

**The supernatural? / by Lionel A. Weatherly ; with chapter on oriental magic, spiritualism, and theosophy by J.N. Maskelyne.**

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# The Supernatural ?

SPIRITUALISM  
THEOSOPHY  
GHOSTS  
DREAMS  
&c., &c.

LIONEL A. WEATHERLY, M.D.,

AND

J. N. MASKELYNE

ARROWSMITH'S THREE-AND-SIXPENNY SERIES



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THE SUPERNATURAL?













A SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPH.

*The Wraith of MR. MASKELYNE appearing to DR. WEATHERLY.*



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# THE SUPERNATURAL?

BY

LIONEL A. WEATHERLY, M.D.

WITH CHAPTER

On Oriental Magic, Spiritualism, and Theosophy.

BY

J. N. MASKELYNE.



BRISTOL :

J. W. ARROWSMITH, 11 QUAY STREET.

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"If all visions, intuitions, and other modes of communication with the supernatural, accredited now or at any time, have been no more than phenomena of psychology—instances, that is, of sub-normal, supra-normal, or abnormal mental function—and if all existing supernatural beliefs are survivals of a state of thought befitting lower stages of human development; the continuance of such beliefs cannot be helpful, it must be hurtful to human progress."—MAUDSLEY.

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To my Friend

DANIEL HACK TUKE, M.D.,

WHOSE WRITINGS,

ON ALL SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH PSYCHOLOGY,

ARE SO WIDELY KNOWN,

I DEDICATE

THIS LITTLE BOOK.





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## PREFACE.

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THE origin of this book was a paper I read last year before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Bath, on "Hallucinations and Illusions."

While it was going through the press, I asked a man whose opinion I valued, to let me know what he thought of it. His criticism was short, but to the point, and was expressed in one word, "Lucid." That one word, however, was everything to me. What will you say, reader? If you can re-echo his single-worded opinion, I shall indeed be contented.

Let me, however, at once say that this has not been written for the professors of mental philosophy, neither do I expect the student of psychology to gain any information from at least my portion of it. To ask them to read it, would be much akin to expressing the hope that the President of the Geographical Society would glean either pleasure or instruction from a perusal of Winslow's *Fairy Geography, Near Home, or Far Off*.

I have tried my best to make my statements as clear as possible, to invest my explanations with language



that anyone could understand. Above all I have, I hope, steered clear of that dangerous shoal, upon which so many authorities on these subjects have wrecked their literary craft; viz., "Religious Arguments."

To Mr. J. N. Maskelyne I here tender my most grateful thanks. Without his help I could not have asked any publisher to launch this work upon the market.

Who is there, in this England of ours—who is there, I may say, at all known to men, who has the right, from practical experience, to speak with such authority on Magic, on Spiritualism, or on the so-called Miracles of Theosophy, as Mr. Maskelyne? Who was it exposed the Davenport Brothers? Who was it who threw many a bombshell into the Spiritualistic camp? Who is it who fearlessly cautions those at the bottom of these latter-day miracles, and bids them *Beware*? The man whose friendship I value, whose assistance to me has been absolutely indispensable, and who will, I know, as long as he lives, devote himself to the exposure of fraud, deception, and trickery, whenever carried out under the guise of supernatural religion.

To his son, Mr. Nevil Maskelyne, a worthy follower in his father's footsteps, I offer my very best thanks. His suggestions have been valuable as they have been numerous; and to him do I owe the capital idea, as well as the actual carrying out, of the appearance of Mr. Maskelyne, in ghost form, to myself! A ghost,



whose materialisation even extended to his top-hat and his umbrella! What a ghost—and in the daylight, murky and foggy as that was, of Piccadilly, too!

How was it done? Will the Theosophical Society think this one more proof of the power of astral precipitation? Will they claim Mr. Maskelyne as a Mahatma of their own kind, as the Spiritualists wanted to claim him as one who had true mediumistic power? Will they imagine Mr. Maskelyne, in his study upstairs, so concentrating his thoughts upon me that his actual body appears to my vision in the hall below, so vividly, so materially, that his son's camera is able to catch a glimpse of it, while focussing my form?

I have next to thank Mr. G. R. Tweedie, F.C.S., formerly Lecturer at the Royal Polytechnic Institution, for so very kindly lending me the negatives of some valuable pictures in his collection; a collection which is undoubtedly the most valuable one of prints, engravings, etc., dealing with witchcraft and ghost-lore that at present exists, making his lectures on these subjects always so interesting and popular. These pictures illustrate my chapter on "Ghosts," etc.

To Dr. Aveline, the Assistant Medical Officer of the Bristol Asylum, I am much indebted for the illustrations of the first four chapters, and the two which appear in the chapter on the "Sense Deceptions of the Insane." Had his time not been so fully occupied, he would have drawn many more for me.



Mr. T. C. Nunn, 49 Watling Street, E.C., who has carried out Mr. Nevil Maskelyne's ideas of illustrating the chapters written by his father, has very kindly stepped into the breach and helped me out of a difficulty, and that, too, at a very short notice. I owe him, indeed, my best thanks.

The two illustrations "Shooting a Ghost" and "Witchery at Woodstock" are by *Phiz*, and taken from that interesting work entitled *Chronicles of Crime*, published by Messrs. Miles and Co., for whose kind permission to use these pictures I am much indebted.

In arranging and writing this simple and unpretentious little work, I have read and re-read many books upon the subject. Many are my quotations; but I have tried my best to acknowledge all authors whose brains I have picked. This is somewhat difficult, however; for in reading many works upon any one subject, one's mind is sure to gather ideas from this one or that one, without, at the time of writing, recognising the source from which sprang the association of thought productive of some line of argument.

Let the frank old Burton speak for me, then; for how could anyone attempt to excuse himself in more graphic, more logical language?

"If that severe doom of Synesias be true, it is a greater offence to steal dead men's labours than their cloaths, what shall become of most writers? I hold

up my hand at the bar amongst others, and am guilty of felony in this kind. . . . .

“As apothecaries, we make new mixtures every day, pour out of one vessel into another; and as those old Romans robb’d all the cities of the world to set out their bad sited Rome, we skim off the cream of other men’s wits, pick the choice flowers of their till’d gardens, to set out our own sterile plots. . . . .

“As a good housewife, out of divers fleeces, weaves one piece of cloth, a bee gathers honey out of many flowers, and makes a new bundle of all.”

LIONEL A. WEATHERLY.

BAILBROOK HOUSE,  
BATH,  
*November, 1891.*





# THE SUPERNATURAL?

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## CHAPTER I.

### Introduction.

*Superstition—Witchcraft—Believers in the Supernatural.*

THE Supernatural? Far be it from me, reader, to tread in the path of the professed sceptic, or to trifle with beliefs cherished by the wisest, with feelings sanctified by the noblest. Still, apart from any bearing on theology, most intelligent persons would, I think, be interested in having explained to them, in as simple language as possible, those peculiar operations of the mind which have, in ages past, led to a belief in the power of oracles, demoniacal possession, and witchcraft, and are to a large extent the leading factors in the faith of Theosophists, Spiritualists, Swedenborgians, and those who may recognise truth in the stories of wraiths and apparitions, of ghosts and haunted houses.

That there are many who love to look to the supernatural rather than to the natural for the causation of many seemingly strange occurrences is as true now as it was in ages past.

To any common-sensed, thinking mind it must, I hope, however, be self-evident that almost all the tales of demonology and witchcraft, of haunted houses,



ghostly walkings and visitations, of apparitions, and of visions, both individual and epidemic, owe their origin, in part at least, to what we call Hallucinations and Illusions; or, in other words, to sense deceptions, whether those deceptions have their origin in the mind of the person, or are caused by imposture and the skill and dexterity of others.

Superstition. Superstition has always reigned where ignorance has thrown her cloak over reason and judgment; and when to this we have added foolish credulity and love of all that is marvellous and extraordinary, can we not at once see the origin of many, if not all, the tales of apparitions, whether of good or evil spirits, of ghosts and vampires, of witches and their wonderful power? A weak and timid mind, a prepossessed fancy, superstition, and a belief without examination, readily and easily call up from imagination visions and voices having no reality but in the brain of the person; these, being uncorrected by education, or being believed in from want of reason and common sense, are placed on record as proofs positive of visits of angels, demons, or disembodied souls from the unknown world.

Witchcraft. To-day we laugh at the idea of an old woman riding on a broomstick in the air, and the celebration of satanic sabbaths. In the seventeenth century learned men accepted such statements as highly probable, and wrote folios to prove them; whilst the majority of the multitude implicitly believed in the absolute truth of such absurdities. To-day, though possibly hiding their beliefs, from fear of being laughed at, are there not many who insist in seeing in the





*The Witches Sabbath.*



prancing of mahogany tables and so-called materialised spiritualistic manifestations the definite evidence of supernatural agency? And, *Cui bono?*

The general witchcraft craze died almost a sudden death. I fear the termination of spiritualism will be of a more lingering character. Mr. Lecky, in his work on *Rationalism*, contends that this old belief was extinguished not by any reasoning process, but by the progress of rationalism. Against this theory we have many who are convinced that witchcraft ceased to be a supposed reality by the careful examination of scientific evidence which soon proved its impossibility. Both these theories are no doubt true.

I used the expression "*general* witchcraft craze died almost a sudden death" advisedly; for unfortunately evidence is not wanting that this cruel superstition still lingers even in our midst.

Only a few short years ago was not the county of Essex brought into unenviable notoriety by scenes worthy only of the middle ages? Poor "Dummy," the deaf and dumb Frenchman, after being knocked about in a tap-room, kicked and brutally beaten with sticks by men and women, after having his mouth filled with sludge and mud, was literally swum to death in a neighbouring millstream—and for what? Because he was believed to be a wizard, and that to him must be ascribed all the disasters, of however trivial a nature, that had affected the inhabitants of Sible Hedingham since he came among them!

True, he was a foreigner, he was deaf and dumb, he had no visible means of existence, and his dwelling-place was a solitary hut; whilst his fantastic and elfish



gestures made him a mysterious being, which the traditional beliefs of the inhabitants of the Essex flats soon transformed into one who had sold his soul to Satan, and had to work his wicked deeds amongst them.

Mr Spurgeon is a firm believer in education as a check to all superstition; but this can hardly be the case when we bear in mind the masses of highly-educated beings who absolutely revel in the so-called supernatural, and find the greatest comfort of their lives in Swedenborgian philosophy.

"The best remedy against superstition is to prevent its birth. Once let it get ahead of us, all attempts to check its course will incur the suspicion of impiety. It is satisfied in itself. It is an evil never less felt than when at its highest pitch. What do I say? It is an evil which, as it grows, takes the deceitful form of a good—the garb of holiness. Like madness, superstition is never more wise in its own conceit than when it is most irretrievably degraded in the judgment of all sane men." \*

Generally speaking, by the supernatural is meant that which we cannot explain by any known laws of Nature and transcends reason; and taking this as a correct definition, it is clear that what may be looked upon as supernatural by one person may be rightly understood to have a natural causation by another. Not long since, when the electric light was for the first time installed in the streets of Calcutta, the more ignorant of the natives rushed madly hither and thither,

\* "L'Imagination ses Bienfaits et ses égoïrenaits surtout dans le Domaine du Merveilleux."—Par. PROF. TISSOT.



declaring that it was supernatural, and predicted some great catastrophe; but gradually, as the origin of the light was explained to them, they lost their fear, and began to realise that it was the result of a scientific arrangement of Nature's laws.

Be'ievers  
in the  
Supernatural. That there are many educated persons who still believe in the absolute reality of all the wildest stories of magic, witchcraft, and the supernatural, can readily be gathered from newspaper reports and books which from time to time make their appearance; and in the present day no author of this class of book has gone farther than the Rev. Frederick George Lee, D.D., who, in his work entitled *Glimpses in the Twilight*, seems to ascribe everything that he, in his narrow mind, cannot understand to supernatural agency; and even has evidently the superstitious bias to maintain that, in his opinion, the tricks he has seen performed by the Indian jugglers—such as snake charming, the basket trick, and the growing mango tree—are all the outcome of supernatural help.

Would it astonish this worthy gentleman to know that I myself have, while in India, been offered to be taught all these tricks, and many more, for so much money, the price varying according to the trick? Has the Rev. Dr. Lee ever visited the Egyptian Hall? Has he ever seen the far more wonderful and, to the uninitiated, far more inexplicable tricks and illusions by Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, and heard them honestly state: "It is all a trick; the eye is only deceived by the quickness of the hand, or by the application and arrangement of scientific laws?"

"The abstract possibility of apparitions must be



admitted," writes Sir Walter Scott, in his charming and interesting work on *Demonology and Witchcraft*, "by everyone who believes in a Deity and His superintending omnipotence." But he goes on to say: "There can be no doubt that the passing deceptions presenting themselves to the organs of sense of men of strength of mind and education, and being by them investigated, appear at once in their true form, as results of imagination; whereas in the ignorant times of the past, and among the more ignorant of our own time, these occasional actions of the senses and the imagination were admitted as direct evidence of supernatural apparitions."

Our Imagination has the power of invoking phantoms, scenes, and the most vivid pictures of events long since past, from that wonderful storehouse of our mind—memory; and Meister in his well-known book on *The Imagination*, asserts his conviction that devotees, would-be prophets, and Swedenborgians are all indebted to Illusions and Hallucinations for their presentiments, their visions, their prophecies, their intercourse with angelic beings, and their visits to heaven and to hell.

Do not suppose, however, for one moment that I am rash enough to imagine that the domain of knowledge attainable by human beings has in any way been thoroughly explored. There must be much that we can only at present class under the heading of "The Unknown;" but I do maintain that to go to the spirit world for a clue to the why and wherefore of all that we cannot understand, is nothing less than the most wilful retrogression, and a wicked transplantation of ourselves back to the middle ages; in which period



scientific enlightenment was certainly not a leading characteristic.

And yet, have we not seen, do we not often see, men of education, men with University training, men who have been taught to thoroughly sift and test evidence by long study and experience at the Bar, unhesitatingly asserting their belief in the possibility of spirit-rapping at tables, and the materialised spirit of some mercenary medium floating in a phosphorescent atmosphere above curtain poles, or maybe passing through ceilings, stone walls, and in and out of closed windows?

Is it to be wondered at that, in the middle ages, the witch riding on her broomstick to her sabbath gathering was a being actually believed in?

My effort in this book will be to lead my readers to look to natural causation as the origin of supernatural seemings.

To render the subject clear to all, to admit of every one following my arguments readily, and carrying away some definite idea, I trust, my readers, you will not consider time wasted if I give a brief outline of the divisions of the Mind. In so doing, as in fact throughout this book, I shall try my best to make all as simple and practical as possible; and, instead of floundering wildly in the deep waters of theoretical mysticism, attempt, by wading through the ford of scientific truth, to bring myself and you safely to the firm land of common sense and right judgment.



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CHAPTER II.

What is Mind ?

*The Unknowable—Divisions of the Mind—Perception—Intellect  
(Memory, Reason, Imagination)—Emotion—Will.*

IT would not be at all wise in a book of this sort to discuss the various controversial questions concerning "spiritualistic" or "materialistic" theories. Religious and moral considerations at once come into our field of argument, directly we raise the question of there being a spiritual part of man, which remains after our natural body has become dust of the earth. It is a matter of faith, and happy is he who has such faith. Scientifically it does not admit of being discussed.

Materialistic and spiritualistic controversies are, as Dr. Carpenter so clearly points out, equally absurd. They are, he tells us, as absurd as the two knights, in the fable, who carried on a mortal contest respecting the material of a shield, seen by them from opposite sides: the one maintaining it to be made of gold, the other, of silver; each proving to be right, as regarded the half seen by himself.

Dugald Stewart maintains that a just object of mental philosophy would be to ascertain the laws which regulate the union of Mind and Body, without attempting to explain in what manner they are united.



