is suggested, then, that the explanation of these curious phenomena is that the disquieting knowledge that the house is reputed to be haunted, or the occurrence of inexplicable noises, themselves probably due to hallucinatory distortion or enlargement of real sounds, generate in some of the inmates a mental condition favourable to the occurrence of hallucinations of all kinds. It must be admitted, indeed, that the explanation suggested rests mainly on conjecture. Outside of the phenomena under discussion we have little proof of the efficacy of disquieting disturbances of a physical kind, and the nervous excitement thereby induced, to generate hallucinations. Some support for the theory may indeed be found in the association of genuine hallucinations with the spurious physical phenomena dealt with in Chapter V. On the other hand it should be noted that various members of the Society have occupied several of the houses referred to in this chapter with the view of seeing or hearing ghosts : and that the state of expectancy and nervous excitement in which some of us at least passed our nights did not produce the effects here supposed. So far as was practicable, therefore, under the conditions, we have put the theory to proof by experiment with negative results.

Again, thus summarily to dismiss the whole of the phenomena attested would perhaps argue the prevalence of unconscious misrepresentation to a greater extent than we are justified in assuming. For, even if allowance is made for the treacherousness of memory on such points, it must be admitted that, in more than one of the cases here cited, there is evidence that two or more persons independently saw a similar phantasmal figure in the same locality. But, if it be thought that the evidence for the occurrence of similar apparitions to independent witnesses is sufficient to entitle us to frame an hypothesis, it may be suggested that the later apparitions are due possibly to thought-transference from the original percipient, brooding over his strange experience. At least, in hazarding the conjecture that the apparently inexplicable element in these phenomena, if not due solely to the operation of the mythopœic tendency, may be attributed to telepathic action on the part of living persons, we are reducing to the lowest possible figure our draft on the unknown. For, as shown in Chapters VII. and VIII., we have grounds for belief in the possibility of such action. It must be admitted that the suggested extension of telepathic action goes somewhat beyond the facts already established. To discern, however, in such narratives as these proofs of *post-mortem* agency involves two assumptions, for either of which we have even less scientific warrant: the survival after death of some form of consciousness, and the affection by this consciousness of the minds

of persons still living. Clearly we should not be justified in importing these assumptions to explain phenomena which are capable of another and less dubious interpretation. For we know no reason why the dreams of the living should be less potent to inspire these vague and unsubstantial visions than the imagined dreams of the dead.

CHAPTER XI.

PREMONITIONS AND PREVISIONS.

THE S. P. R. has accumulated a considerable collection of narratives under the category of Premonitions. Writing in 1888, Mrs. Henry Sidgwick estimated the number of first-hand cases purporting to contain evidence of supernormal knowledge of future events at about 240. Since that date our own collection has been considerably increased. Several cases have also been published in the *Proceedings* of the American S. P. R., in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, and in other continental periodicals. The cases which have been passed in review in preparing this estimate of the evidence probably number over 300.

But a mere enumeration of the narratives affords a very imperfect measure of the strength of the evidence. That the thing itself calls for very stringent proof it is hardly necessary to say. Foreknowledge of the future is more remote from general experience, and less conformable to current philosophy, than the conception of a new mode of sensuous or supersensuous communication. But the evidence for prevision so far collected is markedly inferior to the evidence of the same kind—the spontaneous

cases to wit—for telepathy. And even with the help of a large body of experimental proof, the doctrine of telepathy, as we have seen, still hangs in the balance.

In fine, these three hundred narratives can be accepted only as a very small instalment—as regards quality at any rate—of what is required to establish prevision as a working hypothesis.

But in effect, from these three hundred narratives we have to begin by subtracting many in which the facts, if accepted, can be explained without recourse to any such extreme hypothesis, by adequate knowledge of the present, or as the result of a lucky guess or of some normal but obscure chain of causation.[1]

In many of the narratives which remain the connection between the supposed prediction and its fulfilment is obscure and indefinite. Again, a large number of these records were written down many years after the event. A still larger number depend upon a single memory. And, finally, about two

[1] As an example of a prediction which may plausibly be explained as a mere chance guess, we may take the following case. It appears from the *Morning Advertiser* of the 6th March, 1885, that a letter was sent to the editor of that paper on the 6th February, predicting in terms of the most absolute conviction the death of the then Emperor of Russia in three weeks from that date. This prophecy, though less startling, would have been more difficult to explain if it had concerned the death of some plain John Smith; for though the confidence expressed by the writer is his own foreknowledge, and demonstrated by the unusual step of writing a letter to a newspaper, is certainly remarkable; yet if we reflect that the death of a monarch is a matter of interest, if not of speculation, amongst millions of his contemporaries, and that the foretelling of such events is part of the stock in trade of the professional soothsayer, we shall probably find as little difficulty in this case of acquitting the prophet (who gives his full name and address) of su-

thirds of the whole number are dreams; and it is precisely amongst the dreams that the clearest and best attested cases are to be found. To say that the best evidence for the reality of prevision is to be found in dreams is itself an admission of the weakness of the case; for dream evidence, as has been already pointed out, in Chapter VIII., can afford but little support in a question of this kind.

Nevertheless, the subject is of such importance, and the records of the Society testify to such widespread interest and, indeed, belief in the matter, that it seems worth while to examine the evidence more closely. The impressions, then, to which our informants testify, may be divided broadly into two categories, *direct* and *symbolic*. By symbolic are to be understood impressions which do not directly represent the events with which they are supposed to be connected. Conventional omens and dreams which require to be interpreted (such as those of Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker) are types

pernatural knowledge, as of complicity with the events which brought about the fulfilment of his prediction.

The following case will serve to illustrate another kind of error. A lady writing from Surbiton to her son in Melbourne on the 23d October, dated her letter the 27th November. On that day she died. But a letter from London to Melbourne will occupy on the average—as appears from the *Post-Office Guide*—thirty-five days in transit; thus, it is easier to suppose that in post-dating her letter by thirty-five days the writer was thinking of the date on which it might be expected to reach the recipient, than that her pen was guided by some higher power to predict her own death.

For an exposition of other causes, subconscious inference of a normal kind, telepathy, etc., which may be supposed to account for some of the incidents vouched for, without recourse to the extreme hypothesis of an intuition of future events, reference should be made to Mr. Myers's article on Precognition.—*Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. xi.

of this class. Amongst direct prophecies, verbal predictions of future events and previsions of future scenes are the most frequent.

There are certain evidential weaknesses and defects which are specially characteristic of each class, and it will be convenient to consider them separately, beginning with the symbolic.

The obvious objection to the symbolic dream or omen is that there is no intrinsic relation between the event and its symbol. Our own ancestors saw a connection between comets and disasters ; and the modern Celt believes Will-o'-the-wisp lights to betoken death. *Prima facie*, the one belief has as much to say for itself as the other. There is a natural tendency to believe that an unusual occurrence—anything out of the ordinary routine of life —is to be construed as a portent. Hence the almost universal belief, at a certain stage of civilisation, in omens. Clearly, to establish a connection between an unusual sight or sound and a subsequent event (most commonly a death) we need a long series of coincidences. But in the symbolic prophecies before us we have no unimpeachable record to attest such a series of coincidences. We are forced to rely upon fallible memories, for the most part unsupported by documents. In other words, we have little security that the "misses" have been recorded as well as the "hits." And this forgetfulness of the unfulfilled omen is specially likely to occur with persons of the peasant or labouring class, who form the bulk of our witnesses for symbolic

hallucinations; and, again, is specially liable to affect dreams, the form of symbolism for which we have most educated testimony. Yet another defect of this class of evidence is that no definite term is fixed for the fulfilment of the omen. This, indeed, is a defect common to prophetic intimations in general, but is peculiarly noticeable in this class. The death may follow the corpse-lights by two or three days; but the omen may fulfil itself unquestioned in months or years. Again, there is the vagueness of the event foreshadowed. The omen may point to a mother or son. But some of our seers are contented with the death, after an interval of weeks, of a step-grandmother, an uncle by marriage, or even a mere acquaintance.

Death Lights and Funeral Processions.

Of symbolic hallucinations the form most widely and frequently attested is no doubt the death-lights. These lights, which are described by some correspondents as in shape like the flame of a candle, but larger and sometimes bluish, are supposed to betoken the death of a friend, and are often said to appear on the route subsequently taken by the funeral, or to hover round a spot where the coffin is afterwards laid. The interval between the omen and the fulfilment is indefinite and frequently extends to weeks. We have received numerous accounts of such lights from two villages, Laugharne and St. Clears, on the coast of South Wales. We

have also similar cases from Macduff and from Argyleshire. It will be observed that all these narratives come from Celtic sources. From the same source for the most part come accounts of funeral processions, which are sometimes heard as the trampling of many feet, or, more rarely, seen. In one case we are told—on the alleged authority of a Royal Commission—that the unhappy witness was trampled on and severely bruised by the phantom procession. One story of this kind, coming from an educated witness is perhaps worth quoting, though it should be noted that it depends upon a single memory.

I.—From Miss H.

"My mother and I were once driving in Somersetshire with an old lady of nearly eighty years of age. She suddenly called to the servants to stop the carriage and draw up to the side of the road, which was done, though we wondered at such an unaccountable order. "Now you can go on," she said presently, and added, turning to my mother, "I always like to stop while a funeral passes." The road was a long, straight one, and quite empty of even a foot-passenger, so we laughed at the old lady, and told her so; and she repeated, "Well, it is very odd, I certainly thought I saw one. How foolish the servants must have thought me." The next day occurred the *perfectly* sudden death of her most intimate friend and nearest neighbour —an old gentleman who used to read to her every day."

In answer to questions, Miss H. writes:

"The drive took place about four o'clock in the afternoon on a fine bright day. We were staying at Weston-super-Mare, where the old lady and gentleman lived, so I heard of his death myself from the old lady's daughter, the day after it

happened. She reminded me and my mother then of the old lady's idea of two days before."[1]

Banshees and other Symbolic Sounds.

Another very general form of death-omen is the Banshee—the loud wailing said to be heard before a death in certain families.[2]

Sometimes the death-warning takes the form of knocks or loud noises heard by the relatives of the person to die. The best attested case of the kind which has come under our notice is, no doubt, the knockings in the Woodd family.[3] No less than seven instances are quoted (three of which occurred in the seventeenth century) in which loud knocks were heard by some relation or dependent before the occurrence of a death in the family. In the three most recent cases (1872, 1893, 1895) the occurrence of the knocks and their close coincidence with the death is well substantiated. But, in appraising such coincidences, we should bear in mind that, when a tradition of the kind has once been started, a sufficient number of unexplained knocks are likely to be found in the course of several generations to support it, especially if some latitude is allowed in reckoning the interval between the omen and its fulfilment. I am bound to add, however, that this criticism in the case of the Woodd knockings applies rather to the older incidents—where the inter-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., 303.

[2] Three such cases are given at length in Mrs. Sidgwick's article on Premonitions. *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 306–310.

[3] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., pp. 538–542.

val between omen and death varies from fourteen days to six months—than to the recent and better attested instances. If many more records of the kind were adduced, on equally sound testimony, we should be forced to reconsider our estimate of symbolic premonitions.

In two narratives the death is preceded, one day and two days respectively, by a loud sound as of some one shaking a newspaper violently in the house. In both cases—one comes to us from Schoharie, New York, and the other from England—the sound seems to have been inaudible to the person who died, who was present in the house at the time. In another case a lady finds an omen of her own death in the inexplicable ringing of the parlour bell; or again, the hallucination of hearing church bells in an Indian jungle announces the death of a brother of the percipient. Two ladies testify that a short time before a sister's death they heard a coach driven past their house and back again. The occurrence was interpreted at the time as foreshadowing a death in the family.

Symbolic Animals.

There are several cases of ominous animals. In one narrative we have a brown dog, and in another a black dog (both hallucinatory) preceding a death. In other cases the warning is conveyed by a real animal. The story of the Oxenham white dove is well known; in another family there is the tradition of a mouse appearing as a herald of death. A

"strange, slim, graceful looking little bird, with a very tiny head, rather bluish grey," is said to have come for several consecutive days prior to a death, tapping at the window of the house and dirtying the glass with its feet. After the death the bird continued its visits until the funeral, and thereafter came no more. The incident is vouched for by the daughter of a medical man.

Again, we have one or two curious narratives in which the sudden appearance of an offensive parasite has been regarded as the forerunner of death or disaster. In one case a child, whom his mother saw in a dream so affected, died unexpectedly within a few days.

Symbolic Dreams.

Of symbolic dreams we have numerous records. In these cases also the event most often foreshadowed is death. Thus Mrs. A. tells us that she commonly has a dream of a child in a bath before the death of any acquaintance. The person whose death is indicated generally figures in the dream. In two instances we have corroborative evidence of the dream being mentioned before the occurrence of the death to which it related. With another lady,[1] warning of death is given by a dream of riding a grey pony through muddy water. The late Rev. P. H. Newnham had symbolic dreams of various kinds. Death would be prefigured by a dream of a cavern by the sea; sickness by a dream of a

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 351.

stormy sea. In neither series was the person concerned as a rule indicated in the dream. Another series of Mr. Newnham's dreams related to the coming of pupils. By another informant, a dream of teeth falling out is interpreted as relating to subsequent deaths.

To sum up :

Before we can assign evidential value to symbolic dreams and omens in general the following conditions must be fulfilled :

(1) The dream or omen must be of a marked and exceptional kind.

(2) The event supposed to be predicted must be of a definite character.

(3) There must be a definite, or, at most, a very short interval between the omen and its fulfilment.

(4) The series must be sufficiently long to establish the probability of causal connection between omen and event.

(5) There must be satisfactory evidence that every instance of the occurrence of the omen has been duly noted.

Now in the records which have been passed under review, these conditions have been very imperfectly fulfilled. The omen has been in many cases a vague dream or a sound of not unusual type ; the event foreshadowed has generally been a death, but any death in a large and indefinite circle of acquaintance is frequently claimed as fulfilling the omen ; the interval before fulfilment may vary in the same series from hours to months ; in some

cases the witness feels himself entitled to accept any unusual occurrence as a portent, and to look for its fulfilment in disaster; and, finally, there is no case in which we have evidence that the omen or dream was recorded on every occasion of its occurrence. The evidence, as a rule, lies in the memory of the percipient and his friends, ranging over a long interval of years, and unsupported for the most part by any documentary evidence.

So far then from adding to the evidence for prevision, the narratives hitherto considered seem to me to some extent to weaken the force of the evidence which follows.

Fetches, or Premonitory Apparitions.

Intermediate between the symbolic cases with which we have just been dealing and direct previsions are the "fetches," or apparitions of persons seen shortly before their deaths. The belief in such premonitory apparitions seems to be very general, and we have several cases in our collection. Thus the Rev. J. H. writes that in 1860 the nurse one evening saw an apparition of his little girl walk into the day nursery. The child died suddenly a few days later. Mrs. M. records that she saw an apparition of her sister come into her bedroom and speak to her at 5 A.M. one morning. The sister died at the same hour a week later.[1] Mrs. C., writing in 1888, states that fifteen years previously, when being undressed, she saw

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 442.

her maid's double about two feet off. A week later, at about the same hour, the maid died.[1] In another case Mrs. Alger, walking from Victoria to Westminster, one day in March, felt herself touched on the shoulder, and turning round saw the apparition of her husband's mother. Later that evening, when discussing the incident with Mr. Alger, she heard a voice say, "Come both of you on the 22nd." On the 22nd of March Mr. Alger's mother died.

Auditory Cases.

In the last case, it will be noticed, the lesson of the apparition is interpreted and enforced by the voice subsequently heard. There are several cases of predictions made by an audible or quasi-audible voice. Dr. Beddoe, F.R.S., records that a patient of his, Captain B., after the funeral of a lad whom he knew, saw a vision of the boy, who spoke to the Captain and predicted his death within a week. The Captain, Dr. Beddoe records, actually died on the appointed day.[2]

We have another well-attested case of a verbal prediction, recorded by Miss X. A note of the date predicted in this case was sent to Mr. Myers beforehand, but from the lack of particulars we are not in a position to estimate the exact value of the coincidence.[3]

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 448.

[2] *Journal, S. P. R.* for May, 1890, p. 256. A similar case, also reported by the doctor who was cognisant of the prediction beforehand, is given in *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 581.

[3] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 536.

There are also a few cases of sounds heard anticipating real sounds in the same locality.

Visions.

There are not many visual cases, other than the fetches already described, which rest on good evidence. The most striking example is given to us by Dr. Wiltse, of Skiddy, Kansas.[1] Dr. Wiltse, lying awake one evening, saw a succession of tableaux appear before his eyes on the wall. The tableaux presented a landscape—unknown to him, but recognised from his description by a friend who was present during the vision, and to whom Dr. Wiltse described each scene as it appeared—a log hut, a man wounded, and finally a corpse. The tragedy actually occurred as seen in the vision some months later. The witness who was present corroborates Dr. Wiltse's account; and the experience, if accurately remembered, was undoubtedly very striking. Unfortunately, however, the vision does not appear to have been recorded until twelve or fourteen years after the events.

We have a few cases of prophetic crystal visions.[2]

Predictions at Séances.

Lastly there come a few cases of predictions at séances. The following case was communicated to me by a lady of my acquaintance, whose accuracy in ordinary matters may be relied on. She was in-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 573.

[2] See for instance *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 298, and xi., p. 503.

troduced some years since by William Lloyd Garrison to a clairvoyante medium in Boston, U. S. A.

II.—From Mrs. P.

"Though I had only arrived in Boston the day before, her guides instantly recognised that I came over the water, and opened up, not only my past life, but a great deal of the future. They said I had a picture of my family with me, and on producing it, the medium told me (in trance) that two of my children were in the spirit world, and, pointing to one son in the group, she said: "You will soon have this one there; he will die suddenly,—but you must not weep for him; he will be taken from the evil to come. It is not often permitted to tell these things, but we see it is best for you, that you may know it is no accident."

I had not been home many weeks, before my son, a brave boy of seventeen, was killed at a game of football." [1]

I was shown a copy of the photograph in question, a group of several children.

Dr Liébeault [2] records another case, in which he was a witness before the event of a prediction by a professional medium. A patient of his in 1879, when nineteen years old, consulted a "Parisian necromancer," and was told he would die at twenty-six. He told Dr. Liébeault of the prediction in January, 1886, and did in fact die (from peritonitis) in September of the same year. In this case, in view of the nature of the illness, it is difficult to suppose that the prediction could have brought about its own fulfilment.[3] Yet another case of a

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 311.

[2] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 528.

[3] Another case of the prediction of a death at a séance is given in the *S. P. R. Journal* for June, 1891, p. 87.

prediction of death may be referred to here. The Rev. A. Glardon wrote to Professor Sidgwick, on September 14, 1893, that his aunt, Miss J. V., had on the 4th of August preceding predicted her own death within six weeks. A few hours later on the same day he wrote again to announce the death, which thus took place a day before the completion of the six weeks.

In the course of this brief review of the evidence for prevision derivable from waking impressions of various kinds, I have touched only upon what appear to be the most striking and best attested narratives. There are no doubt among them a few records which merit consideration; and if, taken as a whole, they are found to fall below the level of the best telepathic cases of the same kind, this inferiority is due, less to any shortcomings on the part of our informants, than to the inconclusive nature of the coincidences, and especially to the want of a definite time relation between omen and fulfilment.

Dreams.