It is as radically wrong to study the Mind by itself, without reference to the Brain, as it is to dissect and analyse the Brain without attempting to comprehend the divisions of the Mind.

Herbert Spencer tells us in one of his  
<sup>The</sup>  
Unknowable. Essays that the sincere man of science sees that the materialistic and spiritualistic controversy is a mere war of words, the disputants being equally absurd, each believing he understands that which it is impossible for any man to understand. In all directions his investigations eventually bring him face to face with the unknowable, and he ever more clearly perceives it to be the unknowable. It is this same sincere man of science, then, who alone truly sees that absolute knowledge on this subject is impossible; it is he alone who knows that under all things lies an impenetrable mystery.

We have, however, certainly made some progress since the days of Aristotle's belief that the heart was the seat of personality, or the days of Descartes, who was convinced that the pineal gland was the true abode of the "Soul."

We recognise now that the brain is the organ of the Mind, and that, however much some may hold that we are not wholly material, they must at the same time admit that we are dependent on material condition. Has it yet been proved that thought was possible without a material brain?

Dr. Wilks, in his work *Diseases of the Nervous System*, warns his readers against introducing into the problem of life too much of the theory of a perfectly independent force; for he remarks: "Once admit this



extravagant notion, and you may believe that an unseen power may carry you in the air, and that you may read a newspaper by sitting upon it."

Can anyone, after all, put this question concerning mind and body, better than our great Milton has, when he tells us, "Man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one individual ; not compound or separable, not according to common opinion made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body—but, the whole man is soul, and the soul, man ; that is to say, a body or substantive individual, animated, sensitive and rational ? "

It is not an easy matter to find a simple and clear classification of the divisions of the Mind, and I am sure the general reader would not gain much knowledge by studying some of the leading books on this subject, which in many instances, to the uninitiated, makes "confusion worse confounded."

Prof. Hammond, of New York, in his work on *Insanity*, seems to me to have divided the Mind in so simple and lucid a manner, that I cannot do better than take his classification; and he has been kind enough to write me, that I may make what use I like of his works on this subject :—

- I.—Perception.
- II.—Intellect:  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} a. \text{ Memory.} \\ b. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Judgment and} \\ \text{Reason.} \end{array} \right. \\ c. \text{ Imagination.} \end{array} \right.$
- III.—Emotions.
- IV.—Will.



I.—Perception. In order that there may be true perception, there must be in the *first* place organs of special sense—sight, hearing, smell, taste or touch; and in the *second* place, there must be nerves to transmit to the brain the different impressions made upon the organs of special sense. Now, these nerves carry the impression made upon the organs of special sense to what is called a centre, in which the impression is converted into a perception.

These nerves of transmission are absolute necessities; for without them, though the eye would still be capable of receiving an image; though the drum of the ear would still vibrate under the influence of sound, the brain would have no knowledge of it. And so with all the other organs of sense.

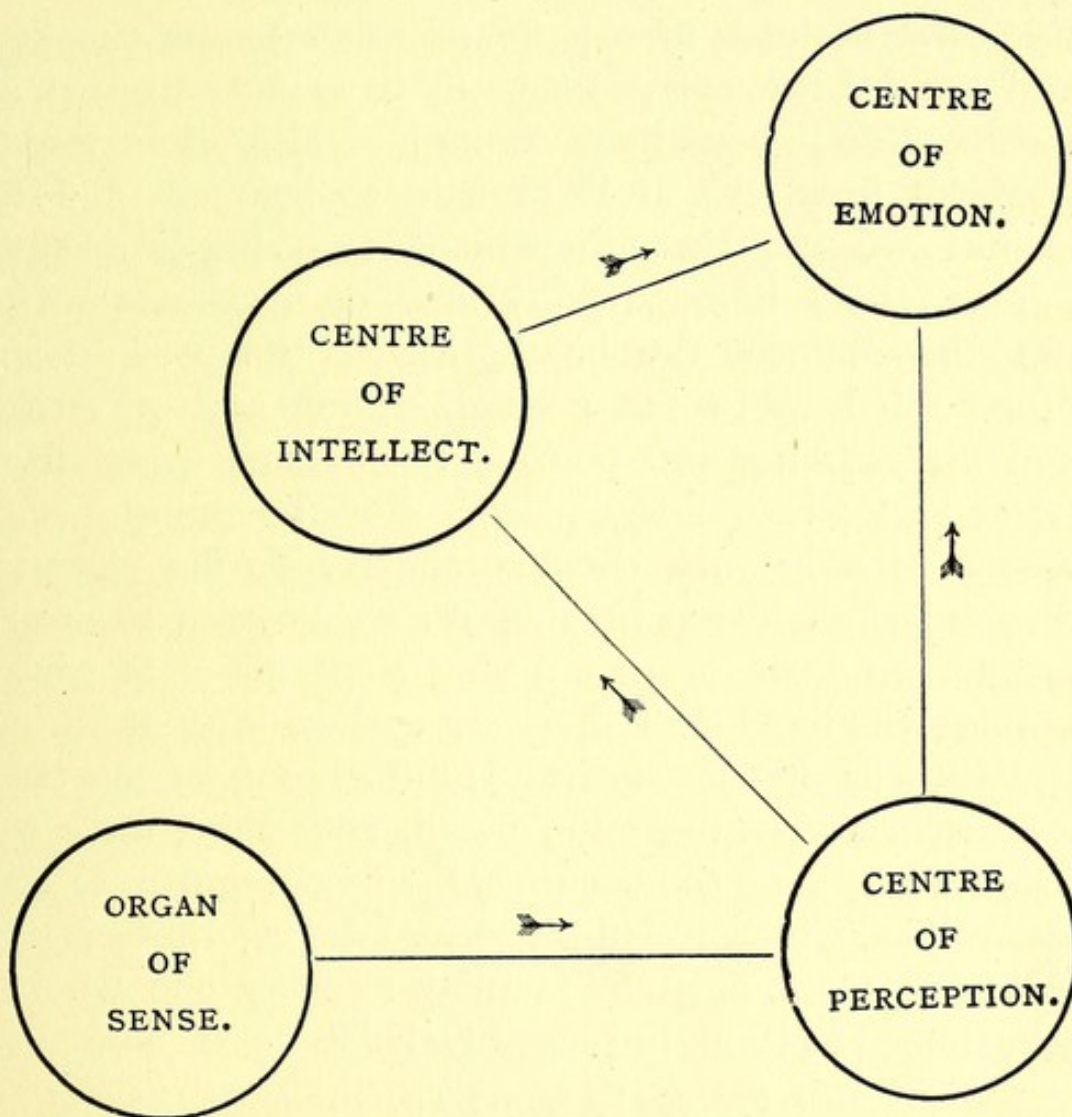
Perception is, then, the starting point of ideas. We must remember that the brain can originate nothing—ideas are not innate: they are, in the first place, derived from without. Can anyone born blind give any personal description of colour? Can one born deaf have any true perception of sound? As will be seen by the accompanying diagram, simple perception generally becomes further elaborated in the centre of intellect before it excites emotion, though it may and often does happen that the simplest perceptions produce at once emotion without having been so elaborated.

Perceptions are, of course, subject to aberrations caused either—1st, by disorder of the organ of special sense (eye, ear, nose, etc.); 2nd, by disorder of the nerves of transmission; or, 3rdly, by disorder of the brain itself.

Before leaving this division of the Mind, let me



explain to you, that though no true knowledge of any external object can be obtained without the intervention of the organs of special sense, yet in certain diseased or disordered states of the brain (temporary or otherwise) *false perceptions* may arise, having their origin entirely in the brain itself and necessitating for their creation no sense organ. These are called *Hallucinations*. They are known to be found in those who have lost their eyesight, their hearing, or other special sense ; but





you must clearly bear in mind that no one can have a hallucination of any sense unless he has at some period of his existence been able to exercise that special sense.

II.—Intellect.      The sense impressions, after having been received by the centre of perception, are transmitted to the grey substance of the convolutions of the brain, and there, are further elaborated. It is in this portion of the brain that the highest and most wonderful of all mental functions is situated. “The Intellect is an excellent—sometimes an exquisite—tool, but nothing more; for it needs to be checked and guided at every turn, if it is not to slip in the hand and wound the owner; or else, it is like a powerful hose, which if brought to bear on a dirty mental window through which it is impossible to see and held there steadily may do excellent work; but the moment the hand-grasp is relapsed, down drops the hose to the ground, coiling and quivering and serpentineing and pouring its streams at its own sweet will all over the place. For the mind never seems to stop—not even, probably, during sleep—though we often stop holding it: we guide it severely, say, for an hour or two during some piece of work, keeping the hand well upon it, and making it throw straight (reason consecutively); but as soon as our task is finished we put the mind down, as it were, while we take a rest. And the vagaries, the inconsequences, the absurdities, which it will perpetrate during these intervals of freedom, must be familiar to every one who is accustomed to think introspectively.”\*

\* *Opposites* by LEWIS THORNTON.



I divide the Intellect into :

- a. Memory.
- b. { Judgment and Reason.
- c. Imagination.

a. Memory. All knowledge which from experience and education we gradually acquire in our daily life can be treasured up and preserved for future use in this wonderful storehouse. Countless sensations, myriads of images which have reached us through the sense avenues from that outside world by which we are and have been surrounded, are here all duly tabulated. A sudden emotion, an association of ideas, or a simple effort of the will, can often in one single instant, recall from this marvellous portion of our mind the knowledge, the feelings, the images of the past.

Hour by hour subjects occupy our thoughts, and numbers of them vanish, leaving no trace behind them ; but attention and association of ideas cause the mental tablet, Memory, to be continually filled up : and education and practice in the power of concentration increases tenfold the subject matter stored up, and that, too, without any apparent effort on our part to fix them in our memory.

Not only is attention and concentration required if we want to be certain of retaining various ideas and facts, ready to be recalled at a moment's notice ; we must also have method in our arrangement. As a man who keeps a properly-arranged commonplace book notes down his facts under their respective headings, to be found without any trouble at any time ; so must the man who wants to make a true and proper use of



this wonderful faculty of the mind, write down and arrange all he wishes to be indelibly engraved in that inexhaustible mental commonplace book—Memory.

*b. Reason and Judgment.* Dr. Johnson tells us: "Reason is the power by which man deduces one proposition from another, or proceeds from premises to consequences;" but this is not very clear, and is probably far too limited.

Reid considers the power of reasoning is so closely allied to that of judging, that he includes both under the name of Reason. By our reason and judgment we trace out, as it were, the relations of things: we compare facts with each other; we reason out the relations of causation, of degree, of composition, of character, of resemblance and of difference. We go still further, for we proceed to compare the impressions of our mind with external things, and we correct these impressions existing in our mind; and this experience, *plus* education, must of necessity strengthen the power of this mental process and make the chances of our arriving at right conclusions all the more certain.

It is this reason and judgment that plays a prominent part in the sanity or insanity of many of us. If we can reason and judge properly with regard to sense deception generally, how well it is for us! Let us however believe all we see and hear, without reasoning out truth or fallacy, into what paths of difficulty may we be led, and how soon may this part of our intellect become so perverted as to be absolutely unsound! Education has, of course, done much for this mental process, but even knowledge may be wrongly utilised and false reasoning seriously interfere with healthy action.



We may then say that the use of reason and judgment is in the investigation of truth, and that therefore this faculty more than any other should be our staff and our guide in our walk through life.

c. Imagination. The etymology of this word, implying, as it does, a reference to visible objects, is unquestionably faulty ; and though Addison and Reid and other philosophers, in days gone by, attempted to limit to the sense of sight the power of furnishing the imagination with all its pleasures and its pains, this limitation must be recognised at once, as far too arbitrary. Have not the poets long since recalled from their imagination the fragrance of the fields, the melody of the birds, and the pleasures of the epicurean ?

What do not the fine arts owe to imagination ? A creative imagination and a cultivated taste make up a combination which we at once recognise as "genius." What an influence it has, too, upon our character and our happiness, or misery, here on earth ! Let it be ill-regulated ; let our conduct gradually find itself under the entire influence of this fascinating mental process ; let judgment and reason, weakened by inactivity, at length lose their power ; to what may this wonderful and marvellous part of our mind lead us ? It is the wildest of our mental faculties, and try hard as you may, it is always endeavouring to tear itself away from the natural ties which bind it to reason ; and, as De Boismont points out, when it has succeeded in so doing, there are no fables, no strange beliefs, no singular illusions, or extravagant day-dreams that it will not propagate.

The Philosopher Bacon recognises this tendency of



our imagination when he tells us "we love better to believe than to examine." This false and misleading feature of us all is at the bottom of most of the sense deceptions of the present day, just as it always was in days gone by.

III.—Emotion. Bain includes in the word Emotion, all that is understood by feelings of pleasure, of pain, of passion, of affection, of sentiment.

The ancients always localised the emotions either in the heart, or in some other of the visceral organs; but we believe that they are located in the grey matter of the brain, and we further know, though an idea may excite and produce an emotion, that any emotion may originate solely from the direct transmission of a perception to an emotional centre—for we know that the feeling of uneasiness in the stomach, consequent upon an undigested meal, may produce the most profound melancholy.

That many of us are, in our actions and beliefs through life, guided by our emotions, rather than by our intellect, is well known. Reasoning and judgment are suspended, and conduct guided and controlled by some emotional feeling, often, unfortunately, leading us in our actions very much astray.

IV.—Will. Emotion, thoughts, and the so-called voluntary actions, are all said to be controlled by the Will, though I, for my part, cannot go so far as this. Some mental philosophers disbelieve the existence of a *will proper*, and ascribe our actions as the result of the strongest motives; but though fully recognising the great influence of motives on all we say or do throughout life, still, I like to realise that a *will proper* may



be justly regarded as one of the divisions of the Mind.

The influence of the Will is greatest over our muscular system, next over our thoughts, and least of all over our emotions. People who are said to control their feelings, may be generally considered, not as being able to hold their feelings in subjection, but simply to control the manifestation of them.

A story is told of two officers who were serving together in the Peninsular War, which well illustrates the volitional control of the manifestations of a powerful emotion. One of them, whom I will call Capt. Smith, was remarkable for his bull-dog bravery, which never failed him, under any circumstances, when mere animal courage was required. The other, Capt. Jones, was a good officer, but was thought by some to be deficient in the contempt of danger, which is, after all, the least qualification of a soldier. The bullets were whistling around, when Capt. Smith, riding up to Capt. Jones, who stood, pale but collected, at his post, said with inexcusable *brusquerie* to be expected of such a person :

“Capt. Jones, you look as if you were frightened !”

“Yes,” replied Jones, “I am frightened ; and if you were half so much frightened as I am, you would run away !”

Consciousness is necessary for the exercise of the will power. If we are not conscious, our actions are no longer voluntary ; they are automatic.

Hartley, in his “*Observations on Man*,” confounds will with desire ; and Mill, in his *Analysis of the Human Mind*, holds a like view. Desire and will, however, may be in direct opposition to each other. I have a



gentleman under my care now who is a thorough instance of this. He will say, "I know it is wrong to break this cup I have in my hand ; I don't want to do it, but I must," and down the cup goes on the floor ; and many other actions, the result of a distinctly perverted will power, take place constantly.

Sir Robert Christison mentions a case of a gentleman who was often unable to do very simple acts which he wished to perform. For instance, in undressing for the night, he would be two hours before he could take off his coat ; all his mental faculties, except his will, being perfect.

The will power is freely developed by education, and instances of what this power is able to do, if determinedly and properly exercised, come before our notice day by day.

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## CHAPTER III.

Description, Physiology, and Classification of  
Hallucinations and Illusions.