We now pass to the most numerous class of premonitory impressions. The best attested cases so far adduced have fallen short of conviction because of their vagueness, or their failure to demonstrate a real connection between the thing foreshadowed and the thing as it occurred. There is no lack of definiteness in the dream stories. No reasonable person could question the conclusion that—if the

narratives now under consideration can be accepted as they stand—coming events do in some sort cast their shadows before. Dreams are indeed numerous enough, but dreams of the type here reported, of clear outline, and full of minutely remembered details, are by no means common. The resemblances reported between dream and event are too numerous and too complex to be explained away by mere chance-coincidence. Nor, indeed, do I think that coincidence unadorned plays any considerable part in the matter. The fact that the great majority of our contributors have experienced more than one premonition is against such an explanation.[1] In other words, the phenomena are not isolated,—as would be the case if they were the work of pure chance coincidence,—but they appear generally in small groups within one individual experience. This characteristic we should expect to find equally if the experiences reported are proofs of some transcendental faculty, or of some common human weakness of memory or narration. Before accepting them as the former, it will be well to see if there are any indications of such merely human errors. Even in the absence of such indications—in face of the demonstrated belief in prophetic omens the remark can

[1] Out of sixty first-hand narratives which I have examined, and which may be taken as a fair sample of the whole, I find that in no less than forty-three cases—more than seventy-one per cent—the percipients state that they have had other supernormal experiences—*i. e.*, dreams or impressions of other kinds believed to have some relation with external events, mostly premonitory, but occasionally simultaneous (telepathic). The question does not seem to have been asked in all cases, otherwise the proportion of affirmative answers would probably have been still higher.

hardly seem superfluous—it is less improbable that these narratives are due to such familiar agencies, than that they testify to a power which would so violently interrupt the empirical order of the world. And be it remembered that we are here concerned almost exclusively with testimony based upon memory. The cases which are supported by contemporary documentary evidence are few and far from conclusive.[1]

Now, memories of dreams are essentially untrustworthy. The experiences themselves are mostly lacking in impressiveness and colour, and readily fade from the memory. Moreover, we have no means of correcting our memory of these elusive

[1] I can find six cases [*Proc. S. P. R.*, ix., p. 437, Mr. Chase: *id.* p. 431, Glardon: p. 528, Liébeault: p. 432, Suddick: p. 536, Miss X.: pp. 489–91, Colonel Coghill] in which there is evidence that a note of the prediction was actually written before its fulfilment. Three of these cases relate to the death of the percipient; and the terms of the prediction were not very precise. The fourth case also related to a death In this instance the letter written beforehand merely mentions the fact of the prediction without giving particulars. [It is doubtful whether these intimations of death should have been included, since they can possibly be explained, as Mr. Myers has suggested, without having recourse to prophecy at all. For the same reason I have omitted a few cases, p. 169 (vol. xi., 455), p. 211 (p. 467), p. 212 (p. 474), and p. 245 (p. 477), attested by previous documentary evidence, in which it is doubtful if the impressions received involved an element of prophecy strictly so-called. See Mr. Myers's remarks on these cases.] In the fifth case the note consisted simply of a date, the event to which the date referred not being described. The sixth case—a dream, by a lady given to dreaming, of an accident in the hunting field to a friend given to hunting—is the most impressive. But here unfortunately the letter written before the event cannot now be found, though there is good evidence that it existed. The precise amount of coincidence cannot therefore be determined. There are a few other cases in which we have an account written so immediately after the event that it may be considered unlikely that serious errors of memory have crept in.

impressions by reference to our ordinary standards and landmarks. We can neither compare them with other simultaneous impressions nor determine their position in the series of impressions which make up our waking lives. The world of dreams is timeless and without dimensions. Hence it follows that those subtle processes of unconscious embellishment—the reading back of details, the pruning of redundant and irrelevant matter, the magnifying of real points of resemblance—which vitiate more or less all memories of what purport to be telepathic or premonitory experiences, corrupt most readily dream-memories. When, for instance, a lady reports that thirty-five years since, as a girl, she constantly had allegorical visions; and that towards the end of 1847 she had a prevision of the revolution in Paris of the following year; or when another writer prefaces her account of a vision (in this instance a crystal vision) with the remark "it is nearly eighteen years ago, and I have almost forgotten it," we can feel little assurance that the narrative faithfully mirrors a real experience. But these purported to be waking impressions, and our reliance on the memory of a dream must be even less. In many cases the relation depends upon a single memory, the witnesses being dead or disinclined to corroborate. More rarely proof is forthcoming that the coincidence has been exaggerated. The witness, when appealed to, has either entirely forgotten the remarkable occurrence and its fulfilment; or he differs from the original narrator in

his version of the circumstance; or he remembers too much[1] or too little.[2] It will generally be found, as in the two cases last cited, that when the two accounts differ, the exuberant detail is supplied by the less educated witness. But the liability to error of this kind is, no doubt, generally admitted; and few educated persons would wish to take an uncorroborated account of a dream or vision as evidence for anything. It is, however, less generally recognised that the same kinds of error which affect the original percipient may affect, though not necessarily to a like degree, the corroborating witness. From the nature of the case it is very difficult to obtain distinct proof of this. But we have come across two clear examples. In one case a colonial judge gave us an account of an apparition seen by him coincidentally with the death of an acquaintance. The account was corroborated by his wife.[3] In another case a lady and her daughter told us of a "ghost" seen by the latter in a foreign hotel.[4] In both cases it was found that the witnesses were mistaken. In the first case the vision, if it occurred at all, certainly did not occur at the time or in the circumstances alleged. In the second case the report was founded on a vision seen by a third person. It will be noticed that in both these cases the imaginary experience was a waking hallucination, an experience much less likely than a dream to be

[1] P. 129, *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 513.
[2] P. 368, *id.*, p. 517.
[3] *Journal, S. P. R.*, vol. ii., p. 2.
[4] *Apparitions and Thought-Transference*, p. 153.

unconsciously feigned. Such a perversion of testimony will no doubt most commonly occur among members of the same family, living in the same household, and immersed in the same environment. It is in such circumstances that the insidious suggestion of an oft-repeated tale will find its most favourable field of operation. Few husbands, it may be supposed, are capable of taking a really intelligent interest in the dreams told by their wives in the morning hours. But if the wife repeats her story often enough, and with adequate conviction, it is possible that, out of the dim floating consciousness of many forgotten incidents of the kind, there may piece itself together a pseudo-recollection of having heard a particular dream told before its fulfilment.

From this point of view it is noteworthy that in a large proportion of these narratives the only corroboration comes from a near relative, or at least a member of the same household. No doubt this would be liable to occur in any event, since it is to those nearest that the dream would commonly be told; but the circumstance, nevertheless, increases the chances of error.[1]

But under the most favourable circumstances a

[1] Out of the fifty first-hand cases [these cases were not dreams exclusively, but included premonitory impressions of all kinds] which I have examined with this view, I find that in twenty-six the only corroboration is supplied by husband, wife, parent, child, brother, or sister; in two cases a daughter-in-law corroborates; in five, a member of the same household—governess or servant. Thus in seventeen cases only out of the fifty is there corroboration from an independent source, a friend or acquaintance not living in the same house.

suggestion of this kind probably requires a certain time to operate, so that this particular fallacy would be less likely to vitiate recent cases.

Pseudo-presentiments.

After an examination of the evidence for telepathy, premonitions, and kindred matter collected by the American Society for Psychical Research, Professor Royce, of Harvard, U. S. A., in 1889 propounded a theory[1] which, in his view, explains away a large number of the narratives cited as proofs of telepathy and premonition. It is "that in certain people under certain exciting circumstances there occur what I shall henceforth call *pseudo-presentiments—i. e.*, more or less instantaneous and irresistible hallucinations of memory, which make it seem to one that something which now excites or astonishes him has been prefigured in a recent dream or in the form of some other warning." Elsewhere he compares these pseudo-presentiments to "momentary spasms of the activity of apperception." In Professor Royce's view, apparently, these pseudo-presentiments are to be distinguished from the familiar illusion of double memory, in which one seems to have been in a place or witnessed a scene before, mainly as being more impressive and more lasting. Of positive evidence he has but little to offer for his views. He quotes, indeed, a couple of asylum cases, in which the patients imagined that many of the events which

[1] *Proc. Am. S. P. R.*, pp. 366 *et seq.*, and *Mind*, April, 1888.

happened had been predicted to them beforehand. But these cases are not quite parallel to those which form the bulk of our evidence, where the narrator has the impression of having seen things beforehand. Of all the narratives which he cites as instances of pseudo-presentiment, there is but one to which his hypothesis can be said accurately to apply; but one, that is, in which we have indisputable evidence that the narrator immediately after the event had a vivid impression (whether well-founded or not) of having witnessed the scene beforehand. This one case is as follows:

III.—Extract from a letter of Mrs. C's, dated Sept. 25, 1874:

"I was called away to dinner, and had to leave off abruptly; now my thoughts are scattered. At dinner my brother told me that a man in his store set upon him to-day and beat him on the head with a stick. W. took the matter up, and a warrant was taken out; but listen—at breakfast this morning we were all laughing at my dream of last night, which was, that I saw a man hitting L. (the brother) on the head with a stick. L. has a bruise on the exact place I dreamt he had. What do you make of this coincidence? The boys beg me not to dream of them." [1]

Mrs. C., writing in 1887, gives a fuller account of the dream and of the incident which it purports to have foreshadowed. Mrs. C's sister, also writing in 1887, confirms the incident, and states that she heard the dream at breakfast, as stated. If we leave out of sight the corroboration which, as it

[1] *Proc. Am. S. P. R.*, p. 475.

depends on a memory thirteen years old, may be conceded to have slight evidential value, we still have to suppose that Mrs. C., a few hours after the event, was seized with a hallucination of memory, which made her imagine, not only that she had had a dream the night before, but that she had told the dream at the breakfast-table, and had listened to the comments of various members of her family. That seems to me an extravagant assumption.[1]

In short, I can find no cases either in the collection of the American S. P. R., or elsewhere, to which the hypothesis of an instantaneous and irresistible hallucination of memory seems applicable.[2] Many of the narratives no doubt strongly suggest a mnemonic fallacy of some kind or other. But I hardly think that we are justified in adopting such an extreme assumption. In the first place, it will generally suffice, as Dr Hodgson[3] has pointed out, to assume an illusion rather than an hallucination. Amongst the vague dream-memories that throng

[1] Professor Royce does indeed cite two other cases, which he classes as pseudo-presentiments, in which we have documentary evidence, in the one case a few hours, in the other a week, after the event, attesting the occurrence of the dream. But the first case is communicated, not by the dreamer, but by the person to whom the dream was told before the event. [*Proc. Am. S. P. R.*, p. 417, case 31.] In the other case [*Ibid.*. p. 375, case 11] Professor Royce himself is of opinion that the dream really occurred, but was misplaced in time. In both of these cases, it is clear, we have to suppose a memory hallucination of a quite different type from the "pseudo-presentiment" above defined.

[2] There are, of course, a few cases in our collection in which we have documentary evidence immediately after the event testifying to the prior occurrence of the impression. But in most of these cases the facts are attested by a second witness.

[3] *Proc. Am. S. P. R.*, p. 540 *et seq.*

the shadowy places of consciousness there must often be found one to fit the occasion. In the second place, since, with the few exceptions above referred to, these accounts have been committed to writing only months or years after the events, we are unable to say that the illusion or hallucination was of instantaneous origin. In the long interval an illusion once started would have leisure to mature and opportunity to impress itself on other persons in the company of the percipient, without any such violent process as Professor Royce suggests, Sometimes, no doubt, the fallacy will consist, not in the deepening and embellishment of an indefinite memory, but in the transposition in time of a genuine and well-remembered dream—a transposition which is facilitated, as already pointed out, by the difficulty of establishing the time-relation between dreams and other events.

There are many cases which *prima facie* may be grouped under the category of pseudo-presentiments, if we may retain the term while enlarging its connotation. Thus, to quote a typical case, one correspondent writes :

IV.—When a lad of about nineteen, I was returning through a secluded lane, from a day's trout fishing, when it suddenly *flashed* upon my mind that I should sprain my ankle badly before reaching home. The next day was, I think, Easter Sunday, and I pictured myself resting my sprained limb on a chair on the lawn whilst the rest of the family were at church. The next stile I reached (about half-a-mile further on), I climbed with *the greatest care*, but fell on the other side, with a badly-sprained ankle !

The account in this case is not less than fifteen years old, and is here, apparently, put in writing for the first time. It is clearly easier to suppose a slowly-maturing memory illusion, leading to the transposition of a dream or other impression occurring after the accident, than to invoke the *deus ex machina* of an instantaneous hallucination at the time of the accident.

There are a few narratives in which the fallacious character of the "memory" is strongly suggested. Thus a lady writes us that, about a fortnight previously, on a Tuesday night, she had a vivid dream of reading some painful news in a letter, which impressed her and made her miserable all the next day. On the following Saturday her dream was fulfilled; she was told the painful news in the very words of her dream. On the Monday she knocked her foot against an iron bedstead, which had figured in her dream, and only then remembered her dream and its fulfilment. In another case,[1] a lady tells us that she was being driven to her sister's house at Roehampton. The horse was restive, and the groom twice got down to see if anything was wrong, and returned to the carriage. When he got down the third time the lady remembered she had had a vision the previous night of the carriage being overturned on that very road, and got out of the carriage to walk; a few minutes later the carriage was upset. These two cases probably approach more nearly to the type of Professor Royce's

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 313.

pseudo-presentiments than any others in our collection.[1]

It remains now to print a few samples of the best attested narratives, that the reader may be in a position to judge how far the various sources of error briefly referred to above can account for the coincidences reported.

To begin with, we have several cases reported at first-hand of dreams in which "an outsider" was correctly indicated as the winner of a race. But, as Mrs. Sidgwick points out,[2] dreams of this kind probably occur pretty frequently to persons interested in racing matters, and the scope for coincidence is therefore very large. Again, Professor Hulin, of the University of Ghent, cites[3] several cases in which persons correctly predicted beforehand the numbers which they would draw in a military conscription. But here again, dreams on a subject of this kind are probably too numerous for an occasional coincidence to be at all noteworthy. The following case, however, which is concerned with an analogous subject, is more remarkable :

V.—From Miss K. D. Ellis, Cranborne Vicarage, Windsor.

"August 21, 1884.

"I have lately been very anxious about the success of a young friend who had been examined for a Sandhurst cadetship. The list of successful candidates was due on the 15th

[1] Another interesting case of a fulfilled dream which probably depends, as Mrs. Sidgwick points out, on a memory illusion, is given at length in *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 316, 317.

[2] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 342.

[3] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 545.

August. About ten days before that date I dreamed that I saw the list, and that a boy of the same name as my friend (Johnson) was two places from the bottom. I mentioned this to my sisters in the morning. About three days after I dreamed exactly the same thing, with the addition that I noticed that the initials of the *Christian names* were *not* those of my friend. I did not see clearly what they were, but only that they were wrong. I mentioned this second dream to my family, saying that I now believed our friend would pass, although it was considered very unlikely that he should do so. When the Sandhurst list appeared in the *Times* of August 15th we looked first at the bottom of the list, and there, second from the end, was the name of Johnson, but it was that of a stranger, as I had dreamed. Our friend (of the same name, but other initials) was 71st on the same list.

"KATHARINE DIANA ELLIS."

A newspaper extract was sent with the narrative, showing the list of successful candidates for cadetships. The name of Hugh W. B. Johnson is 71st, and that of Rupert M. R. Johnson 98th, the number on the list being 100.

In answer to the question, Was this dream marked by exceptional vividness, or was it unusual in any way? Miss Ellis states that it was unusually vivid, and repeated twice. She also informs us that she has had other seemingly veridical dreams.[1]

There are several cases of dreams of accidents in mines and quarries. But these, again, are open to a similar objection; that accidents probably enter frequently into the dreams of persons who have to do with mines.

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 342–3. The percipient's two sisters have written to corroborate this account. Both believe that they heard the account of the two dreams before the publication of the list.

A well attested case, already referred to, of the dream of a hunting accident, which was fulfilled four days later, will be found in *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 489.

Of dreams of death, the following is one of the most remarkable :

VI.—From Mr. James Cox, Admiralty House, Queenstown, Ireland (Secretary Ret. to the Admiral Commanding in Ireland).

" December 18, 1883.

" On Sunday, 11th September, 1881, while proceeding in H. M. S. *Phœnix*, from Newfoundland to Halifax, Nova-Scotia, I dreamt that one of my brother officers was lying dead in a house at Portsmouth. The dream was so vivid that it quite disturbed my mind the following morning, and it was with difficulty that I could shake off the uncomfortable feeling. At breakfast I sat opposite the officer, and looking round the table, I remarked : ' I dreamt last night that I saw one of you fellows lying dead, but I won't say which, as I don't want to spoil your appetite.' In the course of the afternoon, as we were steaming into Halifax harbour, *the* officer was sitting at the stove in the wardroom joining in an animated conversation about the speed of the ship, &c. A few minutes after we anchored, I went on shore, and returned again on board at 10 P.M., and as I was about to go below to my cabin, the officer of the watch motioned me to be silent, and approaching me, said, ' Poor S. is dead ; he has just died suddenly ' ; and as I passed across the mess-room I beheld the officer of my dream lying dead in his cabin.

" I am certain that two or three officers who were with me in that ship will remember the circumstances."

In answer to inquiries, Mr Cox adds :

" I never before or since had any similar vivid dream of death. The case of the chief engineer of the *Phœnix* was so

vivid and distressed me so much that I am not likely ever to forget it."

Mr. M. Hawkins, one of Mr. Cox's brother officers, writes from H. M. S. *Superb* in January, 1884, to Mr. Cox :

"My dear Cox,—I think I can fully corroborate the story that you ask me about, as it made a great impression on my mind at the time, which has never left it. In fact, I have frequently spoken of it to persons who have been speaking of similar affairs, and now I will tell it as nearly as I can. On the morning of the 12th September, 1881, you told me that you had dreamed the night before that you saw Mr. Sharp lying dead in the back room of a printer's shop in Commercial Road, Landport (as far as I recollect it was Trivers'), whither you had been called by some one for the purpose. You said that he had fallen down dead very suddenly, and that when you told the captain of the circumstances, he requested you to make all necessary arrangements with regard to the funeral, &c. You then, in your dream, found yourself in an undertaker's shop, with some one else, engaged in superintending the funeral matters and selecting things, &c.; and then, as far as I recollect, your dream ended." [1]

But the most striking and well attested dreams in the S. P. R. collection relate to quite trivial incidents. Such incidents of course offer greater scope for coincidence than a dream, such as that last cited, which relates to a unique event. It is essential, therefore, in such cases, that the record should be made before the details have faded from the memory. On the other hand the triviality of the incident makes it perhaps less probable that the

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 330–1.

dream experience is the result of a pseudo-presentiment. The following case, from friends of my own, is a good example of the class :

VII.—From the Rev. Walter Smith :

"HARPENDEN, ST. ALBAN'S, March 7, 1883.

"I write to tell you of a thing that has just happened, and which may interest you. It is at least a curious coincidence. I think it was about a month ago that my wife woke up in a fright and told me that she had been dreaming that she was in her old room at the rectory, and that the clothes-basket was mysteriously on fire. I perfectly remember the circumstances of the dream as she told them to me, and we laughed at it, as the thing seemed so wildly improbable.

"However, this morning, not long after the nursery fire was lighted, the baby's clothes-basket was found in flames, and was burnt to cinders, the floor and walls of the room being also a good deal burnt. The basket was so far away from the fire, and it was so obvious that the fire had proceeded from it, that the origin of the fire was at first almost as mysterious as in the dream, and the thought of spontaneous combustion passed through my mind. I have little doubt now that it really arose through some fragments of burning paper being blown out from the grate and against the basket.