*Sense Deceptions generally—Definition of Hallucination and Illusion—Physiology of Hallucination and Illusion—Classification.*

Sense Deceptions generally. **H**ALLUCINATION and Illusion are the scientific terms for deception of the senses, but these terms hardly convey to the ordinary mind all that is included under the heading. The senses may be deceived by some defect in the sense organ, or they may derive the deception from the morbid unhealthy imagination entirely, or from some unsound condition of the brain. Again, they may, by falsely perceiving a real object and, from many causes, by looking upon it as something different to what it is, be illuded. Finally the senses may have fraud exercised upon them by the trickery and imposture of others. All these will be considered in this work; but Hallucination and Illusion must be looked at scientifically and carefully by themselves, and rightly understood, if we wish to have clearly explained the rationale of many seemingly supernatural effects.

Definitions of Hallucination and Illusion. Dr. Maudsley's definitions of Hallucination and Illusion are to my mind by far the clearest. He says: "By *Hallucination* is meant such a false perception of sense as a person has when he sees, hears, touches, or otherwise



approaches, as external, that which has no existence at all outside his consciousness, no objective basis—he sees a person, where there is no person; hears a voice, when there is no voice.

When there is an external object which excites the perception, but the nature of it is mistaken, then an *illusion* is produced. Thus a man in the twilight mistakes a stump of a tree for a cow. That would be an *illusion*."

It must be patent to all ordinary observers that whereas *illusions* of the senses are of very common occurrence to us all, *hallucinations* must be rare indeed, unless the mind has in some way or other departed from a truly healthy state. A highly imaginative person may gradually, by habit and practice, develop hallucination of the senses, but it is indeed a dangerous habit.

Though I have given a very decided definition of hallucination and illusion, the actual line of demarcation between the two is often almost impossible to be traced, so gradually does one fade off, as it were, into the other.

Dr. Hack Tuke, in one of his works, mentions a case of a lady who had been thinking very greatly about the erection of a drinking fountain, and one day, when out walking she saw plainly before her on one side of the road a drinking fountain with the text perfectly legible—"Come unto me, all ye that thirst," &c. On approaching the imaginary fountain, she discovered it was a heap of stones. Here, then, was an Illusion, for there was an external object which she had falsely perceived; but it is doubtful whether without the heap of



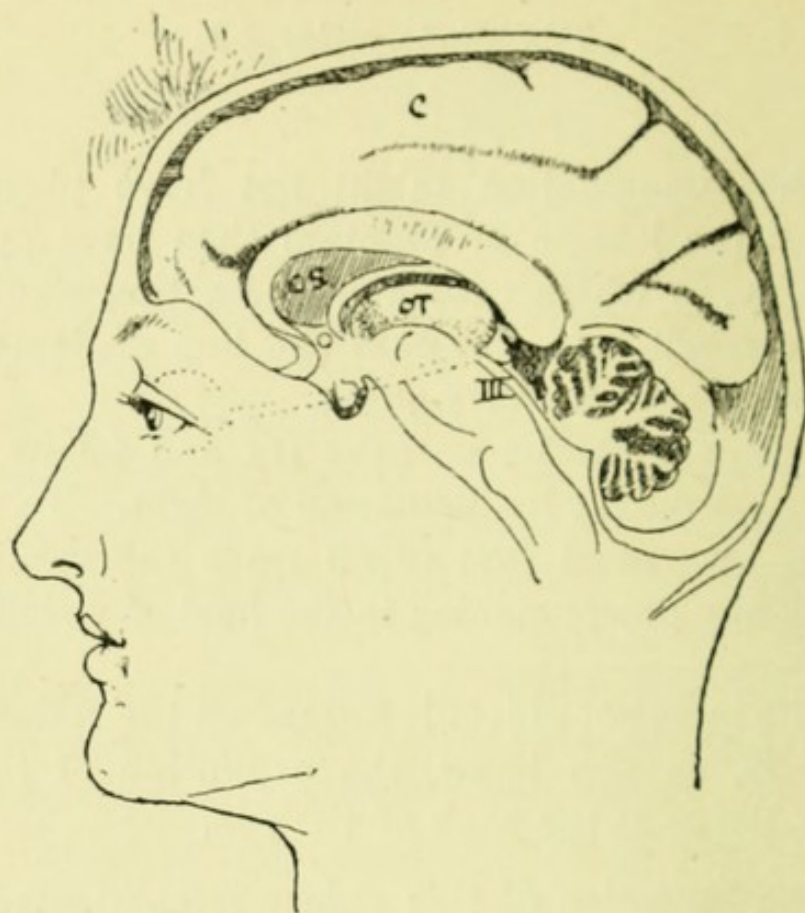
stones her imagination might not have played her false, and the imaginary fountain then have appeared as a reality, in which case a hallucination would have been the result. In any case the line of demarcation between the two was very slight.

Physiology  
of  
Hallucination.

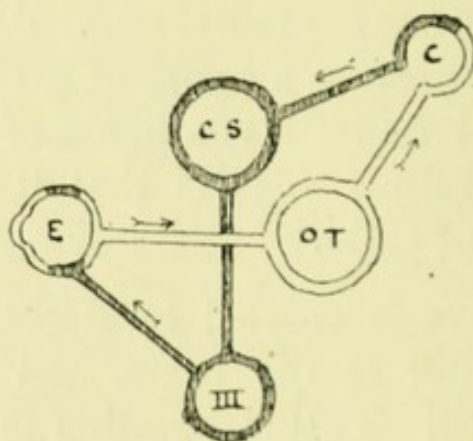
Now let us next try and follow out an ordinary hallucination of sight. To do this we must first of all trace the result of an image or any object coming in the field of vision.

- 1st. The image or object is formed on the retina, which is, as you know, the expansion of the optic nerve at the back of the eye.
- 2nd. The sensation of this object is conducted to the centre of perception by nerves, and in this centre the nature of this object is perceived generally, but not individualised. For instance, let the object be a figure of a person. So far we perceive that it is a figure of a person, and we generally recognise that it is a man, or woman, or child.
- 3rd. The sensation is carried by nerve fibres to the grey matter of the brain, and is there fully elaborated. This elaboration is helped partly by memory and by reason, but something more is necessary. The eye must be further adjusted so as to take in all the characteristic peculiarities of the figure, and this is done by what is called reflex action through the motor nerve-fibres to the muscles of the eyes, and by the due and proper adjustment of this organ of





I



II

## EXPLANATION OF PLATE.

E.—The Eye. O.T.—The Optic Thalamus (the organ of perception). C.—Cortex, or grey matter of brain. C.S.—Corpus Striatum, or organ of motion. III.—Motor ganglia of the nerve which supplies the muscles of the eye.



sense a more definite formation of the figure is determined; and we now, maybe, realise that the figure is that of a person well known to us, and according to the amount of attention we bestow we should be able to give a more or less accurate description of the dress, &c.

- 4th. The sensation thus elaborated may by attention be stored up in the brain, and may thus persist as memory.

Now, by emotion, by some association of ideas, or by some effort of the Will, we are able to recall these sensations, in which case a simple reminiscence is the result. Supposing, however, this reminiscence, for some cause or other, becomes so intensified to the very highest degree, we get an apparent *re-presentation* of the object—a scene called up from memory—and a *hallucination* is produced.

We must, however, go a step further than this; for though a hallucination may be simply an intensified re-presentation of something we have actually seen, heard, &c., it may be, and often is, a re-presentation of something we have read of, heard of, &c., and our idea of which has been stored up in our memory without any actual image having been seen by the eye, without any corresponding sound having reached the ear.

An imaginative person, superstitious, and imbued with strong ideas of the supernatural, visits a house supposed to be haunted. He has heard that a white figure has been seen at a certain time of night wandering through one of the galleries, or, maybe, making its appearance in the room which has been placed at his



disposal. What more likely than that this figure, which he has only heard of and never seen, should present itself to his vision, to be firmly believed in by his imaginative superstitious mind, when the hours of darkness have added to his belief in the supernatural.

In the sane a waking hallucination may not be contrary to reason, but in the insane we shall find it is generally extravagant, absurd, and often terrific.

Explanation of Illusion. This is much simpler. We see some object, we hear a sound, we smell, taste, or touch something, but we may not perceive it. An illusion is a mistake of something made from without inwards, whereas a hallucination is a mistake from within outwards. A person sees a ball roll over the floor, and obtaining from it the false perception that it is a mouse, has an illusion of the sense of sight; another, maybe, hearing the rustling of leaves in the stillness of the night, perceives in it the whispering of voices near him, and is the subject of an illusion of hearing; whilst yet another, having some pleasant scent to smell, or something with a sweet flavour placed on his tongue, falsely perceives in the first place that he has turpentine near his nostrils, or, in the second, that he has some horrid bitter taste in his mouth. These are illusions of the senses of smell and taste.

The causes of illusions are many. Defect or disorder of the sense organ, of the nerves of transmission, or of the organ of perception, may produce an illusion. Pre-occupation of thought, imagination and want of attention may cause a false perception, whilst, as we shall see further on, suggestion to certain persons in what is called the hypnotic state will induce illusions of



all the senses. Illusion plays a prominent part in all tricks, whether mechanical or purely sleight-of-hand.

*Classification.* The whole subject of sense deceptions is far more abstract than many imagine and to attempt any definite treatise on the subject, classification is necessary; yet it is not only difficult, but, I fear, unsatisfactory. Varied have been the attempts, in all times, by some of the most learned philosophers, to properly and adequately classify these extraordinary products of our minds.

The simpler the division, the better and easier to be understood by the ordinary reader, and as this book is not intended for anyone else, I can only trust that the classification adopted will be clear to all, though it may be very far from a truly scientific one.

Mons. Leuret divided hallucinations and illusions into two large classes: I.—Those occurring during the waking state, and II.—Those occurring during sleep. But I prefer a different division altogether, and the following is the classification to which I shall adhere throughout this book:

- A.—Hallucinations and illusions co-existing with a sound state of mind.
- B.—Doubtful cases.
- C.—Hallucinations co-existing with, and in many cases, being the sole evidence of an unsound state of mind.
- D.—Hallucinations and illusions caused by either a direct or indirect poisoned blood supply, circulating through the brain, as in delirium of



drunkenness, in delirium of narcotic and other poisoning, and in delirium of various fevers, diseases, etc.

Looking generally at classes A and C, it has been said, that in order to call the persons, who are the subjects of hallucinations and illusions, insane, it must be proved that the intellect is more or less defective, that the individual is no longer master of his own judgment or his will, and that consequently his conduct is often guided by those false and insane sense impressions : —but, in whatever way we look upon this subject, we find it impossible to place in either of these classes some of the well-known subjects of hallucinations and illusions, and I therefore have made another class, B, described under the heading of “Doubtful cases.”

To a very large extent, I think the fairest way would be to take each individual case and classify it, *not* according to the nature of the hallucination, and the effect on the general condition of the individual ; but, according to the period in which the individual lived, his surroundings and his educational advantages or otherwise. We shall then be able with perfect fairness to say that some of the authenticated histories of visions and so-called supernatural communications, owing their origin to the prevalent superstitions and the dearth of proper education, might readily be placed in class A, whereas if these histories were recounted of persons of the present day, with all the advantages of education and its scientific truths, we might justly, I take it, consider that we were entitled to add them to our list in class B.



*SANE SENSE DECEPTIONS.*



THE END OF THE WORLD



## CHAPTER IV.

## Ordinary Sense Deceptions.

*Simple Sense Deceptions—Atmospheric Illusions—The Mirage—The Fata Morgana—The Giant of the Brocken Mountain—Fog Spectres—Case of Dr. Lombard—A Murderer's Hallucination—A Lover's Apparition—Nicolai—Sir Walter Scott's Friend's Illusion—An American's Illusion—Beethoven—Luther—The Demon of Socrates—Hallucinations and Illusions by Suggestion—Epidemic Hallucinations and Illusions—Vampires—Mrs. A.'s Sense Deceptions—De Quincey's Day Dreams.*

Simple Sense Deceptions. SOME of the simplest of these are so common, so frequently occurring to all of us, that they hardly need description. How many of us, when thinking of putting on a pair of silk or cotton gloves, have our teeth put on edge to the same extent as if the imaginary feeling of the gloves going on our fingers was a reality! This is a hallucination of the sense of touch. Again, how often does it happen that the recollection of some offensive smell, which has made us feel "mortal sick" as the Yankee would say, produced the same effect as the real smell! We, as it were, inhale the very same horrid odour, and it is so real, though only the product of our



imagination and memory, that reflex vomiting may actually take place ; but it is only a hallucination of the sense of smell.

It is said of the French novelist, Balzac, that, while writing the story of the poisoning of one of the chief characters by arsenic, he had such a distinct taste of the metallic poison in his mouth that he thought he was himself poisoned, and absolutely vomited his dinner. This, as Dr. Maudsley points out, is indeed an interesting and effective proof of the power of imagination over sense.

Atmospheric  
Illusions.

By certain atmospheric conditions our senses are often illuded, and many are the examples of this class of sense deception. By the ignorant and superstitious these illusions are easily and readily looked upon as supernatural, and many are the romantic stories that owe their origin to the frauds practised on the senses by the vagaries of the atmosphere.

When the atmosphere is of equal density the rays of light pass without alteration in their shape or direction ; but when they enter from a rarer into a denser medium, they are refracted and bent out of their course. If the second medium be very dense in proportion, then the ray will be both refracted and reflected, and the object from which it proceeds will assume a variety of grotesque and extraordinary shapes.

The Mirage.

When the French army were in Egypt and in the desert between Alexandra and Cairo, the mirage of the blue sky was inverted and so mingled with the sand below as to impart to the



desolate and arid wilderness an appearance of the most rich and beautiful country. The soldiers saw in all directions green islands, surrounded with extensive lakes of water, and they hastened forward to enjoy the cool refreshment of shade and stream. When they arrived, the lake with its glorious transparent water, and the trees among whose foliage they longed for shade, had all vanished; nothing remained but the dreary desert of sand with its few arid and ragged shrubs.

In northern climes a similar illusion is often perceived. Cities, houses, battlements, are seen in desolate regions, and when approached they vanish, and nothing remains but a ragged rock or a misshapen iceberg.

The Fata Morgana. This is a further illustration of an optical illusion. The phenomenon is seen at the Pharo of Messina in Sicily, under certain conditions. The spectator must stand with his back to the east on an elevated place behind the city, commanding a view of the bay, and having the mountains like a wall opposite him, so as to darken the picture. No wind must be abroad to ruffle the surface of the sea; and the waters must be pressed up by currents, as they sometimes are, to a considerable height in the middle of the strait and present a slightly convex surface. When all these circumstances occur, as soon as the sun rises over the heights of the Calabrian shore and makes an angle of  $45^{\circ}$  with the horizon, all the objects on the shore at Riggio are transferred to the middle of the strait and are seen distinctly on the surface of the water forming an immovable landscape of rocks, trees and houses, and a movable one of men, horses and cattle. These are formed into a thousand separate compartments, pre-



senting most beautiful and ever-varying pictures of Nature.

The people of the country firmly believe in the reality of these illusions; and whenever this optical phenomenon occurs they will meet in crowds and view with curiosity and awe these varied pictures, considering that the edifices are the enchanted palaces of the fairy Morgana, and the moving objects the living things which occupy them.

The Lake of Killarney, which is bounded on one side by a semi-circle of rugged mountains, and on the other by a flat morass, is susceptible of producing these vivid illusions, and the imagination of many of the people, being quite as lively as that of the Sicilians, clothes them with the same amount of reality.

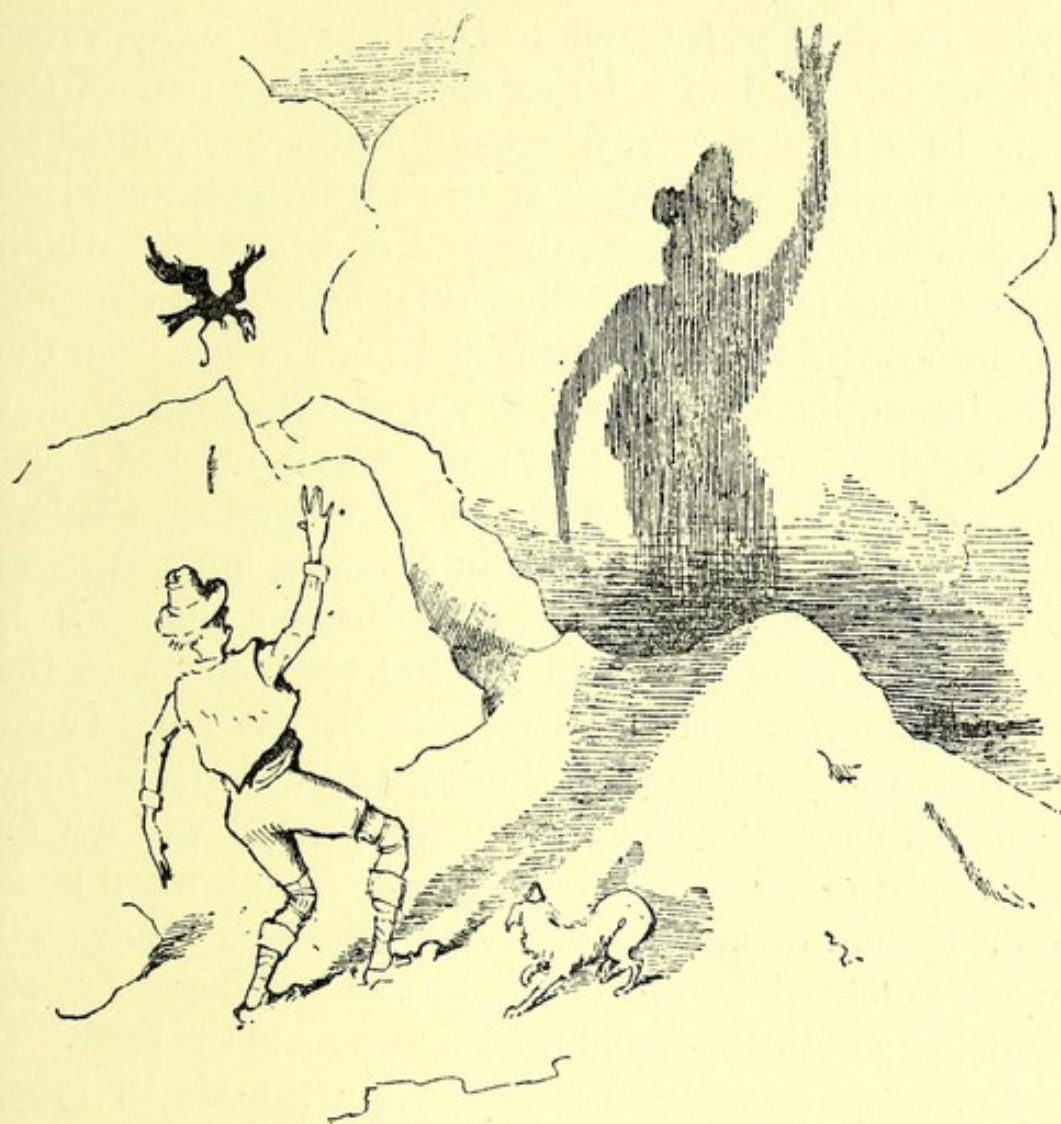
The Giant of  
the Brocken  
Mountain.

No doubt this remarkable illusion is familiar to most of my readers; but as some few may only have heard of it by name and not had it described, I will as shortly as possible give its history.

At certain times, a giant showed himself on the summit of the Brocken, the highest point of the Hartz mountains, and, as may be well imagined, greatly astonished all who saw it. For many years it was looked upon as distinctly belonging to the supernatural, and marvellous were the tales told of this prodigy. At last, a Mr. Hane, while looking at the giant, found his hat almost carried away by a gust of wind: suddenly he raised his hand to his head, the colossal figure did the same; he made another movement by bending his body, the spectral figure repeated it. Mr. Hane then called the landlord of the inn at which he was staying, and



they jointly repeated their experiments. The mystery was solved. It was simply an atmospheric illusion.



Fog Spectres.

From the *Daily Graphic* I quote the following: "Mr. A. W. Clayden read a paper before the Royal Meteorological Society on 'Brocken Spectres in a London Fog.' He explained that during dense fogs in February last, he made a number of experiments with the view of raising his own 'spectre.' This he ultimately succeeded in accomplishing by placing a steady lime-light a few feet behind his head,



when his shadow was projected on the fog. If he breathed heavily, so that the condensed vapour drifted across the shadow, fragments of circular glories appeared fringing the head of a larger shadow than that of the fog. In a similar way, when hot water was poured on a broom, which was waved at arm's length on the windward side of the shadow, the veil of dense mist which drifted from it gave a shadow intermediate in size, but no glories. If he stood about eight or ten feet from the light the outlines of the shadow were very distinct, but they became less so as he moved away, until at a distance of about twenty feet not a vestige of shadow could be seen. If a person is in a fog, he must be close to its margin, or the light will not throw a shadow. If he is on the margin, he will see the phenomena to the best advantage. If he is outside it, but not too far away for the details of his shadow to be sharp, he may be able to see the shadows of others, but will not be able to see much of the dark rays. Again, when he is in or upon the margin of the mist, his shadow will appear enlarged, and its apparent size will depend upon the density of the mist and the brightness of the light."

Coleridge ascended the Brocken mountain in 1799, with a party of students from Göttingen, but the atmosphere was now humid, and they did not see the spectre. In England, however, he evidently saw one of these "fog spectres," which he describes in the following lines:—

"Such as thou art as when  
The woodman winding westward up the glen  
At wintry dawn, when o'er the sheep-track maze  
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glistening haze,  
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,  
An image with a glory round its head."



Case of  
Dr. Lombard. Dr. Hack Tuke, in a recent number of *Brain*, describes a wonderful case of hallucination of sight in a friend of his, a Dr. Lombard, who, by intense mental attention, is able to recall, as absolute realities, figures which have as it were, been fixed on his mental tablet. So real do these figures seem, that they absolutely obscure from his view objects behind them.

Brewster no doubt would have considered such a case a proof of his theory, that a revival of an image did actually involve the organ of sense, the eye. Dr. Hack Tuke asks this question: "Can it be, that when an object which has been depicted on the retina is resuscitated (as in Dr. Lombard's case), the image appears on the retina, but when a purely fanciful picture, born of the fancy, or of dreams, appears in spectral form, the brain centre of sight, and not the retina, is the seat of the revived impression?"

Professor Sully answers "that such obscurity of objects behind the visual image, by the image, might easily depend *not* on the retina being involved, but on the form and persistence of the image, which would make simultaneous attention to real objects impossible." I certainly think this explanation is a very good and common-sense one.

Further proofs that Brewster's theory is not a right one, are, that blind persons (*i.e.* not blind from birth) have been the subjects of hallucination of sight, when the optic nerves have been, by a process of atrophy, so destroyed that there could have been no transmission of sight impressions on the retina; and again, by the experiment of producing double vision of a real image,



by pressing inwards (towards the nose) one eyeball—whereas, if the image be only a re-presentation, a hallucination, no double vision, is the result.

Dr. Lombard, who is the author of a well-known work on *Regional Temperature of the Head*, related his experiences of this peculiar power to Dr. Hack Tuke, so that some further particulars will, I am sure, be of value, and I therefore quote at some length, the history of his discovery of this singular power, taken from Dr. Tuke's article on "Hallucinations" in *Brain*. The author points out that Dr. Lombard's well-known accuracy in all his writings makes his statement doubly interesting.

"He had for some years occasionally seen images of persons and things, which he had been attentively regarding, but he took little notice of this circumstance, and they speedily disappeared from the field of vision. On the 3rd of December, 1862, however, a much more decided visualization occurred. He was then in the army, and stationed on the west coast of Maryland. A military man, his daughter, a naval officer, and Dr. Lombard were seated in the verandah of a house which stood within a stone's throw of Chesapeake Bay. The girl sat on the second of the steps leading down from the verandah. He himself was on the same step at the other end, there being about nine feet between them, and her profile being clearly in view. For no particular reason, he began to stare at her, at the same time concentrating all his attention upon the features. At the expiration of about twenty minutes, he turned his eyes towards the bay, simply to relieve them, when he saw before him the image of the girl very distinctly, and also in like manner all the objects that had been within the



range of his vision. The image began almost at once to fade, but he found that by fixing his whole attention upon it, that he could retain it. (To this power I particularly draw attention.) He next looked over her head towards a wood of Southern pine-trees, and again saw the image. He had repeated this experiment four or five times, when the girl turned her head towards him, and asked why he was staring at her so. Dr. Lombard described what he had seen, when, to his surprise, she laughed and told him he was only a beginner, and that he ought to be able to obtain in twenty seconds what had taken as many minutes. She then led him on the verandah where the moon shone brightly, and asked the naval officer to take note of the time occupied in the experiments. She told Dr. Lombard to keep everything but herself out of his mind, to look her full in the face, and then to run his eyes up and down her figure. In a few seconds she called 'Time!' and told him to look towards Chesapeake Bay, directing him to regard the image as attentively as he had regarded her previously. He then saw the image very distinctly. The time was twenty-two seconds. In the course of the evening many more experiments were made. In reply to her father and Dr. Lombard, she said she had discovered that she possessed this power through a school-fellow, two years before, who possessed the same faculty of voluntarily recalling spectral images."

Dr. Lombard told Dr. Tuke that he never saw faces other than those which he had known and had regarded attentively.

This strange and seemingly supernatural form of voluntarily calling up, as a real image, a pure phantasm



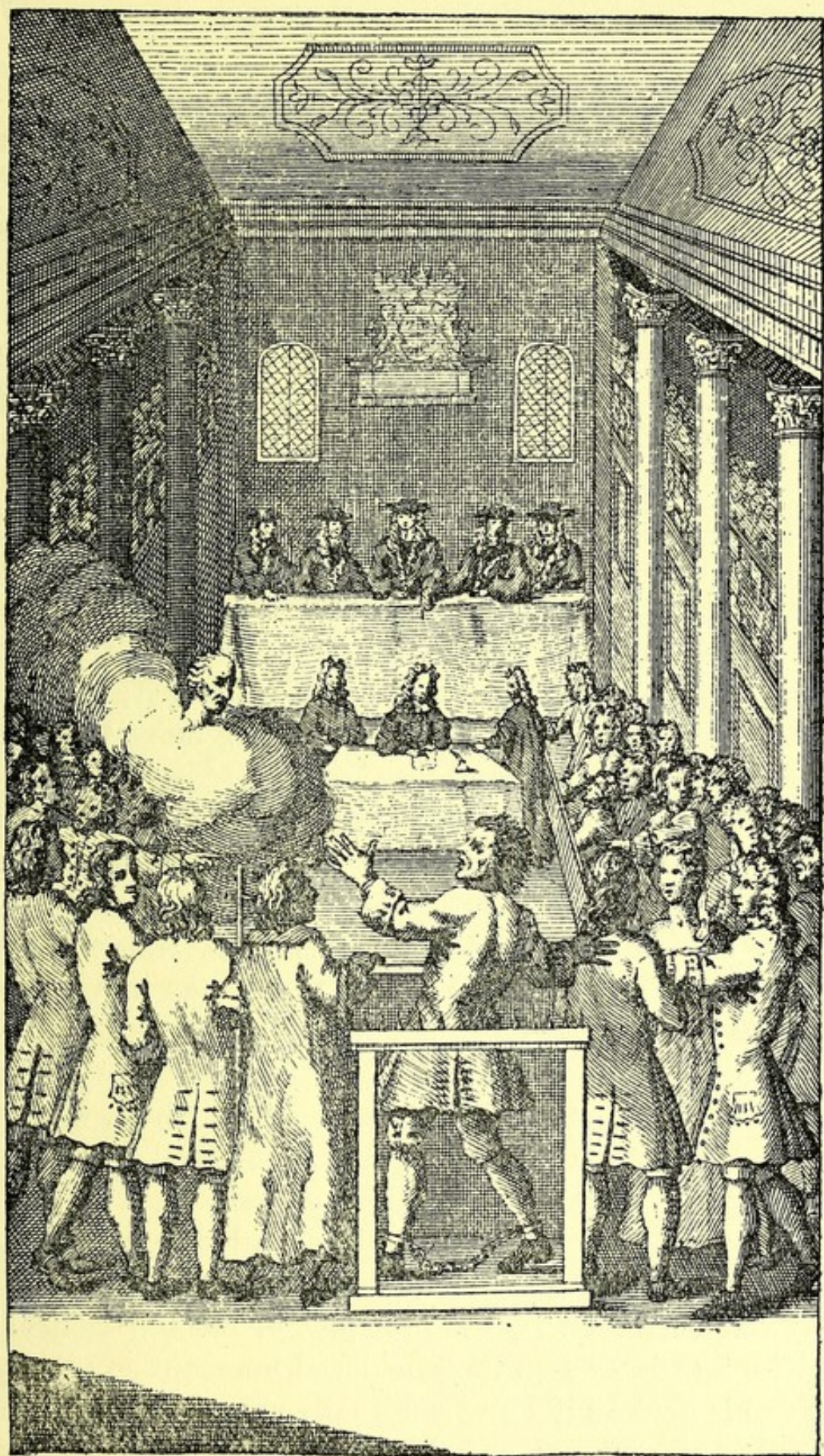
of memory is one not given to many in ordinary sound mental health, and is a power which certainly should not be practised; for probably, however strong reason and judgment may be, however firm a will the person may have, and however much he may look upon it as a natural mental power, still, if indulged in, it may prove but the stepping-stone to those many and varied sense deceptions which we meet with in the insane, and the mind may quickly pass into such a condition of unsoundness, that the border-land between sanity and insanity would not only be reached, but actually passed. The case of the painter Blake proves the truth of this warning.

A Murderer's  
Hallucination.

This most extraordinary story of a hallucination of sight, which happened to a man on his trial for murder, is related in a book entitled *The Universal History of Apparitions*, by Andrew Moreton, and published in 1738. I cannot do better than give it in the author's own words. It proves how conscience, acting on the imagination, "shows apparitions that no other eyes can see; makes ghosts to walk and departed souls appear, when the souls themselves know nothing of it."

"I have heard a story, which I believe to be true, of a certain man who was brought to the bar of justice on suspicion of murder, which, however, he knew it was not in the power of human knowledge to detect. When he came to hold up his hand at the bar, he pleaded 'Not guilty,' and the Court began to be at a loss for a proof, nothing but suspicious circumstances appearing. However, such witnesses as they had they examined as usual; the witness standing up, as is





*A Murderer's Hallucination.*



usual, upon a little step, to be visible to the Court. When the Court thought they had no more witnesses to examine, and the man in a few moments would have been acquitted, he gave a start at the bar, as if he was frightened; but recovering his courage a little, he stretches out his arm towards the place where the witnesses usually stood to give evidence upon trials, and pointing with his hand, 'My lord,' says he (aloud), 'that is not fair, and is not according to law; he's not a legal witness.' The Court is surprised, and cannot understand what the man means; but the Judge, a man of more penetration, took the hint, and checking some of the Court that offered to speak, and which would perhaps have brought the man back to himself; 'Hold!' says the Judge, 'the man sees something more than we do; I begin to understand him.'

"After some conversation with the Judge, and after an exhortation to confess his crime, the prisoner burst into tears and lamentations, and made a full confession; and in so doing he told the Judge: 'that he saw the murdered person standing upon the step as a witness, ready to be examined against him, and ready to show his throat, which was cut by him (the prisoner); and who,' as he said, 'stood staring full upon him, with a frightful countenance, and this confounded him' (as well it might.) And yet there was no real apparition, no ghost, or appearance; it was all figured out to him by the power of his guilt and the agitation of his soul, fired and surprised by the influence of his conscience."

The murderer sees the murdered innocent as plainly before his eyes as if he was actually sent back from his place to charge him; nay, he sees him without eyes, he



is present with him sleeping and waking; he sees him when he is not to be seen, and testifies to his guilt, with no need of other witnesses.