"It is a curious case of a dream partially prophetic. You may easily set it down to mere coincidence, but if many cases like it were multiplied, one would ask whether it is possible that dreams can grow out of a reminiscence of the future as well as of the past. It was a commonplace dream enough, and just such a one as in future times might grow out of the events of this morning, and the strong shock which they gave her nerves ; but it was a curious dream to *arise* quite spontaneously.

"WALTER SMITH."

Mrs. Smith's account of the dream is as follows :

"About the end of January this year I had a very vivid dream. I thought that I was in my room in my old home. I saw all the furniture most vividly just as it used to be. Suddenly and mysteriously I saw flames burst up from the clothes-basket, which was standing, as usual, in a corner quite away from the fireplace. I thought that two or three other people were in the room, and that they tried to put out the flames, but I was so frightened that I woke up before they had done so. I think that I woke my husband in my fright, but I cannot be sure whether I told him the dream then or in the morning. I remember we laughed at the improbability of the thing, and of course thought no more of it." [1]

This case will serve to illustrate one of the fundamental defects of the evidence for prevision. If this dream had occurred to Mrs. Smith at the time of the accident we should, no doubt, have ranked it as a fairly good instance of a telepathic dream. To the casual reader, no doubt, occurring as it did some six weeks before the event, it may seem almost equally valuable as evidence for prophetic intimations. But if placed in the balance its weight as evidence will be found to be only a small fraction of the simultaneous dream. For in circumstantial evidence of this kind each additional coincidence is not merely added to the sum of the other coincidences, but multiplies them. The value of the whole case is represented, not as $a + b + c + x$, but as $a \times b \times c \times x$, where x represents the time-coincidence. And x, it is clear, has in the one case a far greater value than it has in the other.

In dealing with experiences such as waking hal-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., pp. 344–5.

lucinations, which are themselves unusual and impressive, this consideration is of less importance, and the value of x is less as compared with the other factors. But in experiences so common and unimpressive as are most dreams, the value of the time-coincidence is relatively greater; and we have seen that even with the help of the time-coincidence telepathic dreams form but a subordinate part of the evidence.

In the next case the coincidence appears to have been more exact, but the record, it will be seen, was made some months after the event.

VIII.—From Mrs. Mackenzie, Lamington House, Tain, Ross-shire.

"July 14, 1884.

"One morning last spring, when at breakfast, I suddenly remembered a dream I had had the night before, and told it to my house party, who numbered ten individuals. I should say that it was rather a joke against me that I believed in dreams, and that very often my dreams came true; so when I mentioned having had a curious dream, I was greeted with the usual joking remarks. 'Well,' said I, 'this is what I dreamt. I thought there were several people in our drawing-room, among others Mr. J., and I left the room for a few minutes to see if supper was ready, and when I came back to the drawing-room I found the carpet, which was a new one, all covered with black spots. I was very angry, and when Mr. J. said it was ink stains, I retorted, "Don't say so, I know it has been burnt, and I counted five patches."' So ends the dream. Well, we all went to church, it being Sunday, and on our return Mr. J. came with us to luncheon, a thing he had never done before, and some others joined our party. I went into the dining-room to see if things were ready, and then going back into the drawing-room I noticed a

spot near the door and asked who had been in with dirty feet; being a new carpet I was particular. Mr. J., as in my dream, said it was surely ink, and then pointed out some more spots, when I called out, 'Oh! my dream! my new carpet! burnt!' As we afterwards discovered, the housemaid had allowed the fire to go out, and had carried in live coals from another room in a shovel, which she had tilted against the door and spilt the coals on the carpet, burning *five* holes. Of *course* next Sunday I had several offers from my party to remain at home and watch the other carpets, but I don't think that housemaid will burn any more carpets.

"J. W. MACKENZIE."

Miss Mackenzie writes:

"I certify the above to be correct.—

"Gertrude Agnes Mackenzie."

Miss Mackenzie, her mother states, was present when the dream was told, and also when the dénouement occurred.

In the cases which follow, the interval between event and record was still longer.

IX.—From Miss L. O.:

"August 31, 1884.

"About a year ago, as nearly as I can remember, I had a remarkably vivid dream—that I went to Richmond Park (from London) with my sisters, and that upon a seat I found a brooch, which I gave to the maid. I mentioned this dream to the maid as she was doing my hair next morning, also to one of my sisters. I did not at the time of the dream know that we were going to Richmond on the following afternoon.

"However, we did so, and as I was walking towards a bench with one of my sisters, we saw upon it a large common black brooch. My sister claimed it, as being the elder, but in a few days she gave it to me, and I gave it to the maid.

"I may add that I dream a great deal, and sometimes prophetically. For instance I dreamed one night last week that I received a letter from one of my cousins. In the morning I told my sister, who went down stairs and found on the table this particular letter, which I had no especial reason for expecting on that morning."

From Miss Nora O.:

"This is to certify that I remember that my sister Louisa told me on the morning after the dream, and before its fulfilment, she dreamed that she had found a brooch in Richmond Park."

The next case was communicated by Miss B. and written down by me from her dictation in the summer of 1884:

X.—"Some time in 1868, when in Poonah, I dreamed that I was in the Government Gardens, which are ordinarily very deserted, and found them crowded with tables laid out near the band-stand, at which children were seated at tea. I was serving at one of these tables, when I heard a voice behind me saying, 'May I be allowed to help you, Miss B.?' I turned round and saw a perfect stranger, an officer, in a uniform which was also strange to me. In my dream I accepted his help, and later on was escorted by him through the grounds, which then appeared to be brilliantly lighted and very crowded, in search of my father and mother. . . . I told my dream in the morning, and also described the man and his uniform to my father and mother, and also to a cousin, who happened to be staying with us. About a month after this, on the eve of the Abyssinian campaign, the cavalry regiment then quartered in Poonah was replaced by a Madras regiment, and riding out with my cousin a few days after the change we met an officer, in a uniform which I recognised, even at a distance, as that of my dream, and pointed him out to my cousin on his nearing us. I also recognised his face as that of the officer of

my dream, and in the evening of the same day pointed him out to my father near the *Ghowpoorie* band-stand. Perhaps as much as three weeks after this a fête was given in the Government Gardens, when tables were laid for a tea to be given to the soldiers' children, and I was requested by a friend to help her at one of the tables. Whilst so engaged, I heard a voice behind me saying, 'Will you allow me to help you, Miss B.?' and on turning round I recognised the man whom I had seen in my dream. I was afterwards obliged to accept his escort in searching for my father and mother through the gardens, brilliantly lighted by fireworks . . . I have absolutely no interest in the hero of my dream, though we knew him tolerably well afterwards. The acquaintance has not continued."

This is attested by Miss B's mother.

On the occasion of a second visit to Miss B., on June 13, 1888, she explained to me that she had never before heard of festivities in the Government Gardens, and had no idea of the approach of the fête. She searched for her diary at my instigation and found it, locked. It was opened with a key of my own and the following passage discovered.

Extract from Miss B.'s diary, copied by me :

"September 25, [1868 apparently] Children's fête at the Government Gardens. I assisted at Mrs. K's tea-table. I had a curious dream some time back about a gentleman I did not know. I met him at the fête. He is . . ."

In the last case, it will be noted, an entry in the diary attests the occurrence of the dream; but for the details we have to rely entirely upon the narrator's memory. The incident, it will be observed, is recorded sixteen years afterwards. Miss B., it

should be added, has had several other prophetic and coincident dreams of the same general character relating to trivial incidents.[1]

Of one of the cases above quoted Mrs. Sidgwick writes[2]:

"I told the story to a lady a little while ago, who remarked, 'But then the question is, of what use was it?' meaning that if it was of no use it cannot have been a premonition. Now, this consideration seems to me irrelevant. I do not deny that the coincidence I have just related may have been purely accidental, with nothing supernormal about it at all, but the fact that it was of no use does not make it more probable that it was so. For we have no sufficient reason to suppose that premonitions, if they exist, are a species of petty private miracles, intended to help us in conducting our affairs—temporal or spiritual. We must regard them as peculiar manifestations of unknown or imperfectly known laws."

And, indeed, two curious characteristics of our evidence, as represented by recent and well attested first-hand narratives, may be noted here. On the one hand the cases which point to a supernormal prevision, as distinguished from an extraordinary but rational prescience, of the future, are almost without exception useless—unless, indeed, the racing dreams which give the "correct tip" may be held to constitute an exception. On the other hand, the type of prophecy which most appeals to the imagination, the classical prophecy which consists in the foreshadowing of great events, is almost en-

[1] A few other well attested dreams of this type will be found in *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., pp. 487–493.

[2] *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 344.

tirely unrepresented. There are, indeed, traditional and remote cases of the kind. There are, for instance, the celebrated predictions of La Harpe shortly before the French Revolution of the fate to come on many distinguished personages. There is Mr. Williams's dream of the assassination of Mr. Percival in the lobby of the House of Commons in 1812. There are a good many traditional family prophecies. Amongst more recent cases we have a second- or third-hand account of a dream—the dreamer being a prominent member of the Society of Friends at Bristol—foreshadowing the Bristol riots of 1831. We have a first-hand uncorroborated account, already referred to, of a vision of the French Revolution of 1848; and there is a case—this time resting on two independent memories—in which a soldier in the American Civil War is said to have foretold his own death and some of the movements of the troops. But the incident happened in 1863, and the accounts are dated 1893.[1]

Now it may fairly be held that the absence of cases of these two types is in itself a strong proof of the good faith and general accuracy of our informants. This is not to say that the imagination has had no part in shaping even the best attested and most recent narratives. But at any rate its activity—an activity for the most part wholly subconscious—appears to have been restrained within comparatively narrow limits. Most of the recent

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., p. 582.

cases have probably a substantial basis in fact. More than this it would not be safe to assert. For though we are not in a position to say of any single narrative that the details have been exaggerated, we have evidence that, taken as a whole, such is the case. It will be found that, broadly speaking, —for the material is too scanty to support a very exact comparison, and the effect of time is liable to be obscured by individual differences of mental habit—the greater the interval between impression and record, the more striking and detailed is the coincidence. I have already referred to the narratives for which we have contemporary, or practically contemporary, evidence. The coincidences attested in these cases are, as shown above, by no means of a convincing character. But as we go further back the correspondences between dream and event tend to grow ever more exact and more impressive. There is a case in our collection [1] in which a gentleman relates how he dreamt one morning, and told his wife before breakfast, the whole series of the coming day's events. The account is so detailed that it occupies three entire pages of small print. But the incident occurred "about twenty years" before the narrative was written.

Taken at its face value, the narrative last referred to would, of itself, seem sufficient to constitute proof of the possibility of prevision. But if it is admitted that all evidence in such matters which depends at

[1] Quoted in *Proc. S. P. R.*, v., p. 348.

all on mere memory is subject to a large and at present indefinable discount, it seems to me that the instances of what purport to be prevision so far collected fall short of redeeming their pledge. Until we meet with records of prophetic visions which are at least on the same evidential level as the narratives quoted in Chapter VIII., and as much more numerous and more impressive than those narratives, as the faculty which they purport to demonstrate is more remote than telepathy from mundane analogies, we can but regard these dream-stories which we have been considering as the sports of chance or the distorted mirage of our own hopes and fears. Questioning Leuconöe must still question in vain. It does not yet appear that there are Babylonish numbers or wizard's spells, vision by day or dream by night, which can reveal to her or us the hidden things of fate.

CHAPTER XII.

SECONDARY CONSCIOUSNESS.

OF late years attention has been strongly directed to certain mental states in which actions, such as ordinarily imply the accompaniment of will and intelligence, are performed without leaving any trace on the normal consciousness. Such unconscious or sub-conscious cerebral activities play a large part in Psychical Research. Some of the most striking and characteristic manifestations of what we have called telepathy testify to these subterranean activities. The phenomena of clairvoyance and spirit impersonation are connected with mental states divided by a more or less definite line from the normal waking life. The study of hypnotism, indeed, is little else than the investigation of the workings of a secondary state of consciousness. It is important, then, for the right appreciation of our evidence in general, and indispensable as regards the matters to be considered in the succeeding chapter, to have some knowledge of the facts roughly brought together under the heading of Secondary Consciousness.

So far, observers have for the most part concentrated their attention on one set of the phenomena

to be explained, and the explanations put forward have been proportionately one-sided and inadequate. Thus to some the facts appear to be exclusively the result of the automatic functioning of brain-centres below the level of consciousness. But if the secondary states of Félida X. and Mme. B. are unconscious, we have no justification for ascribing consciousness to any human activities except our own. Others see in the phenomena only indications of a morbid dissociation of consciousness. This view has more to say for itself than the first; but in accepting it we should have to recognise a pathologic element not merely in the hypnotic trance, but in the nightly dreams of ordinary life.[1] As regards the psychical theories, the interpretation placed upon some of the phenomena by the spiritualists will be most conveniently discussed in the next chapter. There remains, as the only generalisation which is professedly founded on a comprehensive survey of all the facts at issue, the hypothesis put forward by Mr. Myers in his papers on the *Subliminal Consciousness*, and supported to some extent by Dr. Max Dessoir. The following passage[2] contains a concise statement of the theory as held by Dr. Dessoir:

"In the course of ordinary life certain actions occur which

[1] As Professor Janet indeed is willing to do. See *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, p. 137. "Un individu parfaitement sain . . . mais aucun homme n'est aussi parfait: mille circonstances, l'état de passion, *l'état de sommeil*, l'ivresse ou la maladie diminuent ou détruisent," etc.

[2] Quoted by Mr. Myers in a review of *Das Doppel Ich*, *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., p. 207.

pre-suppose for their origination all the faculties of the human spirit, but which nevertheless work themselves out without the knowledge of the agent. These actions we term automatic. Among them are certain automatic movements, as the act of dressing one's self, or of retracing a well-known path; and some other automatic performances, such as counting one's steps, or adding up columns of figures. These latter acts plainly indicate the existence of a separate train of *memory* employed upon them. And moreover, although they take place without the agent's *knowledge*, they cannot take place without his *consciousness;* they cannot be truly *unconscious* acts. They must in some fashion belong to a *sub*-consciousness which, in its relation to the far more potent *upper* consciousness, may best be understood if we consider it as a *secondary* consciousness. And if we regard Consciousness and Memory as the essential constituents of an Ego, we may boldly say that every man conceals within himself the germs of a second personality."

Mr. Myers's doctrine is of wider scope.

"I suggest, then, that the stream of consciousness in which we habitually live is not the only consciousness in connection with our organism. I accord no primacy to my ordinary waking self except that, among many potential selves, this one has shown itself the fittest to meet the needs of common life." There is in each of us an abiding psychical entity far more extensive than he knows,—an individuality which can never express itself completely through any corporeal manifestation. All this unexpressed psychical action is conscious, all is included in an actual or potential memory below the threshold of habitual consciousness. This subliminal consciousness may embrace a far wider range both of physiological and of psychical activity than is open to the supraliminal consciousness. The spectrum of consciousness in the subliminal self stretches indefinitely in either direction, extending on the one side to physiological processes which have long dropped out of human

knowledge, on the other to certain supernormal faculties (telepathy, clairvoyance, prevision), of which only stray hints have reached us in our present stage of evolution. Conformably with this view, a stream of consciousness flows on within us, at a level beneath the threshold of ordinary waking life ; sleep is no longer to be conceived as the mere abeyance of waking activities, but as a phase of personality with characteristics definitely its own ; crystal vision, the hypnotic trance and allied states, open a door into this hidden life ; and the improvisations of genius are manifestations of subliminal activity intruding upon the primary consciousness."[1]

It need hardly be said that this theory, being purely psychological, is not necessarily opposed to, or even inconsistent with, the physical theories by which various observers have essayed to explain the facts ; just as the doctrine, of which indeed it forms one aspect, that there is a soul in man transcending his material organism, is not held to be incompatible with the discoveries of physiology that the activities of that organism are, in general, conditioned by changes in the nerve-centres originated by external stimuli. The theory, however, of a subliminal consciousness is founded not solely on transcendental considerations, but, like the various physiological theories, on a study of patent and admitted facts, and is so far just as amenable as they to criticism on physiological grounds.

These facts may be roughly divided into two classes, *spontaneous* and *induced ;* the former being subdivided into *normal* and *pathologic.* This classification is indeed more or less arbitrary, since

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vii., p. 301, etc.

it is impossible, on the one hand, to distinguish precisely between phenomena which are spontaneous and those which are induced, and on the other, to draw a definite line between the normal and the pathologic ; and it may be very far from expressing the real relation between the facts. In our present ignorance we are scarcely justified in assuming that any one physiological explanation is sufficient to cover the whole of the heterogeneous phenomena here grouped together. But it will serve for practical convenience, especially if we group the facts in the following order,—normal, induced, pathologic,—and thus begin by studying the phenomena which appear in ordinary life, and so proceed by progressive stages until we reach those admittedly morbid mutilations of consciousness which are most remote from common experience.

Secondary Consciousness in the Normal State.

The first indications of the splitting up of the stream of consciousness are to be found, on the one hand, in those activities for which Dr. Carpenter proposed the term "unconscious cerebration," and on the other in dreams.

Our waking consciousness at any given moment consists in a heterogeneous mass of impressions of every degree of intensity. Take, for instance, the case of a man walking about and talking with a friend in some crowded place. His consciousness will include many distinct groups of ideas ; he will

be "thinking" primarily of the particular aspect of the subject under discussion, but there will enter as elements into his consciousness ideas of its other aspects and of cognate subjects. He will also be conscious of his interlocutor's appearance, voice, etc.; he will be conscious, more dimly, of the appearance of his surroundings and of the other persons near him; there will probably be present to him also some twilight knowledge of scraps of conversation overheard; and, lastly, there will be an obscure but adequate conception of his own movements in walking and speaking, and of his tactile, muscular, and organic sensations generally.

In the language of physiology, consciousness reflects the simultaneous, co-ordinate activities of an immense number of nerve-centres, but reflects them very imperfectly, much as—to employ Ribot's illustration—a map represents the main features of a country-side.

But when, as in sleep, the pressure on the limits of consciousness is relieved by the inactivity of some of the higher cerebral centres, the "critical point" of consciousness is lowered, various new elements rise above the threshold, and elements hitherto subordinate acquire greater prominence. Of the throng of images present to the mind during sleep, the most part are so evanescent as to fade from the memory shortly after waking. The common run of dreams, no doubt, are comparable in intensity to the feebler reverberations which accompany the main movement of our waking thoughts,

and assume temporary importance only because they do not come into competition with more vivid impressions. Thus sensations of organic processes are frequently predominant during sleep, just as the clank and clash of shunting trains, the gross machinery which underlies our social life, forms an unregarded element in the complex mass of sound which fills our ears in the daylight hours, but attains to solitary distinctness in the quiet of the night. Ordinarily, then, there are no indications in our dream-life of a continuous separate stream of consciousness. If we forget our dreams in the day we are not entitled to assume that they are treasured up in a hidden memory elsewhere ; the forgetfulness, we may conjecture, is due partly to the feebleness of the original impression, partly to its isolation. It would seem, indeed, that the cerebral register is appropriated to the more firmly welded impressions of our daylight hours, and that a dream not recalled at once and so brought into association with our waking ideas has little chance of permanent record there.

Now it frequently happens that dreams do not merely reflect the sensations of the moment, but include also subordinate elements of a recently past state of consciousness, or even more remote images, which rise into prominence after their original appearance has been forgotten. Thus, to quote a few familiar illustrations, forgotten incidents of our youth frequently recur in dreams, and there are many cases on record of dreams in which the where-

abouts of a missing article has been seen, indicating the resurgence of an impression which at the time did not penetrate into full consciousness. Sometimes the forgotten impression is revived not in dreams but in some analogous state. Lapsed memories frequently come to the surface in the delirium of fever. Miss X.'s crystal visions will bring before her pictures of scenes which had demonstrably passed before her eyes and been forgotten. In one oft-quoted instance the crystal pictured to her the obituary notice of a friend, which had appeared in the *Times* the day before, where her eyes had casually encountered it without realising its import. Planchette-writing, as Dr. Carpenter showed, frequently refers to incidents, or quotes lines of poetry, which had passed from the memory of the operator.

Sometimes the dream-activity is of a more complex kind. Such no doubt, was the dream in which Coleridge composed *Kubla Khan*,—the long poem of which only a melodious fragment remains to us. Professor Lamberton, of the University of Pennsylvania, records that after having vainly wrestled for some days with a geometrical problem, one morning immediately on waking he saw the solution diagrammatically given on the wall in front of his eyes.[1] Dr. Hilprecht, Professor of Assyrian in the same University, in the winter of 1882–3 received in a dream an explanation, then novel, but now gen-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xii., p. 11. See the parallel cases quoted in Carpenter's *Mental Physiology*, pp. 536–7.

erally accepted, of the meaning of the name *Nebuchadnezzar*. In March, 1893, he had an even more remarkable dream. He had been puzzling over two fragments of agate from the temple of Bel, at Nippur, the inscriptions on which he was unable to decipher. On going to sleep he dreamt that a tall, thin priest led him to the treasure chamber of the temple on its south-east side, into a room where stood a large wooden chest, while scraps of agate and *lapis lazuli* littered the floor. The priest then addressed him as follows:

"The two fragments which you have published separately upon pages 22 and 26, belong together, are not finger rings, and their history is as follows: King Kurigalzu (ca. 1300 B.C.) once sent to the temple of Bel, among other articles of agate and *lapis lazuli*, an inscribed votive cylinder of agate. Then we priests suddenly received the command to make for the statue of the god Ninib a pair of earrings of agate. We were in great dismay, since there was no agate as raw material at hand. In order to execute the command there was nothing for us to do but cut the votive cylinder into three parts, thus making three rings, each of which contained a portion of the original inscription. The first two rings served as earrings for the statue of the god; the two fragments which have given you so much trouble are portions of them. If you will put the two together you will have confirmation of my words. But the third ring you have not yet found in the course of your excavations, and you never will find it."

On the following morning Dr. Hilprecht put the two fragments together, and deciphered the inscription—"To the God Ninib, son of Bel, his lord, has Kurigalzu, Pontifex of Bel, presented this." Later, he found that two years previously he had been

told of the position of the treasure chamber, and of the discovery of a room with fragments of a wooden chest, and *lapis lazuli*, etc., littering the floor.[1]

In all these three cases we have evidence of a more or less complicated process of ratiocination having taken place, the results of which alone persisted into the waking consciousness. Analogous results are sometimes obtained through planchette. A striking case is quoted in the next chapter, in which the narrator held a long conversation with himself through planchette, and through planchette propounded anagrams and conundrums, which his conscious self had some difficulty in solving. A lady of my acquaintance was in the habit, in spontaneous somnambulism, of writing letters, and performing other acts indicating intelligence.

So far these experiences would seem to indicate that there is a cerebral storehouse in which certain impressions, which have lapsed from, or possibly failed to penetrate to, full consciousness, may be treasured up ; but there is nothing to justify the assumption of a " secondary consciousness "—that is, a continuous psychical memory. The recovery of lost memories in dreams and allied states can be adequately explained on the assumption of a physical stimulus of the nerve tracts in which the memory is stored,—a mere cerebral reverberation. Even the fairly complex processes indicated in the cases last quoted may be conceived as the results of a mechanical functioning of the brain, of which the

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, xii., p. 15.

final stages alone were irradiated by consciousness. At any rate, in all these cases Dr. Carpenter's term "unconscious cerebration" does not seem conspicuously inapplicable. The same may be said of the various manifestations of our waking life, which Mr. Myers has brought together under the heading "The Mechanism of Genius,"—such as the inspiration of oratory and poetry, the improvisations of musical composers, and the wonderful powers of calculation recorded to have been possessed by certain persons, mostly young boys.

Again, in view of the extreme complexity of a state of consciousness at any given moment, and the innumerable and heterogeneous elements which it includes, of the lightning-like elusiveness of many of the processes of thought, and the rapidity with which they fade from the memory, it seems to me, that in considering such results as those given in Professor Hilprecht's dream, or the problems worked out by the calculating boys, or the inspired work of a poet, we have no justification for saying that the processes by which those results were obtained were represented in a secondary consciousness, merely because the memory of them has not persisted in waking life. It may be suggested that one of two other interpretations,—or possibly a combination of these two—would be more in accordance with known analogies; namely, that the processes were conscious but evanescent, or that they were automatic and unconscious.

But indeed the question whether or not we may

postulate in such instances any psychical concomitant of the cerebral processes seems to be a question of scant significance in this inquiry. We know little of the limits of consciousness, and nothing whatever of its physical equivalents, or whether, indeed, it enters at all into the chain of physical causation. It is a waste of words, then, to ask whether or not consciousness is present in such cases, when, apart from the fact that the very conditions of the problem preclude a definite answer, there is no evidence that its presence or absence would affect the result. But it is of real importance to note that these examples drawn from normal life are apparently disconnected and sporadic. We can find nothing here to justify the assumption of a separate consciousness, or a systematised cerebral activity working independently of the normal mechanism, such as alone could merit the title of a second personality. At most, these isolated manifestations could be held to indicate that a few nebulous fragments are occasionally thrown off from the central cosmos, not that they ever coalesce into a stable system apart. Except in the distinctly pathologic cases, to which we shall revert presently, it is only in various artificially induced trances that we can find a memory and intelligence so stable and systematised as to deserve the name of a secondary consciousness, and even in such cases the secondary "personality" only attains its full development gradually, and in exceptional cases, and bears many of the marks of a manufactured article.

Induced Secondary Consciousness.

It is a well known fact that many hypnotic subjects retain in waking life no recollection of what they have done and suffered in the hypnotic trance ; but that when again hypnotised they can recall all that passed in the previous trance, and will moreover, almost invariably, be cognisant of their waking life as well. To put it briefly, the hypnotic memory in such cases includes the normal memory, as the larger of two concentric circles includes the smaller. The rule is indeed by no means a universal one, and in many cases this division between the normal and the hypnotic memory appears to be a matter of slow growth. In the early stages of hypnotism it frequently happens that, whilst the power of voluntary motion may be abolished by suggestion, consciousness will remain apparently unimpaired ; and even in a somewhat later stage, when the hypnotic becomes liable to hallucinations, a dream-like memory will in some cases persist into the waking state. But with each succeeding trance, the trance-consciousness differentiates itself more and more, until the obliviousness in the normal state of all that has happened in the trance may become complete. Now the trance-consciousness thus established is in most persons of a very rudimentary kind. It resembles closely the dream-consciousness ; and for the most part has little spontaneity. The subject will, indeed, answer direct questions and respond to suggestions, even to the extent of acting out, with some originality, any

part, from a windmill to the Queen of Sheba, which may be assigned to him. But he will rarely vary his performance, except at the direct suggestion of the hypnotist ; or initiate any thought or action of his own accord. The trance, in fact, if left undisturbed tends to pass over into ordinary sleep. The state may indeed differ as widely from ordinary sleep as from normal life. In the hypnotic trance the subject frequently obtains a control over his own muscular, respiratory and vascular system, and his bodily functions generally, which is denied to his waking hours. The establishment of complete anæsthesia and analgesia, local or general, is a commonplace of hypnotism. So, too, are the effects of suggestion in this state in checking morbid processes or re-establishing healthful activities. In some extreme hypnotic cases, as in some hysterical subjects, we have it on the evidence of various French observers that suggestion will even produce artificial sores, mimic stigmata, and other profound pathological modifications of the organism. But all these processes, it need hardly be said, are so far as we know unaccompanied by consciousness of even the most rudimentary kind. The psychical modifications which may be observed in this state are, however, hardly less interesting, such as hyperamnesia, increased power of mimicry and impersonation, an extraordinary faculty of visualisation and so on. But these enlargements of psychical activity appear to co-exist only with the original dream-like state of consciousness. They tend to disappear as

the hypnotic is trained to exercise his reasoning faculties in the trance. How far this process of education may be carried is best seen in the classical example of Madame B.[1]

Madame B., commonly known as Léonie, is a peasant woman, who has been a natural somnambulist from her childhood. From the time when she was sixteen years old—she is now over fifty,—she has been frequently hypnotised by all sorts of persons. For the last few years, however, she has been under the constant observation of M. Pierre Janet, Professor of Philosophy at Havre. In her normal state Léonie is an ordinary peasant woman, serious, a trifle heavy, placid and retiring. In this state she is also extremely gentle and docile. When hypnotised, she wakes up to another existence ; she now calls herself Léontine ; her whole aspect changes ; she becomes extremely bright and lively, and not seldom recalcitrant to suggestions ; she also develops considerable powers of humour and sarcasm. She discusses her visitors freely, and makes fun behind their backs of their little foibles and vanities. Of her waking self she says, " This good woman is not me,—she is much too stupid." When shown a photograph of her ordinary self in outdoor costume she has been heard to exclaim, " Why has that woman taken my bonnet ? " Léonie the first is a Roman Catholic ; Léonie the second is a confirmed Protestant—she has adopted the religious views of her first hypnotiser. In a word, Léonie the first is an ordinary French peasant ; Léonie the second is a woman of the world,

[1] Madame B., indeed, is not quite a normal subject, and it may be argued that it is her hysterical diathesis which has rendered it possible to educate her secondary consciousness to the point which it has now reached. But the case is quoted here because it is difficult to find another instance where the effects of repeated and prolonged hypnotisation on the subject's mental state have been reported by competent observers. In any case, if we grant Madame B.'s abnormality, the fact that her secondary consciousness when developed tends to revert to the same type as the primary, is an argument *a fortiori* for the views advanced in the text.

able to hold her own in polite society, and with a circle of acquaintances and a varied experience of which Léonie the first has no knowledge whatever.

But there is a third state of this woman, with a third memory, a memory which includes the other two, but is not shared by them. In this third state Madame B.—Léonie the third—is lethargic and passive, the face pale and still, the limbs motionless; she speaks in a very low voice, and only when directly addressed. If in the third state she is told to perform some trivial act, she will carry it out *in the second state*, whilst laughing and talking with those around her; and in this second state she does not know that she is doing anything else but laughing and talking. Thus Léonie the third has been told to take up an album and place it on a particular spot. She is then brought back to the state of lucid somnambulism, as it is called, and, as Léonie the second, she talks with those around her. Whilst so engaged, she moves the album as enjoined. But when asked what she has just been doing, she looks surprised and says "Nothing." Brought back into the lethargic state Léonie the third gives a full account of the moving of the album, and adds, "*The other one* was talking whilst I got up from my seat; she is so stupid that she knows nothing about it." Léonie the third has, indeed, a pretty poor opinion of both her predecessors; of Léonie the first, her waking self, she says, "She is a good woman, though stupid; but she isn't me." Of Léonie the second, her somnambulic self, she asks, "How can you think me like that silly woman? I have nothing to do with her."[1]

It will be seen from this account that the characteristics which distinguish Léonie II. from Léonie I. are not due to any hidden stream of consciousness tapped by the trance; they are just the characteristics which the difference of external circumstances and the suggestions of the experimenter are sufficient to account for. It seems clear that here the

[1] *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, pp. 128 *et seq.*

hypnotist has created the consciousness which his processes reveal.

There seems to be no limit, indeed, to the number of artificial states of consciousness which the hypnotist may create. How transitory and unreal such "selves" are, however, is well seen in some experiments of Edmund Gurney's. He has shown that in many hypnotic subjects two distinct stages can be demonstrated in the hypnotic trance, each with a memory peculiar to itself and mutually exclusive. In some subjects, indeed, he succeeded in evoking three such stages, the memory in each being distinct and exclusive, so that the subject in state A would carry on an animated conversation on any imaginary incident suggested to him by Mr. Gurney; when thrown into state B he would have completely forgotten the subject of his talk in state A, but would talk on a fresh subject similarly suggested, which would in turn be forgotten on his being placed in state C. He could be led backwards and forwards through these three states several times in the course of an evening, and would converse in each state freely on the ideas peculiar to that state, or on any other which might be suggested to him. It was observed, however, with Mr. Gurney's subjects that these artificially induced memories tended ultimately to merge into the primary hypnotic consciousness. After a few days the imaginary incidents suggested in each of the three states would be recalled all together indiscriminately.[1]

[1] *Stages of Hypnotic Memory*, *Proc. S. P. R.*, iv., p. 515, *et seq.*

Analogous to the hypnotic trance is the self-induced trance of the spiritualist medium. Here, also, the entranced subject frequently educates himself to such an extent that the dream-like consciousness entirely disappears, and he will address public audiences with considerable fluency in his secondary state, and be a more active citizen of the world than in what are historically his "waking" hours.

There are other considerations which indicate that the secondary consciousness of the hypnotic trance—when it is not merely a dream-state characterised by the absence of certain familiar elements and the greater relative prominence of others—is not the revelation of a pre-existing psychical state, but a consciousness created *de novo*. It rarely has any distinctive content other than that supplied by the suggestions of the hypnotiser, or the other experiences of the trance. Conversely, when the hypnotic trance does reveal the existence of subterranean memories, we generally find that they are of a distinctly pathologic kind. Thus, a spontaneous somnambulist of my acquaintance was in the habit of secreting valuable objects in her trance. On one occasion she hid in this way two £10 notes. After a prolonged and fruitless search she was hypnotised and then revealed the hiding-place. But in this instance the secondary consciousness—even then of a very crude kind—which was tapped in the trance had been organised in a long succession, extending through many years, of spontaneous attacks of somnambulism. Again, in the case of Ansel

Bourne, referred to below, the hypnotic trance brought to the surface the memory of the previous abnormal state of secondary consciousness, and that only. In other cases of spontaneous secondary consciousness the same thing has been observed.[1]

No doubt when the secondary consciousness in hypnosis has once been firmly established it may incorporate with itself various elements which occupy but a subordinate place in the primary consciousness, or have escaped from it altogether, just as we see is the case in dreams. The oft-quoted experiment of Herr Dessoir may be explained in this way. He records[2] that he was talking with some friend about a common acquaintance, X. W—— who was present, but reading, caught the name, and asked, "What was that about X?" Questioned, he said he had not heard the conversation. Herr Dessoir then hypnotised W., and he was able to repeat all that had been said. Again, memories of childhood occasionally emerge in hypnotism; there is an instance recorded of a subject in the trance speaking Welsh, a language which he had learnt in childhood and forgotten.[3] But after all, we do not need the supposition of a stream of subterranean consciousness for these sporadic cases; the physiological assumption of a cerebral register, in which irrelevant records may be occasionally brought to light by some disturbance of the

[1] See the case quoted in the *British Medical Journal*, May 17, 1890.

[2] "*Das Doppel Ich*" quoted by Mr. Myers, *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vi., p. 208.

[3] Moll. "*Hypnotism*" (English Translation), p. 126.

accustomed paths of association, involves a smaller draft upon the unknown.

The relations of the hypnotic to the ordinary consciousness are of a very interesting kind. One of the most familiar illustrations of these relations is in the performance of post-hypnotic promises. Reference has already been made to the subject in the case of Madame B., but the instance there cited was of a command, impressed in a deeper, being fulfilled in a lighter stage of the hypnotic trance itself. Generally speaking a fairly docile hypnotic, if asked in the trance to perform after waking any act, however grotesque or trivial, will faithfully execute the command. Mr. Gurney, amongst others, has carefully investigated the conditions under which such enjoined actions are carried into effect. He has shown that, whilst the subject may be in the normal state and fully conscious at the time he executes the command (though not conscious of his motive in so doing) and may subsequently retain the memory of the action, it frequently happens that during the performance of the action the subject relapses into a state closely resembling, if not actually identical with, the ordinary hypnotic trance—a state in which anæsthesia may be observed, and hallucinations imposed. It can be demonstrated, further, that in the interval between the waking from the trance and the fulfilment of the command—an interval which may extend for minutes or for months—there is not merely a record in the subconscious memory of the act to

be performed, but some kind of intelligence which watches for the given signal, or counts the time until the appointed date. For instance, a subject would be told to blow out a particular candle after Mr. Gurney had coughed six times. After being awakened from the trance he would retain no conscious recollection of the command, and would be, as judged by the usual tests, in a perfectly normal condition. At the sixth cough, however, he would rise and blow out the candle. Now if questioned, say after the fourth cough, when in the normal condition, he would profess himself unable to say how many times Mr. Gurney had coughed. But when put back into the hypnotic trance, or questioned by means of planchette, he would reply correctly. Again, if told to do something at the expiration of one hundred and twenty-three days, he would, if re-hypnotised in the interval, correctly state the number of days which had already passed and the number which were still to elapse before the appointed time, though in his waking state he knew nothing whatever about the matter. It would seem, then, as if in all these cases there was a thin but continuous stream of cerebral activity cut off from the main channel, which was capable not merely of registering a command, but of receiving external impressions and recording the lapse of time.[1]

Sometimes the task exacted of the secondary consciousness was one requiring the exercise of greater intelligence. Thus, to quote Mr. Gurney:

[1] See Dr. Milne Bramwell's experiments, *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. xii., pp. 176–203.

"P. was told (in the trance) to add together 1 and 2, 2 and 3, etc., up to 8 and 9; and also to write down anything startling that happened in the room. He was awakened, set to the planchette, and read a newspaper aloud. Soon after his hand began to write, I knocked the poker down in the fender. The writing was:

"'5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, the Poker Fell down in Fender.'"[1]

In other cases the primary intelligence was set to work out a sum, the answer being given by word of mouth, while another problem of the same kind was set to the secondary intelligence, the answer being written through planchette. Or the attention of the primary consciousness would be fully engaged by a suggested hallucination, whilst the secondary intelligence would do a sum, or write out a line or two of poetry, or perform some other task requiring the exercise of the mental faculties. In all these cases when re-hypnotised the subject would be able to recall and generally to correct where necessary what his hand had written through the planchette; and in most cases the memory of the hallucination suggested, or of the task imposed upon the primary consciousness also penetrated into the secondary state. This division of the intelligence into two distinct and simultaneously active channels was possible, however, only within narrow limits. It was difficult to find an occupation for the primary intelligence which, whilst affording evidence of mental activity, should yet not be sufficiently engrossing to absorb all the available store of attention. It was

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv., p. 316.

found, in fact, as a rule, either that both tasks were performed imperfectly, or that one task failed of fulfilment altogether. Thus, when two sums were given simultaneously, one or both were incorrect. The writing through planchette was generally misspelt and faulty; and sometimes, when the task assigned to the primary self was such as to demand a large output of energy, the other task remained unfulfilled, as in the following case:

"S——t was told to multiply 697 by 8, was instantly awakened, and in another moment was given a book to read aloud. The passage was the chapter about Humpty-Dumpty in *Through the Looking-Glass*, of which he read several pages with great spirit and enjoyment. But the planchette on which his hand was lying remained motionless. He was re-hypnotised, and S. said, 'Why did you not do that sum?'

"S——t. 'You didn't give me time to. I lost it all at once—could make nothing of it afterwards.'

"S. 'What else have you been doing?'

"S——t. 'What else?'

"S. 'Yes—what else?'

"S——t. 'I don't know—leave that in your hands.'

"S. 'Have you been reading?'

"S——t. 'No.'