A Lover's  
Apparition.

A clergyman, under the *nom de plume* of "Senex," published, some ten years ago, a book entitled *Clerical Reminiscences*, all of which are from his own personal experience; and there is a weird story told which quite reminds one of those beliefs in vampires, which even now seem to be prevalent in Eastern Europe, if we are to credit the accounts we read in the newspapers. Two lovers had agreed that the first who died should appear to the survivor. Suddenly the young lady broke off the engagement, and married a new flame. Whether from grief or not, is not stated; suffice it, the young man soon after the wedding of the girl he had thought so true and devoted a lover, died. After his death, she believed she saw him standing, night after night, at her bedside. She rapidly broke down in health; when it occurred to her that if she could only see his dead body her hallucination might be cured. "Senex" goes on to say that he allowed the grave to be opened, the coffin taken out, and the corpse exposed to the view of the young lady; and that from that hour the apparition of her departed lover visited her no more.

Nicolai.

You all remember the celebrated case of the Berlin bookseller, in the last century: how he lived for so long surrounded by phantoms; how, by exercising his reason and his judgment, and being of a scientific turn of mind, instead of sending for a priest to exorcise his ghostly visitors, called in a physician, examined by calm, philosophical investigation the condition of his mind and body, took a course of medicine,



and soon had the happiness to find that his visitors, becoming day by day dimmer and fainter, gradually entirely vanished.

Sir Walter Scott mentions a good example of a sane illusion which happened to a friend of his. Not long after the death of Lord Byron, a friend, who had known the deceased poet well, was engaged, during the darkening twilight of an autumn evening, in perusing a publication depicting the habits and opinions of the distinguished individual. He put down his book and passed out into the hall, through which the moon was beginning to shine; and before him, standing amongst the articles of armour, the quaint furniture, and the skins of animals with which this part of the house was fantastically fitted up, he saw the exact representation of Lord Byron, whose recollection had been at that moment so strongly brought before his imagination. He stopped to notice the wonderful accuracy with which fancy had impressed the bodily eye, the peculiarities of dress and posture of the illustrious poet. Sensible, however, of the illusion, he stepped forward towards the figure, and at once saw that a screen, a great-coat, a shawl, and a plaid had composed and completed this wonderful illusion.

An American's Illusion. One of the most peculiar cases of sane visual illusion of which I have read is mentioned by Professor Hammond. A lawyer is so subject to illusions of the sense of sight, that he has a difficulty in recognising people. He will mistake a stranger for an intimate friend, and pass an acquaintance or a relative without recognising him. If one of the latter would say, "Why, J——, don't you know



me?" he would stop, look his questioner in the face, and answer, "So far as I know, I never saw you before; but I'll take your word for it. Who are you?" And when told, he would reply, "Oh, all right; I suppose you are, but you don't look like anyone I ever knew."

This case is certainly interesting and amusing. At first it would strike one as simple want of memory, but when more closely examined one realises that Professor Hammond is right when he calls these mistakes illusions. Mr. J—— falsely perceived. Faces familiar to him seemed so altered in character that he did not know them, whilst strangers assumed in his eyes the aspect of friends and relations.

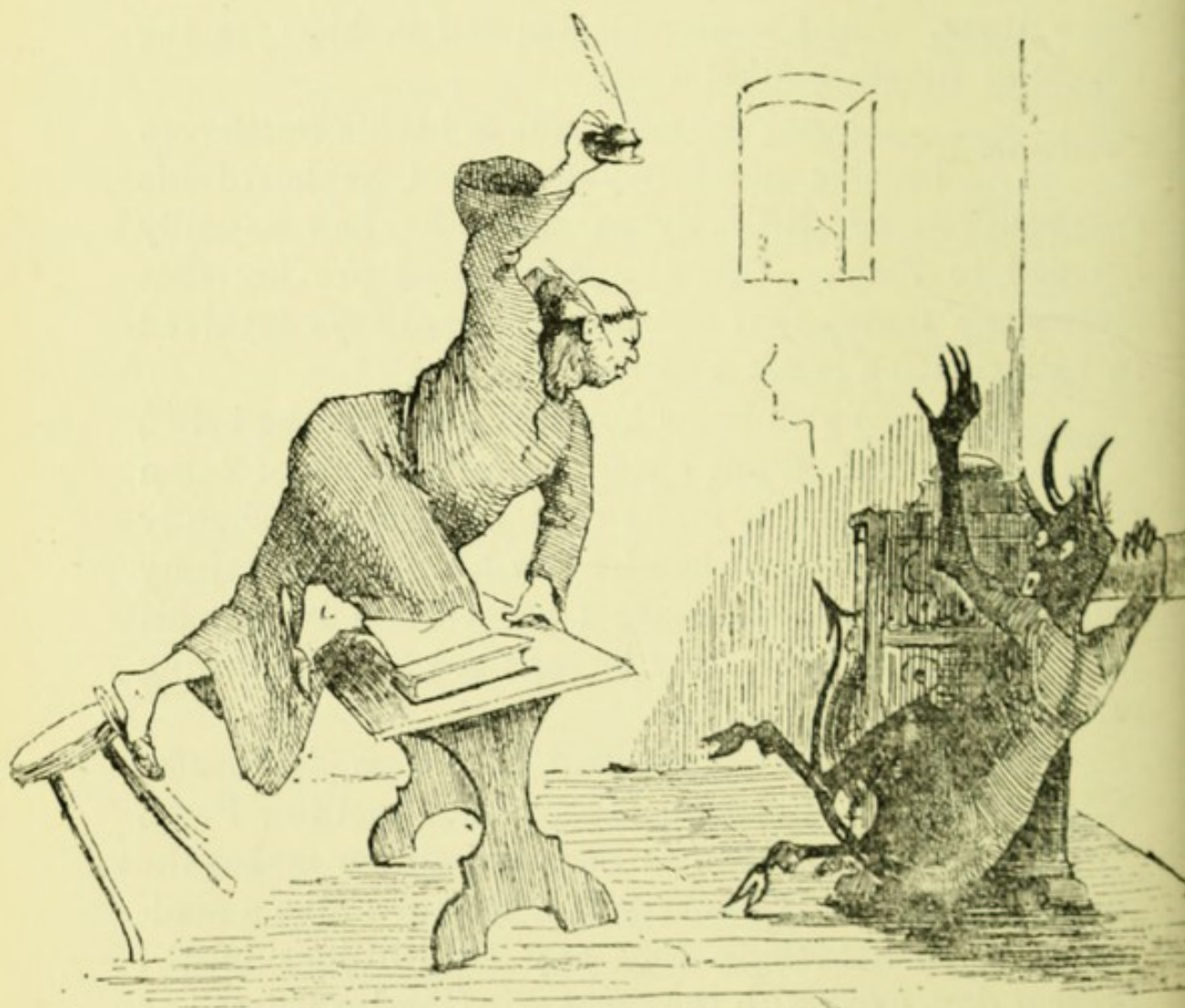
Beethoven. During the last years of his life Beethoven became absolutely deaf, but he heard his compositions as distinctly as when he had actually listened to them. This is another case proving that Brewster's theory that sense organ is always involved in hallucination is not a correct one.

Luther. We all know how common was the belief, in the middle ages, that apparitions of Satan constantly appeared; and we remember how slightly Luther was surprised when he saw his Satanic Majesty walk into his cell, and make a great noise behind his stove, and how vehemently he repulsed him by flinging an ink-pot at his head!

In a work entitled *Du Démon de Socrates*,  
The Demon of Socrates. par L. F. Lélut, Membre de l'Institut, Paris, and published in 1856, the author makes the somewhat startling discovery that Socrates was a mad-man. I do not think that any British jury in the present day, even with the great Sir Charles Russell as



counsel for the petitioner thrown in, would bring in a verdict of "Insane, and incapable of managing his own affairs," were a petition presented for a judicial inquiry into the state of mind of this great genius. True, Aristophanes thought him a fit subject for caricature; but this does not prove him a madman. True, he was peculiar both in manner and in dress: so are many of the wise heads of the present day. True, too, his mockery was severe and his language ironical; but that surely is no sign of insanity. Again, we have it recorded that he seldom wore shoes, that as he



*Luther's Hallucination.*



walked along the street he strutted with haughty and supercilious air, stopping occasionally to gaze, as it were, at some fixed spot; and that with these peculiarities, added to his personal appearance, his turned-up nose and unwieldy body, he was an object to be noticed. But surely this may all pass as eccentricity, born possibly of love of notoriety, and cannot be pointed to as proofs of an unsound mind.

The Oracle of Delphi had given his opinion that "none was wiser than Socrates." We know that, living in an age of impurity, he was pure; surrounded by luxuries of the most luxurious city of the world, he was temperate; amidst thought swamped by sophism, he was clear-sighted; that no one was a sterner rebuker of vice, no one a greater living reproach to impurity.

By what arguments then, and for what reasons, can Mons. Lélut prove this great and good man to have been insane? Simply upon the oft-contested point of the demon or familiar spirit of Socrates. Mons. Lélut declares that this was a true hallucination of hearing, that it was possibly also a hallucination of sight; and that because Socrates believed in its reality, because he allowed his life to be greatly guided by it, that therefore it was a hallucination, the outcome of an unsound mind, and Socrates was a madman !

Now, without going into the discussion of the nature of this so-called demon, without accepting as real the explanation that it was only a name he gave to those convictions on practical subjects which sprang up spontaneously in his mind, and which he felt constrained to follow, as we do our conscience; let us at once allow that he had a true *hallucination*, and that he believed in



it. Let us think of the age in which he lived; let us remember the belief at that time in Polytheism; let us consider that Socrates felt satisfied himself that he had a special and devout mission; that he, like all the thinkers of that day, was assured in his own mind that there was<sup>f</sup> a certain inferior order of spirits who were the intermediate agents in carrying out the Supreme will; and then ask ourselves the question—Do we agree with Mons. Lélut? The answer is certain. It could not be otherwise. Negative it must be.

This is a vastly interesting subject, and one might almost write a volume upon it alone. Doubtless, many have been present at some of the recent hypnotic or mesmeric séances, and have seen what suggestion on the part of the operator will do towards forming, in many of his subjects, distinct deceptions of the senses. There is a great deal of cheating and collusion mixed up with the entertainment: still there are undoubtedly genuine cases where the will power being weak and the imagination extensive, the minds of the subjects are really prone to have their senses thus deceived.

Mesmerism died out because its practice so soon passed into the hands of charlatans and mountebanks. Hypnotism is being dragged down in the same way; and I feel certain that the Germans were thoroughly justified in making public exhibitions of this revived mental experiment a penal offence. It would have been wise if we had done likewise.

In hypnotic suggestion, illusions are more easily produced than hallucinations. By suggesting to a hypnotised person that, we will say, an antimacassar thrown



carelessly on a chair is a cat, a cat is apparently seen ; but, should there be no external object to be mistaken, it is difficult to make the hypnotic subject believe that he sees the animal suggested. I cannot do better than quote from that interesting work on "Hypnotism," by Albert Moll, of Berlin, and published in the *Contemporary Science Series*. "In hypnotic subjects hallucinations of sight are more easily caused when the eyes are closed ; the subjects then see objects and persons with their eyes shut, as in dreams. They think at the same time that their eyes are open, just as we are unaware in dreams that our eyes are shut. . . . The other organs of sense may also be deluded. I knock on the table, and give the idea that cannon are fired ; I blow with the bellows, and make the suggestion that an engine is steaming up. In the same way smell, taste, and touch may be the senses deceived. It is well known that hypnotics will drink water, or even ink, for wine ; will eat onions for pears, will smell ammonia for Eau de Cologne, &c. . . . Tell the subject he has taken snuff ; he sneezes. Tell a person he is standing on ice ; he feels cold at once ; he trembles, his teeth chatter, he wraps himself in his coat."

Several of the sense organs can in the same way be deceived at one and the same time. Suggest that the subject has in his hand a large bottle of scent ; he feels it in his hand, he sees it with his eyes, he smells the scent.

Before leaving this subject of Hypnotism I cannot resist quoting M. Zola's opinion about it, which he gave to an interviewer some short time ago. He admitted that in his time he had been present at various



séances, under the auspices of Daudet, Slade, and Gibier, dealing with magnetism, spiritualism, and hypnotism; but he avowed that he had carried away from these manifestations simply the desire not to be drawn into them again, and to take no account in his books of the "new science." "To what extent," he asked, "had the experiments, performed up to the present time, been conclusive? I want other proofs of 'suggestion' than those which have been set forth so mysteriously. Why should not a man whose wife is peevish suggest to her that she possesses every virtue, including a sweet disposition? To me these susceptible beings, who are capable of being hypnotised to the point of submitting to a dominating influence, and of losing their individual free-will, are neither more nor less than phenomena of the same class as the Siamese twins and the sheep with five legs. Simple physiology explains to us enough, without obliging us to have recourse to hypnotism; and, if I admit that a vigorous temperament may have a certain measure of influence over a feeble one—the influence that a strong man may have over a weak one—I refuse absolutely to believe that this influence can go so far as to make him commit crime."

I think most of my readers will agree with M. Zola, and thank him for his outspoken, common-sense views.

"But one 'Ism' still prevailing, shows no sign as yet of failing—

Nay, it daily serves excitement new to yield;

And, 'midst persons of all classes, from the monarch to the masses,

It's Hypnotism now that leads the field!

Books and pamphlets polyglot launch new theories hypnotic,

And doctors fresh phenomena declare;



Whilst when dining, or when dancing, there's no gossip so  
entrancing

As that inspired by La Saltpétrière.

And so many are inquiring, with an industry untiring,

Into secrets which at present mystify,

That whate'er the future history of this strange hypnotic mystery,

It isn't fated yet to pass and die.

No, Hypnotical experiment

Will induce much further merriment

Before it is its fate to pass and die!"

*Truth*, Xmas Number, 1890.

Epidemic  
Hallucinations  
and  
Illusions. Suggestion has played a prominent part  
in those epidemic sense deceptions which  
were so rife in days gone by. The story of  
the wag who, by calling the attention of a  
crowd collected in Trafalgar Square to the shaking  
of the lion's tail, caused a very large proportion of  
the number present to believe in the reality of what  
they, from his suggestion, expected to see, must be  
well remembered.

The spectators who witnessed the sacrifice of the  
heroic Joan of Arc declared they saw the sacred name  
of "Jesus," the last word she uttered, inscribed in the  
flames.

During the reign of Charles II. mimic battles were  
seen in the clouds—armed knights encountered each  
other, and the clouds became the colour of blood.  
Illusion, hallucination, and suggestion being the evident  
factors in the belief.

Of all the periods remarkable for the number of  
these epidemic hallucinations, the Crusades stand out  
in bold relief. Everything here concurred to favour the  
production of the marvellous in the minds of the



Crusaders. Religion, ignorance, anarchy, and the still lingering fear that the end of the world was at hand, were exciting causes. The very name of the East had in its sound something magical. Was it not the land where the wonders of the Old Testament and the miracles of the New had been accomplished? Was it not still the birthplace of a thousand marvellous tales? How easily, then, did the imaginations of the people become inflamed! Hardly had the signal for the first crusade been given when apparitions made their appearance; and these prodigies were multiplied without end when the Crusaders had penetrated into the regions of Asia.

The supposed visions of ecstasies and religious enthusiasts may, I think, be readily explained by saying that these apparitions were nothing more than reproductions, by remembrance, of the sculptures, the pictures, &c., by which these devotees were surrounded, and before which their devotions were made.

The influence of dominant ideas on the nature of hallucinations cannot be doubted, when we remember that with the Greeks they assumed the form of gods and shepherds, of wood elves, of water elves, and fairies; with the Romans, that of genii; whilst in the middle ages, as we have seen, saints, angels, and devils were invariably the figures in all the visions of those days.