"S. 'Nothing about Humpty-Dumpty?'

"S——t. 'Humpty *who*?'

"S. 'Humpty-Dumpty.'

"S——t. 'I read about him when I was a kid.'

"S. 'Hasn't Mr. Gurney been holding a book for you to read?'

"S——t. 'No.'

"S. 'What have you been doing?'

"S——t. 'Been sleepy or something.'"[1]

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. iv., pp. 318–9.

Here the thread of the secondary memory appears to have been broken, and we find, as in Ansel Bourne's case given below, two entirely distinct states of consciousness, each without memory of the other.

It is clear from these examples that the *simultaneous* functioning of two separate streams of consciousness, if possible at all, occurs within very narrow limits; that there is not enough attention "to go round"; and that the guides of our childhood were after all justified in their warning that we could not do two things at the same time. It is not quite clear, indeed, from Mr. Gurney's experiments how far such a thing as *simultaneous* double consciousness occurs at all. Many of the results which he records seem susceptible of explanation as due either to rapid alternations of consciousness, or even, as he himself suggests, to unconscious reflex action in one state or the other.[1] It would, no doubt, be putting a rather severe strain upon this explanation to apply it to the post-hypnotic remembering of signals or days, and to post-hypnotic planchette writing. But if we admit a subterranean consciousness in such cases, the importance of the admission lies in the fact of its existence, and not in its quality as demonstrated. It does, indeed, perform its allotted task with a rough approximation to accuracy, but it displays no spontaneity and little intelligence. It seems to be but

[1] Mr. A. H. Pierce (*Proc. S. P. R.*, xi., pp. 317–325) adopts this view, and explains planchette writing under such conditions as the result of purely reflex action.

a thin thread of dream-consciousness created *ad hoc*.

Secondary Consciousness in Pathologic Cases.

It is, however, in certain pathologic cases, in association with functional disturbances more or less profound, that we find the most striking illustrations of secondary consciousness. The following case, communicated by Mr. Algernon Joy,[1] gives an interesting example of a secondary memory, appearing apparently in connection with the altered state of the cerebral circulation consequent upon a blow on the head, and disappearing when the physical cause was momentarily removed.

"When I was about sixteen, and a cadet at Woolwich, I was thrown in wrestling with another cadet, and received a violent blow just above the left temple from a knob of an iron bedstead. A great lump formed rapidly, but I was not stunned and did not show any signs of being seriously injured. I seemed perfectly rational, and assented at once to the suggestion that I should bathe the place with cold water. But the moment that the cold water touched the place I seemed to wander and to forget what had occurred, saying, 'Hullo! What 's the row? What has happened? Why am I bathing my head?' However, as I felt that my head was hot and painful I went on bathing it, until the five minutes 'warning' bugle sounded for going in to study, when the others left me, I saying that I would follow in a minute or two. Shortly afterwards I was found sitting on the steps leading to the backyard of my barracks by a servant, who asked me whether I was not going in to study. I told him the story of my wrestle and fall, and said that I should not go in to study, as my head

[1] The account was written in 1876 and communicated at that date to the Psychological Society, from whom we received it in 1884.

ached badly in consequence. He suggested my lying down on my bed, which I acceded to. So he accompanied me to my room and prepared my bed for me. I lay there for an hour or two during which I was visited by two or three officers, to whom I explained all that had happened quite rationally. Some time after dark I was taken out of the warm room and put into a Bath-chair outside, where a cold wind was blowing. The moment the cold air blew upon my uncovered head I seemed to begin to wander again, and asked where I was, what was the matter, why I was going to hospital (which I realised to be the case from the presence of the Bath-chair, only used for that purpose), etc. My cap was then put on my head, and the chair shut up. On arriving at the hospital I wandered through the different wards, inquired the names of the cadets in each, and having ascertained that one to whom I had a dislike was in the ward in which there was the largest number of empty beds, and which I was therefore sure to be told off to, went to the nurse, and manœuvred successfully to get myself put in another. I told the cadets and surgeon what had happened to me, and conducted myself, throughout, in the most perfectly rational manner. My head had to be partially shaved, that leeches might be applied; and though the orderly lathered me with hot water, he did not warm the razor. I perfectly understood all that was being done, and why, until the cold razor touched my head, when I seemed to wander again and began asking for explanations. The moment the razor was taken away, my memory returned, until the leeches' cold bodies touched my head, when I relapsed into the same state.

"When I awoke, the next morning, I had forgotten, *for ever*, everything that had occurred, from half an hour or so *before* my wrestle, up to the moment of waking—except what had happened and passed through my mind during the brief intervals when anything cooling was in contact with the injured spot, all of which I still remember distinctly, though now about twenty-seven years ago.

"A. Joy.

"Junior United Service Club, 9th December, 1876."

Such a secondary consciousness, which in Mr. Joy's case lasted for a few hours at most, has been known to alternate with the primary consciousness for the greater part of a lifetime. The classical example is Félida X., the daughter of a captain in the French merchant service, born near Bordeaux in 1843, whose case has been observed and recorded for a period of many years by Dr. Azam of Bordeaux.[1]

"Up to the age of fourteen, Félida was a quick, industrious, somewhat silent child, remarkable chiefly for a varied assortment of pains and ailments of hysterical origin. One day, when engaged in her regular occupation of sewing, she suddenly dropped off to sleep for a few minutes, and awoke a new creature. Her hysterical aches and ailments had disappeared, she had changed from gloom to gaiety, from morose silence to cheerful loquacity. Presently Félida slept again, and awoke to her usual taciturnity. Asked by a companion to repeat a song which she had just been singing, Félida stared in amaze —she had sung no song. In brief, all the incidents of that short hour between a sleep and a sleep were for her as though they had never been. In a day or two the same sequence was repeated, and so on day by day, until her friends learned to look for and welcome the change; and her lover grew accustomed to court her in the second state, when her somewhat gloomy stolidity had given place to brightness and gaiety. In due course she married; and as time went on the second state came to usurp more and more of her conscious life—until, in her prime, she would spend months together in that state, with only short intervals of recurrence to her normal condition. The characteristics of the two states remained unchanged; in her first, or what we must call her *normal*, state, she retained the remembrance of those things only which had come to her knowledge when in the normal state, but the memory of the second, or abnormal, state embraced her whole conscious life.

[1] *Hypnotisme, Double Conscience, et altérations de la Personnalité*, Paris, 1887.

Thus in her later life an occasional relapse to her primary state was attended with very serious inconvenience, for with it the memory of large tracts of her life would disappear. The history of the few months preceding would vanish like a dream. She would not know the whereabouts of her husband and her children; she would not recognise the dog which played at her feet, nor the acquaintance of yesterday. She knew nothing of her household requirements, her business undertakings, her social engagements. Once the relapse came during her return from a funeral, and she had to sit silent and learn gradually from the conversation around her whose obsequies she had been attending. Her gloom and despair during these brief intervals of interrupted fragmentary life are so great as almost to impel her towards suicide.

"Even her normal affectionate relations with her husband are altered in these relapses. She complained to Dr. Azam on one occasion: 'Ce qui me désole c'est qu'il m'est impossible d'avoir rien de caché pour lui, quoiqu'en fait je n'aie rien a dissimuler de ma vie. Si je le voulais, je ne le pourrais pas. Il est bien certain que, dans mon autre vie, je lui dis tout ce que je pense.' Finally, Félida occasionally relapses into a third state, characterised by terrifying hallucinations and hyperæsthesia of the skin. In this state she recognises her husband only; and behaves as if stricken with madness." [1]

It seems probable that these alternations of memory are connected with some changes in the supply of blood to the brain. There are many indications of disturbance of circulation in the patient. There is much hemorrhage from the mucous membrane of the stomach, throat, mouth, and nose; and even occasionally from the skin of the head; and local congestions, confined to the left side, so that her left hand has been known to swell to such an extent as to burst her glove.[2]

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 102.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 96.

In Félida's case, as in that of the ordinary hypnotic subject, the primary and secondary consciousness may be represented by two concentric circles, of which the secondary is the larger. Sometimes, however, the two memories are mutually exclusive, as in the following case:

"The Rev. Ansel Bourne, of Greene, R. I., was brought up to the trade of a carpenter; but in consequence of a sudden temporary loss of sight and hearing under very peculiar circumstances, he became converted from Atheism to Christianity just before his thirtieth year, and has since that time for the most part lived the life of an itinerant preacher. He has been subject to headaches and temporary fits of depression of spirits during most of his life, and has had a few fits of unconsciousness lasting an hour or less. He also has a region of somewhat diminished cutaneous sensibility on the left thigh. Otherwise his health is good, and his muscular strength and endurance excellent. He is of a firm and self reliant disposition, a man whose yea is yea, and his nay nay; and his character for uprightness is such in the community that no person who knows him will for a moment admit the possibility of his case not being perfectly genuine.

"On January 17, 1887, he drew 551 dollars from the bank in Providence, with which to pay for a certain lot of land in Greene, paid certain bills, and got a Pawtucket horse-car. This is the last incident which he remembers. He did not return home that day, and nothing was heard of him for two months. He was published in the paper as missing, and foul play being suspected, the police sought in vain his whereabouts. On the morning of March 14th, however, at Norristown, Pennsylvania, a man calling himself A. J. Brown, who had rented a small shop six weeks previously, stocked it with stationery, confectionery, fruit and small articles, and carried on his quiet trade without seeming to anyone unnatural or eccentric, woke up in a fright and called the people of the house to tell him where he was. He said his name was Ansel

Bourne, that he was entirely ignorant of Norristown, that he knew nothing of shop-keeping, and that the last thing he remembered—it seemed only yesterday—was drawing the money from the bank, etc., in Providence. He would not believe that two months had elapsed. The people of the house thought him insane ; and so, at first, did Dr. Louis H. Read, whom they called in to see him. But on telegraphing to Providence confirmatory messages came, and presently his nephew, Mr. Andrew Harris, arrived upon the scene, made everything straight, and took him home. He was very weak, having lost apparently over twenty pounds of flesh during his escapade, and had such a horror of the idea of the candy store that he refused to set foot in it again.

" The first two weeks of the period remained unaccounted for, as he had no memory, after he had once resumed his normal personality, of any part of the time, and no one who knew him seems to have seen him after he left home. The remarkable part of the change is, of course, the peculiar occupation which the so-called Brown indulged in. Mr. Bourne has never in his life had the slightest contact with trade. " Brown " was described by the neighbours as taciturn, orderly in his habits, and in no way queer. He went to Philadelphia several times, replenished his stock ; cooked for himself in the back shop, where he also slept ; went regularly to church ; and once at a prayer meeting made what was considered by the hearers a good address, in the course of which he related an incident which he had witnessed in his natural state of Bourne.

" This was all that was known of the case up to June, 1890, when I induced Mr. Bourne to submit to hypnotism, so as to see whether, in the hypnotic trance, his " Brown " memory would not come back. It did so with surprising readiness ; so much so indeed that it proved quite impossible to make him whilst in the hypnosis remember any of the facts of his normal life. He had heard of Ansel Bourne, but " didn't know as he had ever met the man." When confronted with Mrs. Bourne he said he had " never seen the woman before," etc. On the other hand, he told of his peregrinations during the lost fort-

night ; (he had spent an afternoon in Boston, a night in New York, an afternoon in Newark, and ten days or more in Philadelphia, first in a certain hotel and next in a certain boarding-ing house ; making no acquaintances, " resting," reading, and " looking round." I have unfortunately been unable to get independent corroboration of these details, as the hotel registers are destroyed, and the boarding house named by him has been pulled down. He forgets the name of the two ladies who kept it) and gave all sorts of details about the Norristown episode. The whole thing was prosaic enough ; and the Brown personality seems to be nothing but a rather shrunken, dejected, and amnesic extract of Mr. Bourne himself. He gives no motive for the wandering except that there was " trouble back there " and he " wanted rest." During the trance he looks old, the corners of his mouth are drawn down, his voice is slow and weak, and he sits screening his eyes and trying vainly to remember what lay before and after the two months of the Brown experience. " I 'm all hedged in," he says, " I can't get out at either end. I don't know what set me down in that Pawtucket horse-car, and I don't know how I ever left that store or what became of it." His eyes are practically normal, and all his sensibilities (save for tardier response) about the same in hypnosis as in waking. I had hoped by suggestion, etc., to run the two personalities into one, and make the memories continuous, but no artifice would avail to accomplish this, and Mr. Bourne's skull to-day still covers two distinct personal selves.

" The case (whether it contains an epileptic element or not) should apparently be classed as one of spontaneous hypnotic trance, persisting for two months. The peculiarity of it is that nothing else like it ever occurred in the man's life, and that no eccentricity of character came out. In most similar cases the attacks recur, and the sensibilities and conduct markedly change." [1]

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, by William James, vol. i., pp. 391, etc. A fuller account of the case, by Dr. Hodgson, who has made a careful investigation of all the circumstances, will be found in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vii., p. 221 *et seq.*

Sometimes the division between the two states of consciousness is even more profound. Thus in the case of Mary Reynolds,[1] in the secondary state memory had almost entirely vanished ; the patient could not recognise the house and its surroundings ; even her own parents, brother and sister, were as strangers ; "all of the past that remained to her was the faculty of pronouncing a few words," and even these apparently conveyed no meaning for her. She had to relearn the arts of reading and writing. From about the age of twenty to thirty-five Miss Reynolds continued to alternate between her first and second states of consciousness, but the last twenty-five years of her life were passed entirely in the second state. In a case recorded by Dr. Azam,[2] the subject—a lad of twelve—in the second state forgot how to read and write, and spoke with difficulty, but never forgot his prayers. A case occurred in France a few years ago in which the subject, during a spontaneous access of secondary consciousness lasting for some weeks, went to visit an uncle, who was a Bishop, and there broke up the Bishop's furniture and committed various other misdemeanours, for one of which he was sentenced in a court of law. The sentence was annulled when the fact of the abnormal division of conciousness was established.[3] In this case, as in Ansel Bourne's, memory of the secondary state was revived in the hypnotic trance.

[1] See W. James, *op. cit.* (vol. I., p. 381).

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 221 *et seq.*

[3] *Revue de l'Hypnotisme*, March, 1890 ; *Brit. Med. Jour.*, May 17, 1890.

Finally there are some hystero-epileptic subjects, with whom various French observers—Prof. Pierre Janet, M. Jules Voisin, Dr. Bourru, and others,—have obtained very remarkable results.

Lucie, a patient of Professor Janet, had a terrible fright at the age of nine, which brought on a series of severe epileptic attacks. She is now (or rather was at the time when she was first described) almost completely anæsthetic. She has no sense of touch, and no muscular sense. She "loses her legs in bed," as she herself describes it, and can only walk by looking at the ground and at her limbs. She is very deaf, and her sight—her most serviceable sense—is extremely defective ; and she has no recollection of her childhood before the age of nine. Put into the first stage of somnambulism, as Lucie II., she recovers something of her lost memory and senses. But it is as Lucie III., in the deepest stage of the hypnotic trance, that the most marked change is observed. She can now feel her limbs, and feel also all objects in contact with her. She can walk without looking at her feet or the floor. Concurrently with this is observed a corresponding enlargement of her memory. She is conscious, not only of all that has happened in the first and second states, but she remembers also the first nine years of her life, and can give a clear account of the terrible fright which brought on her calamity.[1]

A very similar case, also a hystero-epileptic woman, has been recorded by Dr. Morton Prince, of Boston, U. S. A.[2] In one of the cases described by the French observers, that of the celebrated Louis V., no less than six different physiological states, characterised by various anæsthesiæ and paralyses, are recorded—each of these states being

[1] P. Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, pp. 104–5.

[2] *Boston Med. and Surgical Journal*, May 15, 1890.

accompanied by a memory and consciousness peculiar to itself.[1]

To return to Lucie. Prof. Janet found that whilst Lucie was awake and in her normal state, he could, whilst talking to her, induce the *tertiary* self, so to speak, to communicate with him in writing; Lucie I. being quite unconscious, all the time, that her hand was writing anything at all. Lucie III. would even communicate thus whilst her primary self was in the throes of an epileptic seizure; but the hand then would write only, "J'ai peur, J'ai peur."

This appropriation by the subliminal consciousness of the right hand for the purposes of writing presents a curious parallel to the results obtained by Mr. Gurney through planchette with various hypnotised subjects. Another spontaneous example, in the case of a hystero-epileptic, is recorded by Dr. Ira Barrows, of Providence, R. I.[2] In this case, whilst the patient was wildly delirious, the right arm remained sane, and would attempt to restrain the movements of the body, and protect the patient from her own violence. Conversely, the delirious patient was convinced that the right arm was not her own, but a foreign body; she called it "Old stump," would bite it, pinch it, and try to drive it away from her. Finally, at night, when the body was apparently sleeping, the right arm would be wide awake, and would write letters and poetry, some pieces from memory, some apparently original.

[1] Bourru & Burot, *Variations de la Personnalité.*

[2] Quoted in *Proc. Am. S. P. R.*, i., p. 552 *et seq.*

This brief survey of the manifestations of the so-called secondary or subliminal consciousness suggests the following provisional conclusions: That the observed facts do not warrant the assumption of a secondary stream of consciousness, or continuous chain of memories, in normal individuals; that such a secondary chain may, however, arise in certain pathologic states, and may be artificially induced by hypnotism or other means; that when once established, it may, within very narrow limits, be active concurrently with the normal waking consciousness; that certain stages of the hypnotic trance, and also hysteria and other states accompanied by a secondary consciousness, are characterised by various peculiarities, enlarged control over the muscles, voluntary and involuntary, as well as over the vascular and respiratory system, and the organic functions generally; extension of various sensory capacities, and a greater activity of the pictorial imagination; there are also in this state some indications of enhanced susceptibility to mental suggestion, and possibly of clairvoyance and other hypothetical faculties of a transcendental kind: that the hypnotic consciousness in certain individuals, and also many instances of spontaneous secondary consciousness, present little difference from the normal consciousness in the same individual, except such as can be accounted for by the oblivion which divides the two states.

Such, then, are the facts which call for explanation. Of the psychical theory advanced by Mr. Myers our present knowledge hardly permits us to

say that it is in any particular at variance with the facts. But it certainly goes beyond them; that is, it is largely founded on assumptions and conjectural interpretations. Of physiological theories none have so far been put forward which seem adequate to the facts as a whole, however nicely adjusted to individual observations. It is doubtful if, with our present knowledge, we should be justified in explaining even planchette writing as in all cases due to unconscious cerebration; and it is quite clear that Dr. Carpenter's theory will not carry us much beyond that point.[1] Heidenhain's[2] view—previously advanced by Braid—that the phenomena of the hypnotic trance are due to the inhibition of the higher parts of the brain and to the unaccustomed activity of lower centres, thus released from their normal control, serves well to account for many of the characteristic phenomena of hypnotism—the greater prominence of organic processes, increased capacity for muscular output, hallucinatory activity, and so on. All these indicate that in the hypnotic trance, as in sleep, we are dealing with a more primitive mental state, in which various activities, repressed in waking life, regain full liberty. But this hypothesis will clearly not help us to explain Madame B., Félida X., and Ansel Bourne. Professor Ribot explains the unity and complexity of the conscious ego as but the subjective expression of the unity and complexity of the physical organ-

[1] See his *Mental Physiology*, chap. xiii., "Of Unconscious Cerebration."