In Hungary, Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, Vampires. Poland, and some parts of Russia, there existed, not so very many years ago, the superstitious delusion concerning the "materialised ghosts" of those the earth rejected from her bosom, called "Vampires."



These persons, who may have been dead a considerable time, are believed to leave their graves or tombs, and coming back amongst their relatives to frighten and terrify them, to suck their life-blood, and cause thereby their death in a short space of time. The only way to deliver the relatives from the power of such a vampire was to disinter the body, impale it, burn it, cut off the head, or pierce the heart.

So prevalent was this belief, and so certain it was that many died from the effects of this delusion, that the bishops and priests of the country of Moravia sent to Rome to consult as to what should be done.

They, however, did not receive any answer, as those in authority were wise in their generation, and evidently were fully convinced that all the stories told were simple visions and popular fancies.

The following account of a vampire, taken from *The Jewish Letters*, published 1783, may be of interest:—

“We have just had in this part of Hungary a scene of vampirism, which is duly attested by two officers of the tribunal of Belgrade, who went down to the places specified; and also by an officer of the Emperor’s troops at Graditz, who was an eye witness of the proceedings. In the beginning of September there died in the village of Kisilora, three leagues from Graditz, an old man, who was sixty-two years of age. Three days after he had been buried, he appeared in the night to his son, and asked for something to eat. The son having given him something, he ate and disappeared. The next day the son recounted to the neighbours what had happened. That night, the father did not appear, but the following night he showed himself, and asked for something to



eat. They knew not whether the son gave him anything or not, but the next day he was found dead in his bed. On the same day, five or six persons fell suddenly ill in the village, and died one after the other in a few days.

"The officer, or bailiff of the place, when informed of what had happened, sent an account of it to the tribunal of Belgrade, which despatched to the village two of their officers, and an executioner to examine into the affair. The imperial officer, from whom we have this account, repaired thither from Graditz, to be witness of a circumstance which he had so often heard spoken of.

"They opened the grave of the old man, and found the eyes open, the face with a fine colour; and concluding this a proof of his being a vampire, the executioner drove a stake into his heart, made a fire, and reduced the corpse to ashes."

This story is only a counterpart of hundreds of others that are told of the ravages made by these so-called vampires; that this superstition is still rife in certain parts, may be gleaned from an account of a scene, which took place in Russia a very short time ago.

The interest attached to the history of the beliefs in vampirism is very great to the student of popular delusions. Given a general belief, and we at once get, in many, an expectant idea, and from this it is easy to understand how persons of superstitious minds, and living in the midst of a hotbed of superstitious credulity, may fancy they have seen the apparition of some departed relative, that their life-blood has been sucked



by this vampire; and with the fear caused by their fancy and the consequent shock to the nervous system, may actually be deprived of life. As an old writer on this subject says, "Is it extraordinary, that being occupied all day with the terror inspired by these pretended ghosts, that during sleep the idea of these phantoms, should present itself to their imagination and cause such violent terror, that some of them die of it instantaneously and others a short time afterwards?"

Mrs. A.'s Sense  
Deceptions.

No work on the subject of sense deception could possibly be perfect without some mention of the case of Mrs. A., so graphically described by Sir David Brewster in his letters to Sir Walter Scott on *Natural Magic*. For those who may not have read a description of Mrs. A.'s hallucinations and illusions I will quote more or less fully from the work above mentioned. The case is so clearly placed before us, that of itself it seems to open up to our mental vision the rationale of almost all the tales of ghosts, wraiths, and apparitions generally :

"A few years ago I had occasion to spend some days under the same roof with the lady, whose case I will mention. At that time she had seen no spectral illusions (or hallucinations), and was acquainted with the subject only from the interesting volume of Dr. Hibbert. In conversing with her about the cause of these apparitions, I mentioned that if she should ever see such a thing, she might distinguish a genuine ghost, existing externally, and seen as an external object, from one created by the mind, by merely pressing one eye or straining them both, so as to see objects double; for, in this case, the external object, or supposed



apparition, would be invariably doubled, while the impression on the retina created by the mind would remain single. This observation recurred to her mind when she unfortunately became subject to the same illusions (hallucinations); but she was too well acquainted with their nature to require any such evidence of their mental origin, and the state of agitation which generally accompanies them seems to have prevented her from making the experiment as a matter of curiosity.

“1. The first illusion (? hallucination) to which Mrs. A. was subject was one which affected only the ear. On the 26th of December, 1830, about half-past four in the afternoon, she was standing near the fire in the hall, and on the point of going upstairs to dress, when she heard, as she supposed, her husband's voice calling her by name, ‘—— — Come here! come to me!’ She imagined that he was calling at the door to have it opened, but, upon going there and opening the door, she was surprised to find no person there. Upon returning to the fire, she again heard the same voice calling out very distinctly ‘—— — Come, come here!’ She then opened two doors of the same room, and, upon seeing no person, she returned to the fireplace. After a few moments, she heard the same voice still calling, ‘—— — Come to me! come, come away!’ in a loud, plaintive, and somewhat impatient tone. She answered as loudly, ‘Where are you? I don't know where you are;’ still imagining that he was somewhere in search of her; but, receiving no answer, she shortly went upstairs. On Mr. A.'s return to the house, about half an hour afterwards, she inquired why he called to her so often, and where he was; and she was, of course,



greatly surprised to learn that he had not been near the house at the time.

2. The next illusion (? hallucination) which occurred to Mrs. A. was of a more alarming character. On the 30th of December, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Mrs. A. came downstairs into the drawing-room, and on entering the room she saw her husband, as she supposed, standing with his back to the fire. As he had gone out to take a walk about half an hour before, she was surprised to see him there, and asked him why he had returned so soon. The figure looked fixedly at her, with a serious and thoughtful expression of countenance, but did not speak. Supposing that his mind was absorbed in thought, she sat down in an arm-chair near the fire, and within two feet at most of the figure, which she still saw standing before her. As its eyes, however, still continued to be fixed upon her, she said, after the lapse of a few minutes, 'Why don't you speak, ——?' The figure immediately moved off towards the window at the farther end of the room, with his eyes still gazing on her, and it passed so very close to her in doing so, that she was struck by the circumstance of hearing no step nor sound, nor feeling her clothes brushed against, nor even any agitation in the air. Although she was now convinced that the figure was not her husband, yet she never for a moment supposed that it was anything supernatural, and was soon convinced that it was a spectral illusion (? hallucination) . . . The appearance was seen in bright daylight, and lasted four or five minutes. When the figure stood close to her, it concealed the real objects behind it, and the apparition was fully as vivid as the reality.



"3. On these two occasions Mrs. A. was alone, but when the next phantasm appeared her husband was present. This took place on the 4th January, 1831. About ten o'clock at night, when Mr. and Mrs. A. were sitting in the drawing-room, Mr. A. took up the poker to stir the fire, and when he was in the act of doing this, Mrs. A. exclaimed, 'Why, there's the cat in the room!' 'Where?' asked Mr. A. 'There, close to you,' she replied. 'Where?' he repeated. 'Why, on the rug, to be sure, between yourself and the coal-scuttle.' Mr. A., who had still the poker in his hand, pushed it in the direction mentioned. 'Take care,' cried Mrs. A., 'take care, you are hitting her with the poker!' Mr. A. again asked her to point out exactly where she saw the cat. She replied, 'Why, sitting up there, close to your feet on the rug. She is looking at me. It is Kitty—come here, Kitty!' There were two cats in the house, one of which went by this name, and they were rarely if ever in the drawing-room. At this time, Mrs. A. had no idea that the sight of the cat was an illusion (? hallucination)

. . . . .

"4. About a month after this occurrence Mrs. A., who had taken a somewhat fatiguing drive during the day, was preparing to go to bed about eleven o'clock a night, and, sitting before the dressing-glass, was occupied in arranging her hair. She was in a listless and drowsy state of mind, but fully awake. When her fingers were in active motion among the papillotes, she was suddenly startled by seeing in the mirror the figure of a near relative, who was then in Scotland and in perfect health. The apparition appeared over her left shoulder, and its eyes met hers in the glass. It was enveloped in grave-



clothes, closely pinned, as is usual with corpses, round the head and under the chin, and though the eyes were open, the features were solemn and rigid. The dress was evidently a shroud, as Mrs. A. remarked even the punctured pattern usually worked in a peculiar manner round the edges of that garment.

"Mrs. A. described herself as at the time sensible of a feeling like what we conceive of fascination, compelling her for a time to gaze on this melancholy apparition, which was as distinct and vivid as any reflected reality could be, the light of the candles upon the dressing-table appearing to shine fully upon its face. After a few minutes she turned round to look for the reality of the form over her shoulder; but it was not visible, and it had also disappeared from the glass when she looked again in that direction.

"5. On the 5th of October, between one and two o'clock in the morning, Mr. A. was awoken by Mrs. A., who told him that she had just seen the figure of his deceased mother draw aside the bed curtains and appear between them. The dress and the look of the apparition were precisely those in which Mr. A.'s mother had been last seen by Mrs. A. at Paris, in 1824.

"On the 11th October, when sitting in the drawing-room, on one side of the fireplace, she saw the figure of another deceased friend moving towards her from the window at the farther end of the room. It approached the fireplace and sat down in the chair opposite. As there were several persons in the room at the time, she describes the idea uppermost in her mind to have been a fear lest they should be alarmed at her staring, in the



way she was conscious of doing, at vacancy, and should fancy her intellect disordered. Under the influence of this fear, and recollecting a story of a similar effect in your work on *Demonology*, which she had lately read, she summoned up the requisite resolution to enable her to cross the space before the fireplace and seat herself in the same chair over the figure. The apparition remained perfectly distinct till she sat down, as it were, in its lap, when it vanished.

"Mrs. A. had had some weeks of illness. She had been troubled with a constant cough, and her weakness was very great; she had naturally a very morbid imagination; she talked in her sleep; her digestive organs were in a very disordered state. Gradually as she regained her health all these hallucinations vanished. What greater proof of the influence of body on mind?"

De Quincey's  
Day-dreams.      The power of De Quincey's wonderful imagination showed itself very early in his life, and nothing can be more beautiful than his description of the effect of his imagination when at church, while yet a child. It indeed is worthy of full quotation: "On Sunday morning I went, with the rest of my family, to church. It was a church on the ancient model of England, having aisles, galleries, organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportion majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of 'all sick persons and young children,' and that he would 'show his pity upon all prisoners and captives,' I wept in secret; and raising



my streaming eyes to the upper windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The sills of the windows were rich with stained glass; through the deep purples and crimsons streamed the golden light; emblazonries of heavenly illuminations (from the sun) mingling with the earthly emblazonries (from art and its gorgeous colouring) of what is grandest in man. *There* were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce, insulting forces. *There* were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will; and all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as the deep chorus from some accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was *uncoloured*, white, fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky: were it but a fragment or a tenth of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white lawny curtains; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish and weeping clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air: slowly also his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children, whom in Palestine once and for ever he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet the sooner meet."



## CHAPTER V.

## Dreams.

*Sleep—A Dreamless Sleep—Dreams Generally—Are Dreams Divinely Inspired?—Ancient Ideas of Dreams—Classification of Dreams—Dream Illusions—Dream Hallucinations—Nightmare—Persistent Dream Images—Differences between the Sleeping and Waking Mind—Prophetic Dreams and their Occasional Fulfilment—Somnambulism—Dream Crimes.*

"Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,  
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;  
But where unbruised youth, with unstuffed brain,  
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign."

*Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene 3.*

Sleep. THERE can be no doubt that to all, unless altered by habit or necessity, there is a sympathy between night and sleep. The end of the day approaches, gradually the songs of the birds are hushed, the flowers which in the early morn opened out to drink in light and sunshine, now close their petals, and very nature sleeps. As the poet most justly observes, "Night is the *time* for sleep."

Healthy sleep can alone bring to the worked and wearied mind that rest and repose, during which our



brain substance, which has been lost by mental and nervous action, may be replaced by new material, and so the necessary repairing process be completed.

The exciting cause then of sleep is the *necessity* for repair. It has been pretty fairly established, by many experiments, that there is a diminished quantity of blood circulating through the brain tissues during sleep. The most philosophical memoir upon the proximate cause of sleep, which has yet been published, is that of Mr. Arthur E. Durham, entitled *The Philosophy of Sleep*, and it will well repay study; for the experiments contained in it are most carefully and clearly placed before the reader.

Dr. Hammond, of New York, made a number of investigations into this question in 1860, and his article on "Sleep" in his *Treatise on Insanity*, proves the interest he took in clearing up any doubtful point. The simile he uses, of the steam engine when the fires are lowered, and the operatives go to work to repair damages, and put the machine in order for the next day, is a very happy one indeed. Although the theory of the immediate causation of sleep being a diminished blood-pressure in the brain, is the one which experiment has proved to be the most sensible, we are still, I think, unable to say that this subtle problem is at all definitely solved. That the exciting cause is necessity for repairs is, however, beyond dispute.

A Dreamless Sleep.      The Cartesian dogma that the mind can never be absolutely inactive, and that consequently even in the soundest sleep dreaming, however vague, must be present, is no doubt incorrect; and Dr. Maudsley asserts that the weight of evidence



goes to prove that the soundest sleep is a dreamless sleep.

Dr. Hoy mentions a case in the *American Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* which proves, if proof was wanted, that in insensibility from pressure on the brain, the mind is absolutely inactive. "A boy was rendered insensible by the kick of a mare named Dolly. As soon as the depressed bone was removed he cried 'Whoa, Dolly!' with great energy, and then stared about him. Three hours had passed since the mare had kicked; the last thing he remembered was, that she wheeled round her heels and laid back her ears."

Locke, in his *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, asserts that most men pass a great part of their lives without dreaming, and that he once knew a scholar who had no bad memory, who told him that he had never dreamed in his life till after the occurrence of a fever in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

Plutarch mentions the case of Cleon, who, in living to an advanced age, had yet never dreamed; and it is asserted that before the murder of his mother, Nero never knew what it was to dream.

There are still, however, writers who contend that the Mind is never at perfect rest, and Sir William Hamilton, in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, declares his belief in the continuance of the action of the brain during sleep. He caused himself to be roused from sleep at intervals through the night, and invariably found that he was disturbed from a dream, the particulars of which he could always recollect. That the conclusion he drew from his experiments was fallacious, may I think, be pretty definitely admitted.



Dreams generally. "The fleeting spectres which in dreams arise  
Come not from temples, or indulgent skies;  
The mind creates them, when its powers uncheck'd  
May sport, and leave the body in neglect.  
The hero sees disorder'd legions fly,  
And helpless monarchs bath'd in slaughter die,  
Renews the wars, besieged towns assails,  
With sword and flames the lofty fortress scales;  
In visionary courts the lawyers spar,  
And convicts tremble at th' ideal bar.  
Still o'er the hidden gold the miser quakes,  
The sportsman still with dogs the woodland shakes;  
The skilful mariner the vessel saves,  
Or buffets, from the wreck escap'd, the waves.  
All that affection breathes by love is penn'd,  
And tokens sent which love delights to send.  
Ev'n dogs in sleep the same impression bear,  
And tongue the scented footsteps of the hare.  
The wretched must the wounds of mis'ry feel,  
Though night's still influence on the world should steal."

*Petron. Arbit.*, p. 178: "Somnia quæ mentes," etc.

Mysteriously interesting is the subject of Dreams. The power of dreaming, and to a certain extent, of remembering those dreams, is possessed by every human being; but the significance of these visions borne in upon his sleeping hours, may be very widely and differently estimated by each individual. To superstition, or to a certain impressibility, may possibly be assigned the guiding influence of individual estimation of dream phantasies.

To the savage, with his belief in what Bain calls a "double materialism," the dream is simply the life in a world far away of his materialised soul; while to some persons in the present day they come as warnings or tidings from another sphere of existence.



Are dreams  
divinely  
inspired ?      This is a question which has caused many heated controversies, and yet, surely, if divine inspiration could be claimed for dreams, some general directions, some useful principles, would have been given to us, whereby we might be able to properly interpret them, and explain away much that is so ambiguous.

Certain dreams do sometimes appear as if they were sent for a special purpose, but even the so-called authentic ones coming under this heading are few indeed. In looking even at these, we must, I fear, view them with a doubtful eye ; for what fiction will invent, credulity will receive, and exaggeration magnify.

It has been truly said by an anonymous writer on this subject "that on reflection any advantage which might occasionally result from the belief of the interference of the Supreme Being in the suggestion of dreams, would be more than counterbalanced by the erroneous apprehensions and superstitious fears which such a persuasion would engender. The dreams which are so often quoted in ancient history, as having pretensions to prophetic significance, are for the most part fabulous tales of classical embellishment ; while some are evidently the contrivance of political and superstitious interests ; and the remaining ones, if even believed in, are easily explained, as the result of natural causes or casual coincidences." This is all just as true, if applied to the many so-called divinely-inspired dreams of modern times.

Ancient Ideas  
of  
Dreams.      The ancient philosophers lent themselves very readily to the delusion of dreams: the curing of diseases by revelation of dreams was a constant practice. Very interesting indeed are



the accounts of the oracles, to whose institution the idea of dreams being the medium of seeking instruction from the gods may be fairly traced. Sleeping-chambers were added to many temples, and here, after pious ceremonies and fervent prayers, men laid themselves down in full expectation of revelation during their sleep: and no matter how absurd, how incoherent the dream proved to be, the dreamer seemed always able to reconcile it to circumstances; no doubt greatly aided by his own superstitious belief, and the crazy wiles of the priests. The most famous of what we might call the somnambulistic oracles was that of Amphiaraus. His oracle was situated at Oropos, on the borders of Boeotia and Attica. This oracle was more frequently resorted to in cases of disease, than from any other motive. His responses were always delivered in dreams. All who repaired thither to supplicate his aid, after going through certain supplications, prayers and sacrifices, laid themselves down on a skin of a ram, slain in honour of the god, and patiently awaited sleep with the prophetic dream. Those to whom an apparently satisfactory revelation was vouchsafed, were allowed to bathe in the sacred waters of a fountain, into which, however, the priest enjoined them to throw pieces of gold and silver!

I do not think there can be many in the present day who are not convinced that all these reputed oracles, whether by dream revelation or otherwise, and which continued to work on the credulity and superstition of the people for many many years, were mere cheats and impostures, to serve either the avaricious ends of the heathenish priests, or the political views of the princes.



We must not forget that these species of oracles were held in the highest estimation during the most enlightened period of Greece; and of all her nations, none believed in them more devoutly than Sparta.

Time alone can wean men and nations from popular illusions which have been transmitted from generation to generation.

Classification  
of Dreams.

I cannot do better than adopt Mr. Sully's division of dreams into two large classes; viz., Dream Illusions and Dream Hallucinations; this division being based on the exciting causes of dreams.

A dream illusion would be caused by something affecting one of the sense organs, and starting either outside the sense organ, or in the sense organ itself; whereas a dream hallucination has its origin in the brain itself, and is purely subjective, having no objective basis whatever.

In many cases, though the starting point of a dream may be some excitation of a sense organ, causing what we call a dream illusion, the sequence of the dream is made up of hallucination; and so it often happens that, just as in waking day-dreams, so in sleep, no line of demarcation can be fixed showing where the illusion leaves off, and the hallucination begins. In the following division of dreams we shall keep to the starting point of the dream as our basis of classification.

Dream  
Illusions.

In perfect sound sleep, when we believe that the mind is perfectly inactive, the avenues of the organs of sense are closed to the external world; but in that kind of sleep during which we all agree we dream, impressions from the outside may be



made upon the sense organs, and so determine the dream subject.

Though our eyelids are closed, a bright light, such as the rays from a lamp, a candle, or the bright moon shining through the window, may so stimulate the eye that, from a wrongful perception, an illusion is produced and a dream started or altered.

A bright light shines upon our closed eyes, and is sufficient, maybe, to start a dream that we are watching a fire; and a certain association of ideas and past experiences instantaneously produce a scene very real indeed.

Radestock thinks it is very probable that the rays of the sun or moon are answerable for many dreams of celestial glory, which religious ecstasies have registered as special visions.

In a remarkable book on this subject, by M. Maury, entitled *Le Sommeil et les Rêves*, the author gives us some capital illustrations of dream illusions, all the results of experiments which he caused to be made upon himself; and I cannot do better than quote from these, placing each case under the respective organ of sense affected.

*The Eye.*—A light, surrounded with a piece of red paper, was repeatedly placed before his eyes. He dreamed of a tempest and lightning, which suggested the remembrance of a storm he had encountered in the English Channel in going from Merlaix to Havre.

*The Nose.*—A bottle of Eau de Cologne was held to his nose. He dreamed that he was in a perfumer's shop. This excited visions of the East, and he dreamed that he was in Cairo, in the shop of Jean Marie Farina.



Many surprising adventures occurred to him there, the details of which had been forgotten.

*The Ear.*—A pair of tweezers was held at a little distance from his ear, and struck with a pair of scissors. He dreamed that he heard the ringing of bells; this was soon converted into the tocsin, and this suggested the days of June, 1848.

*The Sense of Touch.*—He was slightly pinched on the nape of the neck. He dreamed that a blister was applied, and this recalled the recollection of a physician who had treated him in his infancy.

Many illustrations may be given by all of us, on a moment's consideration, of extraordinary dreams, resulting from impressions on the organ of sense. Wundt thinks that the involuntary extension of the foot of the sleeper causes the common dream illusion of falling over a precipice.

The dream illusions I have so far mentioned have their starting point outside the sense organ; but many dreams are caused by some excitation of the sense organ itself, without any external cause. Blood-pressure in the retina will give rise to apparent rays of light; and Sully thinks this is often the cause of those picturesque dreams in which figure a number of bright objects, such as beautiful birds, butterflies, flowers, or angels. Again, the pressure of blood in the ear gives rise to rushing and roaring sounds, and the tension of the skin and the sensation of cold from exposure of some part of the body through the shifting of the bedclothes may produce definite dreams. Let the clothes fall off us while we sleep, and how often does it happen that the sensation of



cold is enough to start a dream in which we seem to be passing through the streets in a state of at least partial nudity; our shame, our utter distress, our efforts to get away from the public gaze, and hide ourselves anywhere, are all so real—for don't the people seem to follow us and deride us?—while no escape from a humiliation seems possible. Yet with all this intensity of proper feeling, we do not for one moment reason that it cannot be true, that the whole thing is so impossible, so absurd, that we must be dreaming.

Sensations in connection with an internal organ, which during our waking moments may be so slight as to cause no apparent feeling, may in sleep, (when by the shutting off, as it were, of the perception of external things, intense impressions are brought into special prominence), give rise to extraordinary dream illusions. The heart's action, increase in rapidity of respiration from position, slight digestive disturbances, etc., may all produce dreams.

Dream  
Hallucinations. Although, as I have before stated, an illusion may, and very frequently does, start a dream which, from association of ideas, excites memory and produces a development of the dream into dream hallucinations; still experience tells us that a large majority of dreams have their origin in the brain itself, without any external stimulus to excite its action. This may be due to a variety of causes. The condition of the blood-supply to the brain, either in its quantity or its quality, may excite a dream fancy.

There is in each individual a certain balance of the circulation in the brain which admits of the mind doing its work in the most healthy and perfect manner. Let



the circulation be excessive or deficient, that work at once ceases to be either sound or perfect. Dreams may often result from some fluctuation in the brain circulation. The quality of the blood is also, as I have said, a leading factor in the causation of dreams, and often gives to them some definite character.

The state of the nervous tissues of the brain, whether much wasted from excessive mental work during the day, or worn by worry and anxiety, may produce dream hallucinations of various kinds. We all know how overwork, mental worry, anxiety, and general harass of the mind will produce in different degrees great nervous depression; and there is no condition of health more likely to conduce to distressing and horrible dreams, making the sufferer's night a dreaded period of his existence, and robbing his brain of all the rest and strength that healthy sleep would have given his overwrought mind.

However a dream be started, whether externally—*i. e.* by illusion—or internally—*i. e.* by hallucination,—the association of ideas and memory, by forming connecting links, make up the whole dream story.

Preceding mental thought will often produce dreams, and, as Sully remarks, it is a common occurrence to dream of the more stirring events, the anxieties and enjoyments of the preceding day. The new-born babe has no mental experience; his sleep is a dreamless one.

Dreams, no doubt, to a large extent owe their origin to recent experience. The slightest thing happening to us throughout the day may, by association of ideas, call up a dream at night. I read an account of a prize fight in my morning paper, and in my sleep I again recall,



maybe in a more or less incongruous manner, a toughly-contested school pugilistic encounter. I hear a song which I remember as having been sung by one long since gone, and, as I dream, back comes the scene of days gone by, and the dead sister's voice again brings pleasure to my heart; whilst around me I see the faces of those who best loved to listen to her sweet singing.

Many times, however, a dream is started far more indirectly than either of these examples show us, and it is almost impossible to follow out the connection of a recent experience with the resulting dream, though that connection is a fact.

It is equally true that events long since forgotten may, by some unknown excitation, be recalled in our dreams; just as in our waking moments we suddenly experience an instantaneous flash, as it were, of some incident long, long ago buried away in some corner of our mental storehouse, Memory.

Besides the intellectual portion of our brain being the starting point of dreams, we have also the motor centres, by some stimulation of their nerve substance, causing dream hallucinations. We may imagine in our dream that we are running, walking, jumping, etc.; just as we imagine we see, we hear, we talk. And just as in a dream we see the most absurd and impossible sights, so may we imagine we are doing the most impossible feats of muscular activity. We may fly up over houses; we may, without the slightest effort, out distance the fleetest animals, and that, too, without apparently touching the ground with our feet. Or, again, we may walk down the steepest precipice, upon which no human being could possibly have gained one single foothold.



Nightmare. "Imagination cannot conceive the horrors it gives rise to, or language describe them in adequate terms. They are a thousand times more frightful than the visions conjured up by necromancy or diablerie, and far transcend everything in history or romance, from the fable of the writhing and aspic-encircled Laocoon to Dante's appalling picture of Ugolino and his famished offspring, or the hidden tortures of the Spanish Inquisition. The whole mind, during the paroxysm, is wrought up to a pitch of unutterable despair; a spell is laid upon the faculties, which freezes them into inaction; and the wretched victim feels as if pent alive in his coffin, overpowered by resistless and immitigable pressure."\*

In simple dreams, our judgment seems to be suspended; in nightmare it is more or less awake, while over our power of volition there is a peculiar torpor.

The sufferer is in terrible danger; flight the only escape, but his legs seem paralysed; he cannot move, or, even if movement is possible, one leg can hardly be dragged after the other. Again, suddenly surrounded by some imminent peril, he sees his friends, who might help him, leaving him alone; a shout would bring them to his aid, but he seems to be choking, his tongue cleaves to his mouth, and no sound can he utter.

As a rule, the moment we regain power over volition the nightmare ceases, and we awake; but for some time we feel the effect of what we have gone through "but in a dream," and with throbbing heart and rapid breathing, cold beads of perspiration start from every pore.

\* *The Philosophy of Sleep.* Macnish.



A most interesting account of the same kind of nightmare occurring to many people at the same time is given by M. Laurent in his article on "Incubi," in the *Grand Dictionnaire de Médecine*, and is well worth quoting here, as it opens up a natural cause for what to many minds might seem proof positive of the supernatural:—

"The first battalion of the regiment of Latour d'Auvergne, of which I was surgeon-major, while in garrison at Palmi, in Calabria, received orders to march at once to Tropea, in order to oppose the landing from a fleet, which threatened that part of the country. It was in the month of June, and the troops had to march about forty miles. They started at midnight, and did not arrive at their destination till seven o'clock in the evening, resting but little on the way, and suffering much from the heat of the sun. When they reached Tropea they found their camp ready and their quarters prepared; but as the battalion had come from the farthest point, and was the last to arrive, they were assigned the worst barracks, and thus eight hundred men were lodged in a place which, in ordinary times, would not have sufficed for half their number. They were crowded together on straw placed on the bare ground, and being without covering were not able to undress. The building in which they were placed was an old abandoned abbey, and the inhabitants had predicted that the battalion would not be able to stay there a night in peace, as it was frequented by ghosts, which had disturbed other regiments quartered there. We laughed at their credulity; but what was our surprise to hear, about midnight, the most frightful cries issuing



from every corner of the abbey, and to see the soldiers rushing terrified from the building!

“I questioned them in regard to the cause of their alarm, and all replied that the devil lived in the building; that they had seen him enter by an opening into their room under the figure of a very large dog with long black hair, and throwing himself upon their chests for an instant, had disappeared through another opening in the opposite side of their apartment. We laughed at their consternation, and endeavoured to prove to them that the phenomenon was due to a simple and natural cause, and was only the effect of their imagination; but we failed to convince them, nor could we persuade them to return to their barracks. They passed the night scattered along the sea-shore and in various parts of the town. In the morning I questioned anew the non-commissioned officers and some of the oldest soldiers. They assured me that they were not accessible to fear; that they did not believe in dreams or ghosts, but that they were fully persuaded they had not been deceived as to the reality of the events of the preceding night. They said they had not fallen asleep when the dog appeared; that they had obtained a good view of him, and that they were almost suffocated when he leaped on their breasts. We remained all night at Tropea; and the town being full of troops, we were forced to retain the same barracks, but we could not make the soldiers sleep in them again without our promise that we would pass the night with them.

“I went there at half-past eleven with the commanding officer; the other officers were, more for



curiosity's sake than anything else, distributed in different rooms. We scarcely expected to witness a repetition of the events of the preceding night, for the soldiers had gone to sleep, reassured by the presence of their officers, who remained awake. But about one o'clock, in all the rooms at the same time, the cries of the previous night were repeated, and again the soldiers rushed out to escape the suffocating embrace of the big black dog. We had all remained awake, watching eagerly for what might happen; but, as may be supposed, we had seen nothing.

"The enemy's fleet having disappeared, we returned the next day to Palmi. Since that event we have marched through the kingdom of Naples in all directions and in all seasons, but the phenomena have never been reproduced. We are of opinion that the forced march, which the troops had been obliged to make during a very hot day, by fatiguing the organs of respiration, had weakened the men, and, consequently, disposed them to experience these attacks of nightmare. The constrained position in which they were obliged to be, the fact of their not being undressed, and the bad air they were obliged to breathe, doubtless aided in the production."

To these reasons might probably be added the impression made upon their minds by the superstitious tales of the inhabitants, and very possibly the devil in the shape of some animal was a leading feature in the stories.

The *immediate* cause of nightmare is the circulation of blood through the brain that has not been properly aerated. The *exciting* causes are various—fatigue, ful-



ness of the stomach, the eating of indigestible food late in the evening, and sundry diseases too numerous to enumerate.

Though doubtless very rare, it does some-  
Persistent  
Dream Images. times happen that an image seen in a person's dream may persist for, say, half-a-minute to a minute after the dreamer is awake. Possibly he may only have dropped off to sleep for a few moments, and not be sensible of having been asleep at all. As he wakes, all around him is familiar; he recognises where he is, and yet the spectral dream image is before his eyes, and its reality is not, for the moment, doubted. Abercrombie mentions an instance of this as having happened to an eminent medical friend of his. Having sat up late one evening, under considerable anxiety about one of his children who was ill, he fell asleep in his chair, and had a frightful dream, in which the prominent figure was an immense baboon. He awoke with the fright, got up instantly, and walked to a table which was in the middle of the room. He was then awake, and quite conscious of the articles around him; but, close to the wall at the end of the apartment, he distinctly saw the baboon, making the same grimaces which he had seen in his dream, and the spectre continued visible for about half-a-minute.