[2] *Hypnotism or Animal Magnetism*. Transl., by L. C. Wooldridge. London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1888.

ism, and essays to prove that any disturbance of the one will reflect itself in the other; and that just because the unity of the organism—and of consciousness—is a highly complex thing, built up of many varying and unstable elements, we must expect to find it liable to be split up in many different ways. Whilst declining to speculate on the exact nature of the cerebral changes which underlie these dissociations of conciousness, he suggests that the ground of the feeling of unity and identity which informs all our psychic life is to be found, not in those elements of which we are most vividly conscious, but in that complex of vaguely realised but permanent sensations which come to us from our own organism; and holds that any change or loss of these sensations must at once and powerfully affect the conscious self.[1]

Some of the recorded cases of spontaneous secondary consciousness strongly suggest the alternating predominance of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This is the solution to which Dr. Azam inclines.[2] Prof. Janet has propounded an ingenious hypothesis, based on the study of Lucie and other hystero-epileptic patients. He suggests that the changes of memory and consciousness are due to perversions or enlargements of the sensory mechanism. According to him the memory of the normal individual is based exclusively upon sensations of one kind,—auditory, visual, tactile, etc., and upon the ideas which represent these sensations. But

[1] *Les Maladies de la Personnalité.* [2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 181–3.

any disturbance of the organism—a disturbance which may range from ordinary sleep to hystero-epilepsy—is liable to change "the orientation of the thoughts" and introduce secondary memories, based on other sets of sensations. In the average healthy man these secondary memories will have but a brief existence, and may never re-appear. But in persistently pathologic states such secondary memories may develop, even to the extent of ousting the primary memory from the field of consciousness. Thus the thought processes of Madame B. in her normal state are concerned with visual images exclusively; as Léonie II., auditory images predominate; whilst Léonie III. is a "motile." In poor hystero-anæsthetic Lucie, whose only sound sense is that of sight, and who has lost control of the entire mechanism, from external organ to ideational centre, of the other senses, the system of thought is necessarily based on visual images. But when we enlarge the sensory basis by restoring temporarily a lost sense, the chain of memories which depends on that sense is restored too. Thus Lucie, in recovering her sense of touch and muscular sense, recovered also the memory of her childhood, the period when the muscular sense, it seems, formed the main thread upon which the sequence of ideas and sensations was strung.[1]

On this theory—and it seems at any rate to include some elements of the true solution—it may be argued that the secondary consciousness, in the

[1] Janet, *op. cit.*, pp. 105, 137, etc.

hypnotic trance for instance, must be superior to the primary or normal consciousness, since it includes the latter, and has, therefore, by hypothesis, a wider sensory basis; and indeed, as already shewn, there are not wanting indications that the hypnotised subject can often boast a sensory equipment superior to that of waking life. It is held by some that in this state we have a prophecy of the future endowments of the race. But it seems more probable that these abnormal conditions are not a prophecy, but a survival: that in such cases there is temporarily restored a more primitive stage of consciousness. Such a consciousness might indeed be superior, as including more sensory elements; but what the civilised consciousness has lost in extension it has no doubt gained in intensity. Our sensory equipment, less complete, perhaps, than that of the child or the savage, is, it may be hazarded, better adapted to its purpose. For poor Lucie an impaired vision was all the salvage which she could retain from the wreck of her organism. In the hurry and stress of living, it may be suggested, we have had to drop articles of luxury, as the keen scent, the telescopic eye, the unerring sense of direction, which served primeval man; we have long ceased to take much account of our organic sensations in general, and we have lost something perhaps of the abounding muscular sense of our own immediate past. Some of us even, as Mr. Galton[1] has shewn, have purchased increased

[1] *Inquiries into Intellectual Faculty.*

powers of abstract thinking by the sacrifice of that vivid pictorial memory which is still part of the heritage of the race. The sensory apparatus which remains to us represents, it would seem, only what we have the means or the leisure to keep in good repair.

For the pressure upon the area of our working consciousness is great, and its capacity limited. As a result, whole classes of ideas and sensations get crowded out. In the long ascent from the amœba we may suppose that group after group of simple sensations fell back into the unconscious or the "not-so-conscious," as their place was required by the more complex images called into existence by the changing environment. Even in the lifetime of the individual the thoughts and memories of childhood and youth are gradually thrust into that twilight by the urgent affairs of our maturer life. Year by year sensations once vivid grow fainter, and finally pass unregarded. New forms of activity are practised with anxious care, and repeated until use has made them familiar, and ultimately cease to require an express mandate from the sovereign power for their performance. It is, then, of this psychological lumber-room that the crystal and the hypnotist's command throw open the door. It by no means follows from the fact that the furniture thus revealed has been gradually rejected by the growing consciousness, that it is of little value. In the lumber-room of memory we may find much that we would gladly see furbished up and brought into

the daylight again—forgotten scenes, neglected ideals, faith grown dusty from disuse. Sometimes we may find there a "Wild Duck Attic"—the hidden romance of a life-time. It is likely enough that the empirical process of selection which the contents of our consciousness have undergone causes the loss of much that we would not willingly let pass away. When the nature of the process and the results which attend it are more clearly recognised, we may find it possible to recover something of these waste products, and thus enlarge and enrich our work-a-day selves. But as yet we seem to have found in the subliminal consciousness no certain indication of any knowledge or faculties which have not at some time played a part in the primary field. We come across memories of childhood, and many old forgotten things; we discover what seem to be traces of long lost but once serviceable faculties—telepathy, sense of time, of direction, of weight; we acquire partial control over bodily functions—digestion, circulation, and the like—which civilised man has learned to acquiesce in as beyond his guidance. But in all this we only resume possession of our own. And we have as yet, I submit, no sufficient evidence of anything beyond that.

CHAPTER XIII.

IMPERSONATION, OBSESSION, CLAIRVOYANCE.

THE older mesmerists believed themselves to have found in the utterances of the hypnotised subject proofs of a supernormal faculty of acquiring knowledge of things remote in space or time. This hypothetical faculty they named Clairvoyance. The Spiritualists in more modern times have discerned in the speaking of entranced persons, and the writings of automatists, indications of external inspiration, and in some cases believe that they are by this means enabled to hold communication with the spirits of their departed friends. As already indicated, the religious doctrines of modern Spiritualism are in great measure based upon revelations from this source. In the present chapter it is proposed to examine the grounds upon which these beliefs rest.

Impersonation.

To the unquestioning observer, the fact that an entranced person commonly gives himself another name in the trance and assumes a different personality is in itself proof of possession or inspiration. But in fact this characteristic springs naturally and

almost inevitably from the changes of memory and consciousness which are associated with the trance, and from the more deep-seated alterations in the physiological groundwork of consciousness, which these surface changes reflect. When, indeed, the new memory is entirely shut off from the old memory—as in Ansel Bourne's case—there can be no knowledge of the old life, and therefore no sense of contrast ; a new name is assumed in such a case merely because the patient has forgotten his old one. But in the more common case, where the new memory includes the old one and something more, there is naturally a sense of contrast, a feeling of an enlarged or altered personality. Sometimes, as with Félida X., and with most hypnotics, the sense of identity persists through the changed conditions. Sometimes, as with Madame B., there is a more or less deliberate assumption of a different personality at each stage, and a certain antagonism (of which indeed we saw the germ in Félida) develops between these artificial selves. But there is still no hint of possession, probably because that idea was not suggested or encouraged by the scientific observers in whose society Madame B.'s trance life has been spent. Conversely, with the Spiritualists it was quite natural that the trance personality should call itself a Big Indian, a Persian Prince, Shakespeare, Emerson, or somebody's grandmother, according to the suggestions offered by the beliefs, the hopes, and aspirations of the medium and his environment. In two or three instances we have

been enabled to assist at the birth of these allotropic personalities. Professor Janet describes an incident of this kind. He had—as stated in the last chapter—taught the secondary self of Lucie to communicate with him in writing whilst Lucie was in the primary state. One day, whilst Lucie was talking to someone else in the room, Professor Janet held the following conversation with the hidden intelligence:

"Do you hear me?" said he. She replied in writing, "No." J. "But if you can answer you must be able to hear." L. "Yes, certainly." J. "Well, then, how do you manage?" L. "I don't know." J. "There must clearly be someone who hears me." L. "Yes." J. "Who is it?" L. "It isn't Lucie." J. "Well, then, someone else. Shall we give her a name?" L. "No." J. "Yes, it would be more convenient." L. "Well, then, Adrienne." J. "Very well, Adrienne, can you hear me?" L. "Yes."[1]

Here the secondary personality was baptised against its will. In another case, recorded by an acquaintance of my own, the communicating intelligence, though not until after a considerable interval, spontaneously gave itself a name. Our informant, Mr. D., was experimenting with planchette, at Easter, 1883. He found the planchette moved readily under his hand, and propounded a series of anagrams and conundrums, which he had no conscious knowledge of having invented, and which it cost his conscious self some labour to solve. On the third day of these experiments he writes:

[1] *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, pp. 317, 318.

"I was so astonished at the apparently independent will and intellect manifested in forming the above anagrams that, for the nonce, I became a complete convert to Spiritualism; and it was not without something of awe that I put—

"Question 7. Who art thou?

"Answer 7. Clelia!

"Q. 8. Thou art a woman?

"A. 8. Yes.

"Q. 9. Hast thou ever lived upon earth?

"A. 9. No.

"Q. 10. Wilt thou?

"A. 10. Yes.

"Q. 11. When?

"A. 11. Six years."

But alas! on the morrow Clelia repudiated her revelations and even denied her own existence, and planchette to the question, "Do I answer myself?" replied "Yes." [1]

One of the most persistent and characteristic of these pseudo-personalities is Dr. Phinuit, or, to give him his full name, Dr. Jean Phinuit Scliville, the "control" of Mrs. Piper. Mrs. Piper, to whose trance utterances we shall revert in the latter part of this chapter, is an American lady, who for some ten or twelve years past has been liable to pass into spontaneous (*i. e.* self-induced) trances. In these trances she assumes a voice and manner which differ markedly from the voice and manner of Mrs. Piper in her normal state, and purports to be possessed—or, in Spiritualistic phraseology, "controlled"—by one Dr. Phinuit. Dr. Phinuit's

[1] For a full account of this case, see Mr. Myers's article on *Automatic Writing.—Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. ii., pp. 226–231.

own account of himself is that he is a French physician, who was born at Marseilles about 1790, and died about 1860. He has given various particulars about his birth, education, and life in Paris, but the inquiries which have been made have failed to reveal any trace of such a person as having lived and died as stated. Moreover, it appears that, though Phinuit is sometimes very felicitous in diagnosing the ailments of those who consult him, his medical knowledge is extremely limited; he does not know the Latin names of the various drugs which he prescribes, and cannot recognise common medicinal herbs when shown to him. In other words, he has given no indications of possessing any scientific knowledge of medicine. Moreover, though professing to be the spirit of a French doctor, his knowledge of French appears to extend only to a few simple phrases, and a slight accent, which is occasionally serviceable in disguising a bad shot at a proper name. This ignorance of his native language is, he explains, due to his having lived for some years in Metz, where there were many English residents! It seems probable then that this Phinuit is neither French nor a doctor. Dr. Hodgson has enquired into his origin, and finds that Mrs. Piper fell into the trance in 1887 at a visit to a professional medium, named Cocke, who was himself "controlled" by the spirit of a French doctor named Finné. Mrs. Piper's first "control" was an Indian girl, who bore without reproach the name of Chlorine. Soon, however, it

appears, Dr. Finné displaced the volatile Chlorine, entered into combination himself with Mrs. Piper, and metamorphosed his name into Phinuit. It remains to be added that when these historical facts were brought by Dr. Hodgson to Dr. Phinuit's notice, that personage professed to remember that his real name was not after all Phinuit, but Alaen. Further, he betrayed some uncertainty whether he had been born at Marseilles or Metz, and whether he had passed the latter part of his life at Metz or Paris. It seems, then, that we need not seriously consider whether Phinuit is in very deed the spirit he would be taken for.[1]

Clairvoyance.

If the faithful acting of the part chosen or assigned to it, eked out with a display of knowledge readily accessible from normal sources, were all that the trance-personality had to show, it is probable that the idea of spirit communion would not have played so important a part as it has done in the history of Spiritualism, and certain that the subject would offer little to detain us here. But it is unquestionably the case that the trance intelligence frequently possesses, or makes a plausible show of possessing, information which could not

[1] It should be said, however, that Dr. Hodgson, who has had exceptional opportunities of judging, since he has had Mrs. Piper under close observation in her trances, and in ordinary waking life, for some years past, is of opinion that she is herself guiltless of intentional deception ; that she knows nothing of what takes place in the trance ; and that the pseudo-Phinuit is perhaps equally ignorant of Mrs. Piper's real life. This view is confirmed by other observers.

have been acquired by normal means : and claims to have acquired this knowledge, sometimes by the exercise of a supernormal clairvoyance ; sometimes through the spirit of the entranced person having temporarily left the body, and having thus visited the scenes which it describes ; and sometimes, again, through possession by, or direct intercourse with, the spirits of deceased persons. It will be convenient to examine first the claim to a supernormal faculty of acquiring knowledge ; and we will begin, therefore, by citing a case in which the secondary intelligence expressly repudiates any spirit influence. The late Mr. P. H. Newnham, sometime Vicar of Maker, near Devonport, conducted in 1871 a series of planchette experiments with his wife, in the following manner : Mr. and Mrs. Newnham sat at different tables, in such a position that Mrs. Newnham could not see what Mr. Newnham wrote. Mr. Newnham would then write a question, the answer to which would be given through planchette guided by Mrs. Newnham's hand. Now Mrs. Newnham had no conscious knowledge either of the question written by her husband, or of the answer written by her own hand through planchette. Nevertheless, the answers so written were in almost every case relevant to the question, and frequently betrayed, not merely a knowledge of its exact tenor, but even an imperfect acquaintance with other facts apparently not known to Mrs. Newnham. On one occasion, as a test, Mr. Newnham and a friend went out of

the room, shutting the door behind them, and the friend wrote down, "What is the Christian name of my eldest sister?" Mrs. Newnham, inside the room, wrote the correct answer through planchette, "Mina" (an abbreviation of Wilhelmina). The evidence of supernormal knowledge seems, therefore, strong; but we find that planchette persistently represented that the answers were due to Mrs. Newnham's brain. Mr. Newnham (a Mason) was much struck by the fact that planchette frequently shewed some knowledge of Masonic ritual, of which he believed Mrs. Newnham to know nothing. He therefore directed his questions to eliciting the source from which this information was derived. The following is a selection from this catechism:

March 15th.

132. Who then makes the impression upon her?
A. Many strange things.
133. What sort of strange things?
A. Things beyond your knowledge.
134. Do then things beyond our knowledge make impressions upon wife?
A. Influences which no man understands or knows.
136. Are these influences which we cannot understand external to wife?
A. External—invisible.
137. Does a spirit, or do spirits, exercise those influences?
A. No, never (written very large and emphatically).
138. Then from whom, or from whence, do the external influences come?
A. Yes; you will never know.
139. What do you mean by writing "yes" in the last answer?
A. That I really meant never.

. . . . . .

March 19th.

142. By what means are (unknown) secrets conveyed to wife's brain?

A. What you call mesmeric influence.

144. What do you mean by "what you call?" What do *you* call it?

A. Electro-biology.

145. By whom, or by what, is the electro-biologic force set in motion?

A. I told you you could not know more than you did.

146. Can wife answer a question the reply to which I do not know?

A. Why do you try to make me say what I won't?

147. Simply because I desire knowledge. *Why* will not you tell?

A. Wife could tell if someone else, with a very strong will, in the room knew.[1]

The nature of these experiments (which were communicated by Mr. Newnham for publication in the *S. P. R. Proceedings*) renders it difficult to doubt the accuracy of their record. We seem, indeed, in this case, to be precluded from invoking any external agency; but the results afford striking evidence of the transmission of thought from the husband to the wife; a transmission of a very curious but by no means unprecedented kind, since the information thus conveyed never penetrated to Mrs. Newnham's upper consciousness at all.

We have many cases in our records which seem to point to the occurrence of spontaneous clairvoyance during sleep. The following instance may be cited as an illustration. It is one of several similar

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, iii., pp. 10, 11.

incidents within the experience of the narrator, who, it is fair to state, in sending her account to us explained that she believed all the coincidences to be accidental, and the more clearly accidental the more numerous the coincidences.

1884.

From Miss Busk, 16 Montagu Street, W.

"I dreamt that I was walking in a wood in my father's place in Kent, in a spot well-known to me, where there was sand under the firs ; I stumbled over some objects, which proved to be the heads, left protruding, of some ducks buried in the sand. The idea impressed me as so comical that I fortunately mentioned it at breakfast next morning, and one or two persons remember that I did so. Only an hour later it happened that the old bailiff of the place came up for some instructions unexpectedly, and as he was leaving he said he must tell us a strange thing that had happened. There had been a robbery in the farmyard, and some stolen ducks had been found buried in the sand, with their heads protruding, in the very spot where I had seen the same. The farm was under-let, and I had not even any interest in the ducks, to carry my thoughts towards them under the nefarious treatment they received.

"R. H. Busk."

Miss Busk's sister, Mrs. Pitt Byrne, who was present when this dream was told, corroborates as follows :

"I distinctly remember, and have often since spoken of, the circumstance of Miss R. H. Busk's relating to me her dream of ducks buried in the wood, before the bailiff who reported the incident came up to town.

"J. Pitt Byrne."[1]

It is, however, in crystal vision and in the hypnotic trance that we find the most abundant evi-

[1] *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 369.

dence of the faculty. The lady who writes under the pseudonym of Miss X. has had many clairvoyant visions of distant scenes in the crystal. Indeed the crystal or some similar means, such as a mirror, or a pool of ink in a boy's hand, was a favourite device with mediæval soothsayers, and still obtains in some oriental countries, for reading the future and the distant. The following account records one of several similar incidents which have been observed with Madame B., the well-known hypnotic subject referred to in the previous chapter:

From Professor Richet:

"On Monday, July 2, 1888, after having passed all the day in my laboratory, I hypnotised Léonie at 8 P.M., and while she tried to make out a diagram concealed in an envelope I said to her quite suddenly: 'What has happened to M. Langlois?' Léonie knows M. Langlois from having seen him two or three times some time ago in my physiological laboratory, where he acts as my assistant.—'He has burnt himself,' Léonie replied. —'Good,' I said, 'and where has he burnt himself?'—'On the left hand. It is not fire: it is—I don't know its name. Why does he not take care when he pours it out?'—'Of what colour,' I asked, 'is the stuff which he pours out?'—'It is not red, it is brown; he has hurt himself very much—the skin puffed up directly.'

"Now, this description is admirably exact. At 4 P.M. that day M. Langlois had wished to pour some bromine into a bottle. He had done this clumsily, so that some of the bromine flowed on to his left hand, which held the funnel, and at once burnt him severely. Although he at once put his hand into water, wherever the bromine had touched it a blister was formed in a few seconds—a blister which one could not better describe than by saying, 'the skin puffed up.' I need not say that Léonie had not left my house, nor seen any one from my laboratory. Of this I am *absolutely certain*, and I am certain

that I had not mentioned the incident of the burn to any one. Moreover, this was the first time for nearly a year that M. Langlois had handled bromine, and when Léonie saw him six months before at the laboratory he was engaged in experiments of quite another kind."[1]

With the earlier mesmerists the exercise of this alleged supernormal faculty commonly took the form of "travelling clairvoyance." The mesmerist, having placed his subject in the trance, invited her in spirit to accompany him to some place, unknown to her, with which he was familiar, and describe the surroundings, the persons which she saw there, and their occupations. Occasionally the process would be varied, and the spirit of the clairvoyant would be despatched on a lonely journey to discover a missing whaleboat, the whereabouts of a murderer, or the fate of Sir John Franklin.[2]

The following is a typical case of the kind. The account, which was procured for us by Dr. Backman of Kalmar, was written by Mr. H. J. Ankarkrona, Director-General of Pilotage in Sweden. Baron von Rosen, the hypnotiser in the case, has given an independent account of the séance, which accords with the narrative below in all its main features.[3]

Mr. Ankarkrona's account is as follows:

[1] *Proc., S. P. R.*, vol. vi., pp. 69, 70.

[2] A selection of the best attested cases of clairvoyance—spontaneous and induced—will be found in Mrs. Sidgwick's papers on Clairvoyance. *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vii., pp. 30 and 356.

[3] This account, which is too long to reproduce here, will be found in the *Proc., S. P. R.*, vol. vii., pp. 205–6.

"At the end of last September I made a tour along the coast of Westervik on H. M. service, to inspect some newly built lighthouses there. At Oskarshaum I went on board the pilot-steamer *Kalmar*. Besides the crew, there were present on board the Captain of Pilotage, Baron von Rosen, the Baroness, and a young woman in his service, named Alma. On the coast of Westervik we met with the Captain of Pilotage, Mr. Smith, from Norrköping. On the evening of September 21st we were lying at anchor in the *Kalmar* in a creek on the coast. Knowing Alma to be an uncommon 'medium,' I asked her if Baron von Rosen might hypnotise her. 'Yes, with pleasure, as soon as I have washed up the china,' she replied. I had already spoken to Baron von Rosen. Soon after ten Alma went down into the cabin and declared herself ready. Baron von Rosen sent her to sleep, and I then asked him to ask her whether she would like to go to my house at Stockholm, give a description of it, and see what the inmates were doing. 'I never tried such an experiment before, but I will try it,' the Baron replied. And so the experiment proceeded in about the following manner (Baron von Rosen asking the questions).

"Baron von Rosen: Will Alma go to the house of the Commander Ankarkrona at Stockholm and see how it is there? Alma: Yes (her voice was feeble and as it were hissed out). Q. Is Alma there? A. Yes. Q. What do you see? A. A small room with very, very dark tapestries with gold on the walls. Q. How many windows? A. One. Q. What else do you see? A. Two paintings;—one, a landscape, the other a marine scene. Several other pictures. In one corner a bookshelf; in another a bouquet, but not of flowers. On one wall a portrait of a lady, in oils. On the floor a carpet, not covering the whole floor; on the carpet a table; on the table a lamp; by the table a chair, on which Mrs. Ankarkrona is sitting. Q. What is she doing? A. She is looking at a newspaper. Q. What newspaper? A. *Dagbladet*[1] (I said, I do not take the *Dagbladet*). Q. You must look better for the name. What newspaper is it? A. *Svenska* (I take the *Svenska*

[1] The name commonly given to the Stockholm *Dagblad*.—A. BACKMAN.

Dagbladet). Q. How is Mrs. A. dressed? A. In black, with the bodice brocaded.

"Q. Can you go into the drawing-room? A. Yes. Q. How many windows are there? A. Three. Q. What more do you see? A. Plenty of furniture; two *chaises longues*, such as I never saw before. Two large tables and several small ones. Great brown draperies for the doors, of the same stuff as that which covers the furniture. The window curtains are double, with broad lace. On the tables and everywhere are *bibelots*. Easels with portraits of ladies and gentlemen. A number of plants; several made of paper. A magnificent chandelier. On the wall a large landscape. On one wall a peculiar drapery of plush with a broad golden cornice. Everywhere small pieces of plate, with something written on them; I cannot say what. Two very beautiful vases. Q. (at my suggestion von Rosen asked), Is not the chandelier covered with stuff? A. No. (When I left Stockholm the chandelier had been covered; but the cover had been removed on the same day.) Q. What have they been doing (in the house) to-day? A. Sweeping. (The furniture had been taken out and beaten.)

"Q. Where has Mrs. A. been to-day? A. Out of the house. Q. Can you go into the kitchen? A. Yes. Q. How are you coming into it? A. Now I am going through a dining-room; now through a long, narrow passage, which is a service-room; now I am in the kitchen. Q. What do you see there? A. Two maid-servants; one older, one younger. The elder one is standing by the fireplace. The younger one is sitting on a chair with some needlework. This one I have seen before. Q. Can you go to the place where Mrs. A. has been to-day? You must go out by the lobby? A. Yes. Q. How does the lobby look? A. Long, narrow, and dark; on the floor a thick carpet, covering about half the floor; a lamp in a glass case is hanging from the ceiling. Q. Is Alma there now? A. Yes. Q. Was the way long? A. Not very (the houses are in the same street). Q. What do you see? A. A gentleman, a lady, and a baby about two months old. I have seen the lady before. Q. What is she like? A. She is dark, with

brown eyes. Q. And the gentleman? A. He is fair (grey-haired). Q. What is the gentleman? A. I cannot see. Q. Look in the wardrobe? A. An officer. Q. What is the lady doing? A. She is sitting on a chair, with the child on her knees. Q. Is she suckling it? A. No; she only looks at it. On the floor is standing an old maidservant (a nurse arrived that same day, or a few days before). Q. What is the name of the lady? A. I do not remember.

"Q. Will you go to Norrköping and see what it is like at Captain Smith's? A. No. Q. Pray do so; Captain Smith wishes it. A. Yes. Q. Is Alma there? A. Yes. Q. What do you see? A. A lady and a little child. The child is ill; but it is nothing dangerous. There are two bedsteads for children in this room. (The child was ill before Mr. Smith left Norrköping.)

"When Alma had slept calmly for a little time she was awakened, and then remembered everything perfectly. About ten days afterwards she completed her account to the Baroness von Rosen, who took notes of it. When she awoke she rubbed her arm, and when we asked her why she did so, she answered that she had been sleeping so deeply that the arm had grown numb.

"Asked where she had seen the younger maidservant, she replied: 'I saw her this summer from the *Kalmar* through a telescope—she was standing on the pilot-steamer *Ring*.' (She had in fact been housemaid on the *Ring*.) While we were talking and wondering over what had just passed, we mentioned the name Rosenblad. Alma exclaimed with pleasure, 'Rosenblad is the name of the lady.' She had seen her in Kalmar during the summer. When shown my photograph, standing in a glass frame in the cabin, she said that 'the photographs standing in the Commander's drawing-room were like that.'

"The remarks between round brackets are mine.

"No one of the persons on board the steamer had ever visited my house at Stockholm. Alma's description corresponds perfectly with the reality. The only points in which she was mistaken were: (1) That she saw 'two beautiful

vases' in the drawing-room. These may have been two branched candelabra of china which stood on the stove. (2) She saw a gilded cornice above the drapery in the drawing-room. It is, however, only painted in oil; but in a certain light it has the look of being gilt.

"STOCKHOLM, January 28, 1889.

"H. J. ANKARKRONA."

Unfortunately the original notes of the experiment, which were sent at the time to Mrs. Ankarkrona, are not forthcoming. But the narrative given above, written a few months later and confirmed by another independent account, may, I think, be taken as substantially accurate.

In the next case the things seen were unknown to any one present; but the close relationship between the hypnotic and the person whose doings at a distance were clairvoyantly seen may have facilitated the action of telepathy.

Mr. A. W. Dobbie, the experimenter in this case, is a gentleman residing in Adelaide, S. Australia, who has practised hypnotism for many years, and has hypnotised, chiefly for curative purposes, some hundreds of persons. Some of the subjects have shown traces of clairvoyance, and in these cases he has kept full contemporary notes of the experiments. When on a visit to this country, in 1889, he allowed us to inspect these notes. The following account is extracted from them:

"June 10, 1884.

"Up to the present time this has been the most interesting case I have had."

(Mr. Dobbie then explains that he had mesmerised Miss

—— on several occasions to relieve rheumatic pain and sore throat. He found her to be clairvoyant.)

"The following is a verbatim account of the second time I tested her powers in this respect, April 12, 1884. There were four persons present during the séance. One of the company wrote down the replies as they were spoken.

. . . . . .

"Her father was at the time over fifty miles away, but we did not know exactly where, so I questioned her as follows: 'Can you find your father at the present moment?' At first she replied that she could not see him, but in a minute or two she said, 'Oh, yes, now I can see him, Mr. Dobbie.' 'Where is he?' 'Sitting at a large table in a large room, and there are a lot of people going in and out.' 'What is he doing?' 'Writing a letter, and there is a book in front of him.' 'Who is he writing to?' 'To the newspaper.' Here she paused and laughingly said, 'Well, I declare, he is writing to the A B (naming a newspaper). 'You said there was a book there. Can you tell me what book it is?' 'It has gilt letters on it.' 'Can you read them, or tell me the name of the author? She read, or pronounced slowly, 'W. L. W.' (giving the full surname of the author). She answered several minor questions *re* the furniture in the room, and I then said to her, 'Is it any effort or trouble to you to travel in this way?' 'Yes, a little; I have to think.'"

"I now stood behind her, holding a half-crown in my hand, and asked her if she could tell me what I had in my hand, to which she replied, 'It is a shilling.' It seemed as though she could see what was happening miles away easier than she could see what was going on in the room.

"Her father returned home nearly a week afterwards, and was perfectly astounded when told by his wife and family what he had been doing on that particular evening; and although previous to that date he was a thorough sceptic as to clairvoyance, he frankly admitted that my clairvoyant was perfectly correct in every particular. He also informed us that the book referred to was a new one, which he had pur-

chased after he had left his home, so that there was no possibility of his daughter guessing that he had the book before him. I may add that the letter in due course appeared in the paper ; and I saw and handled the book."[1]

There are a few cases in which experiments have been designed with a view to test the subject's power of obtaining knowledge of facts not known to any person present.[2] Anna B., a laundress, is the subject of Dr. Ferroul, Mayor of Narbonne. In the hypnotic trance she has given remarkable proof of her power of seeing events at a distance. From an account contributed to the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*,[3] by M. A. Goupil, I extract the following : The account, it will be seen, is founded on Dr. Ferroul's notes taken at the time, and on a contemporary letter, both of which have been seen by M. Goupil.

1° *Cas du Boulou.*

Ce cas se produisit dans le courant de juin, 1894. M. Ferroul attendait du Boulou, localite située à 86 kilomètres de Narbonne, deux personnes devant arriver par le train.

Ces personnes n'arrivant pas, et ne recevant pas de nouvelles motivant le retard, M. Ferroul fit venir Anna et la mit en état de somnambulisme avec ordre de se rendre au Boulou ; il la guida par ses indications, connaissant les lieux ; mais Anna n'y était jamais allée.

J'y suis, dit elle, c'est de telle et telle façon ; mais je ne vois personne.

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vii., p. 64.

[2] See, for instance, *Proc. S. P. R.*, vii., pp. 59, 63, 73, 207. Also Professor Charles Richet's experiments, *ibid.*, vols. v. and vi. It should be added that Professor Richet's experiments, though some success was attained, are not regarded by him as conclusive.

[3] May-June, and July-August, 1896.

Entrez dans la maison.

J'y suis, ah! grand Dieu! qu'est-il arrivé! Madame est sur le lit, blessée à l'epaule et aux reins, mais elle ne saigne pas . . . Voilà: la voiture a versé, le cocher est tombé d'un côté, mais n'a pas eu de mal.

A. B—— dit ensuite que le docteur faisait un pansement et demandait une bande plus longue que celle qu'il tenait en main, et autres détails. (J'ai lu tous ces détails sur le carnet de M. Ferroul.) Aussitôt après, M. Ferroul passa une dépêche au Boulou : "*Est-il vrai qu'il vous est arrivé accident voiture?*"

Le lendemain matin, il recevait une lettre de son ami (lettre que j'ai lue); cet ami commençait par s'étonner que M. Ferroul ait pu avoir connaissance de l'accident; les renseignements de la lettre concordaient bien avec les indications de la lucide.

On another occasion a piece of paper enclosed in three distinct envelopes, and securely sealed, was handed to Dr. Ferroul. On the piece of paper were written some words not known to Dr. Ferroul. Anna in the trance read the words,

"Votre parti certainement
Se tue par l'assainissement."

After the words had been written down, the paper was examined, and envelopes and seals found intact. The seals were then broken, the paper removed from its envelopes and opened, and the words were found to be correct.

So far, then, the evidence points to the existence in certain persons, who are generally in the hypnotic trance or in some allied state, of a peculiar condition of receptivity, which facilitates the telepathic transmission of ideas consciously or uncon-

sciously present in the minds of those in the immediate surroundings; and, more doubtfully, to the occasional transmission of such ideas from persons at a considerable distance from the subject. Further than this the evidence so far adduced will not carry us. We have now to consider the cases which are held to afford proof of spirit communion.

Possession.

Instances of spontaneous "possession" exhibiting any kind of plausibility are rare. One of the best attested cases is that of Lurancy Vennum. I quote, slightly abridged, the account given by Prof. W. James of Harvard, based upon a tract published in 1887.[1]

Lurancy Vennum was a girl of fourteen, living (in 1877 apparently) with her parents at Watseka, Illinois. She was subject to hysterical attacks, and possessions by alleged spirits, which ultimately culminated in an attack in which she declared herself possessed by the spirit of Mary Roff, the daughter of a neighbour who had died twelve years before. Lurancy, she said, was temporarily in heaven. At her urgent request the soi-disant Mary Roff went to stay with her "parents," the Roffs.

"The girl, now in her new home, seemed perfectly happy and content, knowing every person and everything that Mary knew when in her original body, twelve to twenty-five years ago; recognising and calling by name those who were friends and neighbours of the family from 1852 to 1865, when Mary died; calling attention to scores, yes, hundreds of incidents that transpired during her natural life. During all the period of her sojourn at Mr. Roff's she had no knowledge of, and did

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i., pp. 397, 398.

not recognise, any of Mr. Vennum's family, their friends or neighbours ; yet Mr. and Mrs. Vennum and their children visited her and Mr. Roff's people, she being introduced to them as to any strangers. After frequent visits, and hearing them often and favourably spoken of, she learned to love them as acquaintances, and visited them with Mrs. Roff three times. From day to day she appeared natural, easy, affable, and industrious, attending diligently and faithfully to her household duties, assisting in the general work of the family as a faithful, prudent daughter might be supposed to do, singing, reading, or conversing, as opportunity offered, upon all matters of private or general interest to the family."

" Mary " would sometimes whilst at the Roffs " go back to Heaven," *i. e.*, leave the body in a quiet trance. Gradually, however, Lurancy's personality returned, and was at the end of fourteen weeks completely re-established ; and Lurancy Vennum returned to her home, and welcomed her own relatives after the flesh.

Professor James adds in a note : " My friend, Mr. R. Hodgson, informs me that he visited Watseka in April, 1889, and cross-examined the principal witnesses of this case. His confidence in the original narrative was strengthened by what he learned ; and various unpublished facts were ascertained which increased the plausibility of the spiritualistic interpretation of the phenomena."

It seems clear, however, that a spontaneous case of this kind, even if watched by competent observers and supported by contemporary records, could not, in view of the extreme difficulty of ascertaining how much Lurancy could have learnt by normal means of the life and doings of poor Mary Roff, afford more than a faint presumption for spirit agency. Mary Roff had herself died in a lunatic

asylum, and it is not unlikely that her tragic history possessed a morbid interest for her little neighbour —herself a girl of unstable equilibrium.

The direction in which proof of spirit communion may be sought with most hope of success is no doubt in the séance room, where the conditions are more completely under control, and the limits of the medium's knowledge can be defined with less ambiguity. As a matter of fact the literature of Spiritualism presents us with a vast mass of what purport to be spirit communications. There are few instances, however, where the substance of the messages has been recorded, and the attendant circumstances investigated, with sufficient care to give them a substantial value in an inquiry like the present. The alleged communications of Mr. Stainton Moses have been already referred to.[1] But it would not be fair to take these utterances as typical of Spiritualistic evidence in general. Of late years some evidence of the kind desired has come to light outside the ranks of professed Spiritualists. Thus Miss X. has had many personal experiences which point at least to a supernormal faculty of acquiring knowledge, and a remarkable body of evidence on this subject is furnished by the trance utterances of Mrs. Piper. Dr. Phinuit—the ordinary "control" —may indeed, as already indicated, with much probability be assumed to be merely the trance-personality of Mrs. Piper, masquerading under an accidentally suggested name. But apart altogether

[1] See note at end of Chapter IV.

from the question of Phinuit's identity, the substance of his communications merits our attention; and there are other "controls" than Phinuit, whose claims to independent existence seem to be better substantiated.

Mrs. Piper, a lady living in Boston, first passed into a spontaneous trance in 1888. Very shortly afterwards she came under the notice of Prof. W. James, of Harvard, who, with other observers has investigated her powers with great care. At one time Dr. Hodgson arranged to have both Mr. and Mrs. Piper shadowed for some weeks by private detectives, in order to ascertain whether they took any means to procure information as to the affairs and antecedents of possible sitters. No suspicious circumstance of any kind was brought to light.

Professor James has borne emphatic testimony to the extraordinary nature of the communications made through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism:

"The most convincing things said about my own immediate household were either very intimate or very trivial. Unfortunately the former things cannot well be published. Of the trivial things I have forgotten the greater number, but the following, *rarœ nantes*, may serve as samples of their class: She said that we had lost recently a rug, and I a waistcoat. (She wrongly accused a person of stealing the rug, which was afterwards found in the house.) She told of my killing a grey-and-white cat, with ether, and described how it had 'spun round and round' before dying. She told how my New York aunt had written a letter to my wife, warning her against all mediums, and then went off on a most amusing criticism, full of *traits vifs*, of the excellent woman's character. (Of course no one but my wife and I knew the existence of the letter in

question). She was strong on the events in our nursery, and gave striking advice during our first visit to her about the way to deal with certain 'tantrums' of our second child, 'little Billy-boy,' as she called him, reproducing his nursery name. She told how the crib creaked at night, how a certain rocking-chair creaked mysteriously, how my wife had heard footsteps on a stair, etc., etc. Insignificant as these things sound when read, the accumulation of them has an irresistible effect, and I repeat again what I said before that, taking everything that I know of Mrs. Piper into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state, and that the definitive philosophy of her trances is yet to be found. The limitations of her trance information, its discontinuity and fitfulness, and its apparent inability to develop beyond a certain point, although they end by arousing one's moral and human impatience with the phenomenon, yet are, from a scientific point of view, amongst its most interesting peculiarities, since where there are limits there are conditions, and the discovery of them is always the beginning of an explanation.

"This is all I can tell you of Mrs. Piper. I wish it were more 'scientific.' But *valeat quantum!* it is the best I can do." *

* *Proc. S. P. R.* vol. vi., pp. 658–9. Compare with this account the impressions of another well known literary man, M. Paul Bourget, who visited Mrs. Piper during his recent travels in America, and contributed to the *Figaro* of Jan. 14, 1895, an account of his experiences, from which the following extract is taken:

Mrs. P.—me tenait les mains, et elle touchait en même temps une toute petite pendule de voyage ayant appartenu a quelqu'un qu'elle ne pouvait pas avoir connu,—un peintre qui s'est tué dans des circonstances particulièrement tristes de folie momentanée. Comment arriva-t-elle à me dire et cette profession de l'ancien propriétaire de la pendule et sa folie, et le genre même de son suicide? Y avait-il une communication entre mon esprit et son esprit à elle, dédoublé dans cette mystérieuse personnalité du docteur Lyonnais? Mes mains, qu'elle tenait entre les siennes, lui revelaient-elles, par des frémissements perceptibles a l'hyperacuite de ses nerfs, mes impressions sous chacun de ses mots, et avait-elle conservé, dans son sommeil, un pouvoir de se laisser guider par ces minuscules jalons? Ou bien, car il faut toujours

The limitations of Mrs. Piper's powers, and the fitfulness of their exercise, as indicated by Prof. James, are often very conspicuous. At its worst a sitting with Mrs. Piper is much like a sitting with the ordinary professional medium—a few lucky shots, diluted with much apparently disingenuous shuffling and fishing for information. But the records of Spiritualism and clairvoyance hardly afford a parallel to Mrs. Piper's trance utterances at their best. The following is a sample of a successful sitting: The narrator, Mr. J. T. Clarke, it should be explained, had left England in the autumn of 1889 for a hurried business visit to America. There he had an interview with Mrs. Piper. Mr. Clarke had friends in Boston, some of whom had had sittings with Mrs. Piper, but his wife and children had never been in America.

Notes of this séance were taken by Dr. Hodgson, and Mr. Clarke after the séance added his comments. These comments, or the substance of them in an abbreviated form, are placed in the account which follows between brackets.

Chocorua, New Hampshire, in house of Dr. William James.
September 20, 1889.

réserver une place au scepticisme, était-elle une comédienne incomparable et qui devinait mes pensées au ton seul de mes questions et de mes réponses? . . . Mais non. Elle était sincère. Les physiologistes qui l'ont observée dans ses crises ont trop souvent reconnu le caractère magnétique de son sommeil a des indices mécaniques qui ne trompent pas. Tout ce que je peux conclure des détails ré-ellement extraordinaires qu'elle me donna, a moi, un étranger de passage, sur un disparu, et dont je n'avais parlé à personne dans son entourage, c'est que l'esprit a des procédés de connaître, non soupçonnès par notre analyse.

Mr. Clarke fixes his mind steadily upon a certain house, and visualises members of family ; of this no recognition by medium, who begins :

(1) Why ! I know you ! I have seen your influence somewhere before ! What are you doing over here ?

(Mr. Clarke explains that some intimate friends had had sittings with Mrs. Piper, in the course of which his name and that of his mother had been mentioned).

(2) Oh ! There is lots of trouble over you, black clouds all over you ; but I see light beyond ; you will come out all right. It is financial trouble that I mean, you will wade through it all right in the end.

(Correct. My visit to America was determined by a financial failure, the loss from which I was then endeavouring to minimise.)

" How long hence ? "

(3) Four months or four months and a half. There are parties that have not dealt honourably with you.

(Mr. Clarke adds that he had at the time a lurking distrust—afterwards proved to be unfounded—of the " parties " referred to.)

(4) I see your lady in the spirit, your mother—have seen her before.

(There followed a clear account of my own conception of my mother, recently deceased, whose constant presence in my mind readily accounts for the frequent mentions of her.)

(5) You've also got a lady in the body, your wife. You won't find her very well.

(Prophecy wrong. My wife never better in health.)

(6) Do you know a man named Williams—no, wait ! Williamson ? (Reply, " No.") Tall, rather dark, first name Henery (*sic*). He will come into your surroundings soon—he will have something to do with your papers and with law. He will look after your interests and get you out all right. You will meet him very soon—within a few weeks.

(Mr. Clarke had written down in his note book some days previously the name of the lawyer—Lambertson—entrusted with his defence ; but had completely forgotten it.)

(7) Part of your interest is in the ground ; you came near being " left " in this business, but are not altogether.

(Correct. Property consisted of a town lot and buildings, and I certainly felt that I had come near losing it.)

" Tell me about my mother."

(8) Your mother is with us. She is here and happy in the spirit.

(This, I take it, is the way that mediums, burdened with the conventional news and the phrases customary in spiritualistic circles, find it most natural to express the conception which they receive from another mind of a person being a memory, an image of the mind as opposed to a living reality.)

(9) Who is this M. your cousin ? Your mother says she is not very well. She is getting better, but she will continue weak.

(The health of the person referred to, though improved at the time, had caused both myself and my mother much solicitude.)

" Can you see my children ? "

(10) Wait. . . . Who is this about you that is musical, that plays the piano (imitating action of fingers) ? Ah, it is your lady in the body. She is not very well just now—she is suffering from rheumatism.

(My wife plays the piano much. She was well and has never suffered from rheumatism.)

" Do you see my children ? "

(11) No, not at all yet : I shall directly. Wait. Who is this Fred that comes together with your mother ?

(A cousin lost at sea ten years ago, under peculiarly shocking circumstances. His death made a great impression upon me.)

Is he not your cousin ?

" Yes."

(12) He comes with your mother. She knows him better now than she did before death. . . . Who is this uncle of yours, named John ?

" I have no uncle John."

Yes, yes, you have—the man that married your aunt.

"No, you are wrong : the man that married my aunt was called Philip."

Well, I think I know. (Changes subject, grumbling.)

(I had entirely forgotten for the moment that an aunt of mine had indeed married a man named John, with whom I had formerly had some correspondence. I did not recollect this until the following day.)

(13) Why ! you are a funny fellow—you are covered with paint from head to foot. Your mother says it is too bad.

(I had been much interested in painting the walls of a room in the house of my friend for some days previously.)

(14) I 'd like to know who this H. is that you are going to see. Take good care of that man. He is a tricky one. Don't let him get you into his power.

(This is an altogether unjust accusation, based upon an unwarrantable distrust entertained by me at the time.)

(15) Here is your Rebecca !

[Clarke and Hodgson both ask "mine"? each having relatives of that name.]

(To Clarke :) Your Rebecca, your little girl. She runs around and gives her hand to everyone about her.

"Is there another little one like her ?"

Yes, there are three of your people together there now.

(My wife and two children.)

(16) "How is Rebecca ?"

Very well.

"Where is she now ?"

She is in the spirit. That is to say, her spirit 's here, but her body is at a distance.

(My child was in Germany at the time, and thus lived rather in my memory than in my daily view. Hence, although the medium felt that she was alive ("Her body is at a distance") her personality was yet spoken of as "in the spirit.")

(17) You will soon have a surprise. It is a photograph of your boy that is being made for you. It is unfinished as yet, but will surprise you.

(I was at that time taking photographs which were not to

be developed, and consequently could not be seen until my return to England.)

(18) There are five of you ; yourself, your two children, your lady in the body, and your lady in the spirit.

(This is my constant feeling—the "we are seven" of my surroundings.)

(19) What are these tickets that you have in your pocket? There are figures on them stamped in red, and they are signed with names underneath. They will be of value to you, you will get something out of them.

"No, I have nothing of the kind in my pocket."

(Mr. Clarke explains that he afterwards found he actually had in an inside pocket two cheques endorsed on the back as described, and stamped with large and peculiar red numbers.)

(20) "Where is my wife?"

She is across country. She has been away.

(My wife had intended to go to Germany from England, soon after my sudden departure for the United States ; I did not positively know that she was away from home, but I should have assumed it as well-nigh certain.)

(21) There is a young man and an old lady with her.

(There followed an accurate interpretation of my estimate of the characters of these two persons, who I knew must be together with my wife.) . . . The young man is coming back again ; he is going still more across country.

(Correct. I knew that my brother-in-law had to return from the Tyrol to his home on the Baltic.)

(22) . . . (Further reference to my mother, describing her character and representing her as she lives in my memory.) . . . That is an old-fashioned portrait of her, not very good, but better than nothing. "Where? Which one?" It is at home. I mean the one with the collarette.

(A sufficient indication of one of the few portraits of my mother.)

(23) Who is this funny-footed fellow of yours, the one with the club feet and the funny shoes? Your mother says it is an injustice to you, too bad—but it will come out all right.

(Correct. My boy was born with club feet, and wears machine boots.)

(24) Why? You've changed your house recently.

"No."

Yes, your lady has changed her house.

"Well you may mean that she is away from her house, that is true. Now describe the house in which we live generally."

Yes. Wait a minute. I will go into the door at the side. What is that tall, old-fashioned thing in the back room? Ah, it is a big clock.

(Correct.)

(25) "Now go into the kitchen."

Yes. No one here now (10 P.M. in New Hampshire—3 A.M. in England). A fat person, a cook, has been here. Big man, with a dark moustache has also been here a good while during the day, and has left his influence here.

"Who is he?"

He has been put here to watch the place.

"Is he trustworthy and faithful?"

Yes, he is trustworthy.

(Interesting error. It was arranged on my leaving England,—in case the servant should object to being left in the house alone during the absence of my wife in Germany—that a policeman should be hired to guard the house and to live in it. As a matter of fact, however, there was no man in the house.)

(26) You have lost your knife! Your mother tells me that.

(This loss had vexed me, as the knife had been made to order. I had lost it shortly before leaving England.)

(27) "Where is it?"

Oh, it is gone; you will never see it again.

(The prophecy proved to be signally wrong, as the knife was restored to me soon after my return.)

(28) "Describe the other room on the ground floor now."

Yes. I see a long piano. What is that high thing that comes forward on top of the piano? Ah, I see; it is the lid.

(Clock and piano are respectively chief features of the two rooms).

(29) "What colour is the wall paper of this room?"

Let me see. It is yellowish with gold pattern and gold spots.

(Correct.)

In short, many things that I knew, even some things that I had forgotten, the clairvoyant could tell me correctly, albeit somewhat confusedly. She made all the mistakes that I should have made at the time, and her prophecies were quite as erroneous as any that I might have invented myself.

One sees the contents of one's mind as in a warped and flawy mirror, or, to take the case from the other side, the secondary consciousness of the medium seems able to get occasional glimpses of the panorama of one's memory as through the rents in a veil. No doubt Phinuit gives the fullest and best results when left unquestioned to tell what he can. If pressed to fill up the broad expanses of the picture remaining between the patches which he sees, he is obliged, despite his pretensions to supernatural knowledge, to take refuge in awkward evasions and "shuffling,"—in guess work, often clearly based upon hints unconsciously afforded by the sitter —or, when all else fails, in incoherent and unmeaning talk. Yet, while fully recognising these repelling features of the manifestations, I am yet convinced that there is enough that is genuine remaining to prove the existence of a direct communication between mind and mind during the trance state. A single success exceeding the limits of coincidence (and it is undeniable that there are many such), proves the possibility; the multitude of failures merely indicate the difficulty and uncertainty.[1]

J. T. C.

It will be seen that here most of the statements made, except those which concern the future, were correct. No true statement was made, however, on any matter not known to Mr. Clarke. We need not look further than telepathy for an explan-

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. vi., pp. 569-574.

ation in such a case. Indeed, as Mr. Clarke points out, one or two of the statements made, though they failed to correspond to the facts of the case, suggest rather strongly that Phinuit was reproducing the thoughts,—conscious or latent—of the sitter.

In the winter of 1888–9, Mrs. Piper came to this country at the invitation of certain members of the S. P. R., and gave a large number of sittings. She was a complete stranger in England; she was met on her landing in this country by Professor Lodge; she stayed for the whole of her visit in the house of some member of the Society, or in apartments chosen by them, in Liverpool, Cambridge, and London; and she was during the whole period under close and almost continuous observation. Add to this that the sitters—of whom many, and those not the least successful, were persons not connected with, nor specially interested in, the Society—were with few exceptions introduced to her under assumed names; and it will be seen that the hypothesis that Mrs. Piper acquired by normal means the curious information—names of various relatives, out-of-the-way bits of family history, odd details of personal description, diagnosis of the diseases of absent friends, etc.—which Phinuit lavished in the séance-room on persons who were unknown to the medium even by name, becomes cumbrously difficult, if not altogether inconceivable. Mrs. Piper's trance-utterances, even if they indicate nothing else, form

one of the strongest items in the case for thought-transference. If our researches in every other direction had proved unfruitful, Mrs. Piper would still, in Professor James's words, stand out as the one white crow which proves that not all crows are black.

But in fact, even so far back as 1888, there were some incidents in the séances which required the theory of thought-transference to be strained to the uttermost. The following case may be taken as a sample:

From Professor Lodge, F. R. S.

"It happens that an uncle of mine in London, now quite an old man, and one of a surviving three out of a very large family, had a twin brother who died some twenty or more years ago. I interested him generally in the subject, and wrote to ask if he would lend me some relic of this brother. By morning post on a certain day I received a curious old gold watch, which this brother had worn and been fond of; and that same morning, no one in the house having seen or knowing anything about it, I handed it to Mrs. Piper when in a state of trance.

"I was told almost immediately that it had belonged to one of my uncles—one that had been mentioned before as having died from the effects of a fall—one that had been very fond of Uncle Robert, the name of the survivor—that the watch was now in possession of this same Uncle Robert, with whom he was anxious to communicate. After some difficulty and many wrong attempts Dr. Phinuit caught the name, Jerry, short for Jeremiah, and said emphatically, as if a third person was speaking 'This is my watch, and Robert is my brother, and I am here. Uncle Jerry, my watch.' All this at the first sitting on the very morning the watch had arrived by post, no one but myself and a shorthand clerk who happened to have

been introduced for the first time at this sitting by me, and whose antecedents are well known to me, being present.

"Having thus ostensibly got into communication through some means or other with what purported to be a deceased relative, whom I had indeed known slightly in his later years of blindness, but of whose early life I knew nothing, I pointed out to him that to make Uncle Robert aware of his presence it would be well to recall trivial details of their boyhood, all of which I would faithfully report.

"He quite caught the idea, and proceeded during several successive sittings ostensibly to instruct Dr. Phinuit to mention a number of little things such as would enable his brother to recognise him.

"References to his blindness, illness, and main facts of his life were comparatively useless from my point of view; but these details of boyhood, two-thirds of a century ago, were utterly and entirely out of my ken. My father was one of the younger members of the family, and only knew these brothers as men.

"'Uncle Jerry' recalled episodes, such as swimming the creek when they were boys together, and running some risk of getting drowned; killing a cat in Smith's field; the possession of a small rifle, and of a long peculiar skin, like a snake-skin, which he thought was now in the possession of Uncle Robert.

"All these facts have been more or less completely verified. But the interesting thing is that his twin brother, from whom I got the watch, and with whom I was thus in a sort of communication, could not remember them all. He recollected something about swimming the creek, though he himself had merely looked on. He had a distinct recollection of having had the snake-skin, and of a box in which it was kept, though he does not know where it is now. But he altogether denied killing the cat, and could not recall Smith's field.

"His memory, however, is decidedly failing him, and he was good enough to write to another brother, Frank, living in Cornwall, an old sea captain, and asked if he had any better remembrance of the facts—of course not giving any inexplicable reasons for asking. The result of this inquiry was trium-

phantly to vindicate the existence of Smith's field as a place near their home, where they used to play, in Barking, Essex ; and the killing of a cat by another brother was also recollected ; while of the swimming of the creek, near a mill-race, full details were given, Frank and Jerry being the heroes of that foolhardy episode.

"Some of the other facts given I have not yet been able to get verified. Perhaps there are as many unverified as verified. And some things appear, so far as I can make out, to be false. One little thing I could verify myself, and it is good inasmuch as no one is likely to have any recollection, even if they had any knowledge, of it. Phinuit told me to take the watch out of its case (it was the old-fashioned turnip variety) and examine it in a good light afterwards, and I should see some nicks near the handle, which Jerry said he had cut into it with his knife.

"Some faint nicks are there. I had never had the watch out of its case before ; being, indeed, careful neither to finger it myself nor to let anyone else finger it.

"I never let Mrs. Piper in her waking state see the watch till quite towards the end of the time, when I purposely left it lying on my desk while she came out of the trance. Before long she noticed it, with natural curiosity, evidently becoming conscious of its existence then for the first time."[1]

This account may, indeed, conceivably be explained as the result of a process of telepathic conveyance from Professor Lodge's mind of things heard in boyhood and long ago forgotten. Professor Lodge himself, however, has no recollection of having heard of these incidents, and regards this explanation as extremely improbable. And it is clear that each fresh case to which this hypothesis has to be applied increases the difficulty of the explanation. Professor Lodge enumerates in the

[1] *Proceedings, S. P. R.*, vol. vi., pp. 458–60

English observations of 1888–9 no less than forty-one instances in which details were reproduced by Phinuit which were "unknown to, or forgotten by, or unknowable to, persons present."[1] Some of these incidents, no doubt, such as the episode of the red-stamped cheques in Mr. Clarke's case, readily suggest the telepathic transference of ideas latent in the sitter's mind. But in a few instances it is not merely improbable that the facts mentioned by Phinuit should at any time have been within the knowledge of any persons present at the sitting, but, as in the account just quoted, the mode of presentation of the facts and the attendant circumstances certainly lend some additional weight to an alternative hypothesis, that of spirit communication. No doubt in view of Phinuit's past history it is right that the evidence derived from dramatic personation should be subject to a considerable discount. And, indeed, partly on this account, and partly because the cases published up to the end of 1892 which seemed to call for some other explanation than telepathy were few in number, the problem did not until recently present itself in an urgent form. Of late years, however, a considerable addition has been made to the evidence. In February 1892 there died in New York quite suddenly, at the age of thirty-three, one G. P., an author of some promise. G. P. had been known personally to Dr. Hodgson, and had two years before his death promised that if "still existing" after death

[1] *Proc. S. P. R.*, vi., pp. 649–50.

he would do his utmost to prove the fact to Dr. Hodgson, should the latter survive him. At the end of March, 1892, a friend of G. P.'s had a séance with Mrs. Piper, and communications were received purporting to come from G. P., "Phinuit" acting as intermediary. Later many of G. P.'s friends—mostly unknown to Mrs. Piper, and introduced under assumed names—had sittings, and many communications were received, G. P. himself professing both to speak and write through Mrs. Piper's organism. Some of these communications were of so personal a nature that they cannot be published, referring as they did to the private concerns of the sitters. But those who received these private communications appear to have been satisfied that they were such as would naturally have proceeded from G. P. himself; and that in many cases the nature of the facts referred to rendered it difficult to conceive of any other source. But apart from these private utterances, the trance-personality has afforded many more public proofs of its identity. Thus, the studs worn by one of the sitters, J. S., were identified by G. P. as having belonged to himself, and the statement made—unknown to J. S. but afterwards ascertained to be correct—that the studs had been taken from the dead body of G. P.'s step-mother. On another occasion the statement was made that G. P.'s father in New York—the sittings being held in Boston—had recently broken the negative of his son's photograph, an accident which the father had not even mentioned to his

wife. On more than one occasion incidents taking place at a distance, and unknown to any one in the room, were described with approximate correctness. References were constantly made to G. P.'s affairs, his manuscripts and personal effects, which betrayed an intimate acquaintance with his own concerns and those of his friends. Many long conversations, partly by writing, and partly by voice, were held with Dr. Hodgson and other persons known to G. P. ; and throughout, the trance-intelligence showed an individual personality—a personality, moreover, which was regarded by his friends as resembling that of the deceased G. P. Finally, of all the numerous persons who were introduced at Mrs. Piper's séances under feigned names, it does not appear that G. P. ever failed to recognise and name any person whom G. P. had known in the flesh ; or ever pretended to recognise persons whom G. P. had not known.

Taken altogether there can be no doubt that these trance-utterances do present many marks of authenticity ; and that even were it conceivable that the references to unknown facts and to private matters could be due to the emergence in the trance of knowledge normally acquired by Mrs. Piper in waking life, or to some process of telepathy from distant minds, the character and personal traits of the trance-intelligence would still remain as an indication of something beyond.

However, the full evidence in this series of trance-communications has not yet, as I write these words.

been completed ; and until this has been done, it would be premature to deliver a verdict. But this much seems clear, that the trances of Mrs. Piper furnish the most important evidence which the Society for Psychical Research has yet adduced for the existence of something beyond telepathy, and afford a sufficient justification, if any were needed, for the labours of the past fifteen years.

THE END

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