That to this peculiar power of the mind may be ascribed many stories of ghostly apparition cannot, I think, be questioned. A believer in the supernatural, if such a thing occurred to him, would, no doubt, with his biassed mind, so exaggerate the circumstance, so enlarge upon any connection such a dream image might have, that he would be quite satisfied to place it on



record as a proof of the power of the "materialised spirit" to again visit the earthly abodes of his friends!

A story of such a visit I shall have to tell in my chapter on ghosts and apparitions, and my explanation of it will be that it was one of those rare instances of a persistent dream image, though the lady who related the story to me is of quite a different opinion; but she is a devoted Swedenborgian. Need I say more?

Differences  
between the  
Sleeping  
and Waking  
Mind.

In *sleep*, former sensations are revived with such an intensity that the character of reality is given to them. In *waking*, the sensational impressions are so faint that they are readily distinguished by the healthy mind as products of the imagination. In *sleep*, our reason is, as it were, suspended, and we express no wonder, no surprise at the most extraordinary violation of known laws, while the most fantastic incoherencies excite no corresponding feeling of amazement.

A writer in the *Saturday Review* some years since gives a curious instance of a dream, which, though it afforded him a hearty laugh when he opened his eyes in the morning, appeared a most serious matter in his dream. He thought he was an undertaker, and re-entered his workshop after a brief absence. "Oh, sir," his journeyman said to him, "that old gentleman you buried on Tuesday has been here again to say his coffin is a very bad fit, and three inches short! He says he never had such an uncomfortable coffin before in his life." And the dreamer had seen nothing strange, nothing irrational in all this, but, like a good tradesman,



had felt sorry that his customer should have been so badly served.

In *sleep*, too, the moral sense is often suspended, and our whole character altered. The patient, good-tempered, meek man may find himself filled with passionate resentment against insults, and become vindictive, arrogant, and quarrelsome; whilst the stony-hearted, cold-blooded individual, who has never done a good turn for a single human being in the world, has sudden feelings of love, true pity, and tenderness of heart.

"We commit, in dreams, acts for which we should weep tears of blood if they were real, and yet never feel the slightest remorse. The familiar check of waking hours, 'I must not do it, because it would be unjust or unkind,' never once seems to arrest us in the satisfaction of any whim which may blow about our wayward fancies in sleep. A distinguished philanthropist, exercising for many years high judicial functions, continually commits forgery, and only regrets the act when he learns that he is to be hanged." \*

To say that dreams never come true is to assert what is absurd; to ascribe those that are fulfilled as due to mere dream coincidence is equally ridiculous. At the same time, to declare that prophetic fulfilment of a dream proves supernatural causation, is an illogical statement, and one which pretty clearly demonstrates that those who make it have never attempted to study the elements of a dream story.

The late Dr. John Addington Symonds, of whom

\* From an article by Miss Cobbe in *Macmillan's*, Nov., 1870.



the West of England is so justly proud, puts the matter of so-called prophetic dreams so clearly, in his lectures on *Sleep and Dreams*, that I cannot do better than quote his reasoning; for, I take it, if you want to make any argument clear, and you find some one has done so far better than you possibly could, it is wiser to admit the fact, by allowing another to speak for you.

“It may be a matter of fact that dreamers have been the subjects of supernatural illumination. But to admit the fact, we require the strongest evidence.

“1stly. We must remember that the testimony is single, and, so far, less to be trusted than were it confirmed by the experience of others. A dream, in its nature, is cognizable only by one mind. We depend, then, on the veracity of a single informant, except in those cases in which the dream has been related before the event which fulfilled its augury.

“2ndly. If the dream comes to us second-hand, we must remember that the love of the marvellous, so inherent in man, renders the hearer as prone to believe as the narrator and to dress up a wonderful story. The relaters of the most real events are but too prone to modify and add to their stories, or to suppress circumstances in order to make them fit some particular view. The account of a civil commotion witnessed by two persons of different political sentiments, will differ most remarkably. Each, unconsciously, moulds the facts so as to adapt them to some pre-existent view. This is signally the case with the relaters of dreams, whom it is impossible to gainsay, however much we may disbelieve them.

“3rdly. We must reject all cases in which the



verification of the dream may be explained on other principles than that of a real prophetic power. Of these principles, the first that occurs to our notice is casual or fortuitous fulfilment. The sense I here attach to *fortuitous* is this. The event in the dream and its subsequent corresponding event happen near together, but are dependent on different trains of causes. To take a familiar instance of another kind. A person from Cumberland, and another from Cornwall, formerly fellow-students, having lost sight of each other for many years, meet some fine May morning quite unexpectedly in Pall Mall or Cheapside, and, on comparing notes, they find that they had arrived in town on the same day, and had left home on the same day.

“They part and never meet again, and nothing comes of the interview but a story to tell over and over again as they advance in life, of the singular coincidence that happened, among other wonderful occurrences, in their visit to London. Now, if the interview had produced any important influence on the life of either party, it would have been difficult to resist the temptation of viewing it as an event specially brought about by a higher power for the particular result in question. And yet many other events just as important in their results, though not occurring in the same unusual manner, have as good a title to be viewed as instances of direct interposition. To the religious mind, which believes that all things are of God, that ‘in Him’ we ‘constantly live and move, and have our being,’ that ‘not a sparrow falls to the ground without his permission,’ every event must be held as subject to his ordinance; and it will not be hastily presumed that those are specially so



which affect one person in particular. For who can affect to say what events are momentous or otherwise? That meeting of two friends in London, though it seemed not 'to point a moral,' however much it might 'adorn a tale,' may have been very important to others. The narrative reaching the ears of a solitary recluse, whose heart had been long, long yearning for the friend of his youth, may have prompted him to undertake a journey to London in the hope of some similar happy coincidence; and he may have lost his life on his journey, or, having got safe to the end of it, may have failed in his hope, and yet been led to form an acquaintance, or even tenderer connections that altered the complexion of the remainder of his existence, or even wonderfully affected remote posterity; so infinite, and infinitely connected, are the links in Nature's chain of existences.

"The principle of mere coincidence, then, will explain many fulfilments of dreams, as they are called, and it must not be presumed that it is not mere coincidence because the dreams are of an unusually interesting character. When one thinks of the vast number of dreams which happen to every one in proportion to the number that come true, I only wonder the fulfilments are so rare. I have dreamed as much as most people in my time, but I never yet experienced any of these remarkable verifications. I have conversed with numbers of dreamers, and, though they abounded in interesting recitals of what had happened to their friends in this way, I have seldom, very seldom, found one who had been himself gifted with prophetic visions; just as for a thousand ghost-story *tellers* we meet with



scarcely one veritable *ghost-seer*, and he turns out to be the subject of a peculiar nervous disorder, that destroys the balance between the perceptive and conceptive faculties."

Preceding thoughts or events leading up to a dream may, and often are, the factor in the coincidental fulfilment of the dream, though we may not recognise the cause at the time ; for it is, I believe, very rare to dream of anything which on awaking we can remember to have been thinking of very shortly before sleep overcame us. In many cases, no doubt, our dreams are called up from our memory, however incoherent and incongruous the re-vivification may be ; but on awaking, we have no remembrance of having impressed on our mental tablet anything likely to have started the dream fancy. It may be we believe that there is a distinct prophetic significance in a dream, and though rare indeed, it still may happen that the prophecy comes true. Are we justified in looking upon such a coincidence as due to supernatural agency? Surely no.

I well remember, many years ago, when a medical student, just before a Goodwood meeting, to have had a most vivid dream that a horse called Anton had won a race "in a walk." I saw the animal cantering home an easy winner by many lengths, and I heard the shouts of the people calling out his name, as he galloped hard held past the winning post. With the dream fresh in my mind, I hastened to the Medical School to early lecture, and the first person I saw was a dear friend, well known then throughout the length and breadth of the land, as one of the finest cricketers that ever handled bat or ball. He was an ardent follower of the fortunes



of the turf, and I at once told him my dream. "Why, old man," he said, "what a joke! that horse has no earthly chance for the Stewards' Cup; he is knocked out to 50-1, and his stable companion, who is favourite, will be sure to win—at least I hope so, for I have backed him heavily, I can tell you." However, I told him that I had no recollection of having ever seen or heard of the name of Anton, and he then became somewhat impressed; to save himself he took the longest price he could procure about my "dream fancy."

Anton won by many lengths.

Now, on talking over this dream and its result with my old friend sometime afterwards, he reminded me of the fact that, when the betting opened on the race some time before the meeting took place, Anton was the favourite, and that he had often jokingly said in my presence that "Anton would win in a walk," as he had greatly fancied that animal, though until I told him my dream story he had not backed it.

I have no doubt many so-called prophetic dreams could be accounted for in the same way.

The late Richard Proctor, in an article on "Fulfilment of Dreams," very naively remarks: "However ready the believer in dreams may be to regard dream warnings as supernatural, he can hardly regard information about horse-races as communicated from above. If they came from the contrary direction, it would be unsafe to accept them with blind confidence, remembering to whom the parentage of falsehood has been on excellent authority attributed."

The stories of dream fulfilment are many, but, I fancy, if the original narrator of any such dream were to be



rigidly cross-examined, many points would be cleared up, and the dream be shown to have had no true prophetic origin; maybe we should find that whilst, in the first place, the cause of the dream was some coincidental remembrance called up by some association of ideas during the preceding day—in the second place, superstitious bias, and love of the marvellous, had invested the dream story with what might justly be called exaggeration, if not contortion of facts.

A gentleman, some little time ago, related to me a story of a dream, which he considered proof positive of inspiration for a good purpose. A friend of his dreamt one night that a person, in whose career he had taken great interest, was in direful distress far away in Australia. So vivid was the dream, and so impressed was the dreamer of its significance, that he at once sent off a draft to the colonist. By the next mail, he learned that the money had only just come in time to save him from destitution.

Now, on cross-examination, I found out that the dreamer had been, for some days, thinking of his distant friend, and wondering why he had not heard from him; and knowing, as he did, that he had but little capital when he started, he had worried himself a great deal about his welfare.

It is then clear that his constant thought of his far-off friend produced the dream, and the coincidence consisted in the apprehension of want turning out to be true.

Is not this a more rational explanation than at once jumping at the idea of "divine inspiration?"

In many cases, however, the cause of the dream may



be difficult to trace; but, because we cannot track down to its starting point a dream which comes true, are we to form conclusions that there has been no natural origin, and that consequently inspiration is the only explanation? Surely not.

Somnambulism.

“ Men’s legs, if man may trust the common talk,  
Are engines put in motion when men walk ;  
But when we cross our knees, and take a chair  
Beside the fire, they’re not in motion there :  
So this we learn by wisdom, art, and skill,  
That legs are made to stir, or to sit still.  
Yet sometimes I have heard that, when the head  
In woollen cap lay snoring on the bed,  
The legs, without the sanction of the brain,  
Were fond to wander on the midnight plain,  
Pursue, ’mid darkness, tasks of common day—  
Yet come, as willed caprice, unharmed away.”

ODOHERTY’S *Somnambulatory Butcher*.

Here we have a different mental state to ordinary dreaming. The Somnambulist has some power over his muscular actions, and is able, in part at least, to execute what his dreaming mind leads him to attempt. The avenues of sense are not all closed, and, as Dr. Carpenter points out, “a somnambulist may *hear*, though he does not *see* or *feel*, or may *feel* while he does not *see* or *hear*.” The eyes of the sleep walker may even be wide open, and yet he sees not. Shakespeare knew this well enough.

“ DOCTOR : You see her eyes are open,”

“ GENTLEMAN : Ay, but their sense is shut.”

*Macbeth*, Act v., Scene i.

The sense, however, which seems always preter-



naturally active is the muscular sense, and no doubt from the great concentration of the attention on this sense, is due the remarkable feats the somnambulist is able to accomplish.

Nothing so nearly approaches the so-called supernatural as the tales told of sleep-walkers, and their extraordinary performances. "The passion of fear, which cautions all others—which inspires a man with a sense of peril, and points out what may be safely attempted, and what should be shunned—is suspended for a season ; and the individual, under the blind impulse of unshackled will, performs feats at which the most stalwart knights of romance would have stood aghast. To walk on the brink of house-tops, to scale precipices, and descend to the bottom of frightful ravines, are common exploits to the somnambulist ; and he performs them with a facility far beyond the power of any man who is completely awake. A story is told of a boy who dreamed that he got out of bed, and ascended to the summit of an enormous rock, where he found an eagle's nest, which he brought away with him, and placed beneath his bed. Now, the whole of these events actually took place ; and what he conceived, on awaking, to be a mere vision, was proved to have had an actual existence, by the nest being found in the precise spot where he imagined he had put it, and by the evidence of spectators who beheld his perilous adventure. The precipice, which he ascended, was of a nature which must have baffled the most expert mountaineers, and such as, at other times, he never could have scaled."\*

\* *The Philosophy of Sleep*.—MACNISH.



In this case, there was some remembrance of the dream ; but, as a rule, the peculiarity of the somnambulistic state is the almost complete forgetfulness of all that has passed through the mind of the dreamer. He awakes, and in many cases, has not the slightest idea of having even dreamed ; but should the somnambulism recur, very probably the remembrance of former occurrences when in that state, is revived.

Dr. Carpenter gives a very good instance of this happening in his own family : "A servant-maid, rather given to sleep-walking, missed one of her combs, and being unable to discover it on making the most diligent search, charged the fellow-servant, who slept in her room, with having taken it. One morning, however, she awoke *with the comb in her hand* ; so that there can be no doubt that she had put it away on a previous night, without preserving any waking remembrance of the occurrence, and that she recovered it when the remembrance of its hiding-place was brought to her, by the recurrence of the state in which it had been secreted."

Dream  
Crimes.

There are cases on record of crimes having been committed, either during sleep itself, when a condition of somnambulism ensues, or just at that moment of returning consciousness, when persistence of dream hallucinations may for a moment exist. We awake from a dream with all the reality of the threatening of some terrible danger to ourselves. We see, for the moment, our enemies around us, and we struggle for our life. If a weapon is at hand, might we not use it in self-defence ? and before consciousness thoroughly asserts itself, a crime, for which we could not be held responsible, might be committed.



Marc gives an account of the case of Bernard Schedmaizig, who, waking in the night, saw what he believed to be a frightful phantom. Calling out "Who is that?" and getting no reply, and still believing that the creature was approaching him, he seized a hatchet which was beside him, attacked the spectre, and—killed his wife!

But, I take it, a crime might be committed in a somnambulistic state, of which the dreamer retains no remembrance whatever. He may perform an act the result of a dream, though the dream itself is entirely forgotten, and the resulting action be completed, without the least after-consciousness of what has been done.

This is the theory of a murder committed some short time ago, in the city of Bristol, and for which a man was hung. The history of the crime is so graphically given by Mr. Francis Scougal, in his intensely interesting work *Scenes from a Silent World*, that I will quote it at length:

"The man, whom we may call James Wheeler, had at one time been in good circumstances, but he and his wife both, unfortunately, became addicted to drinking, and their descent in the social scale was of course very rapid. He then became assistant to a butcher, in the intervals of other occupations, and at the time when the event occurred which brought the lives of both to an end, they were living in so humble a domicile that they had only one sleeping-room for the whole family, the children lying on the floor near the bed occupied by their parents. One winter's evening, Wheeler and his wife were both more or less intoxicated, but there had been no quarrel of any kind between them when they



went to bed with their children, in the one room, at seven o'clock. Wheeler immediately fell into a deep, heavy slumber, from which, as his son distinctly stated, he never once awoke till three hours later. His wife meantime had chosen to take her supper in bed, and she carried there, with her, the knife, which her husband used in his occupation as butcher, in order to cut pieces of bread from the small loaf which constituted her meal. While thus employing it, she put it down for a few minutes beside her, in such a position that it is supposed to have rested against the hand of the sleeping man. It is presumed that the touch of the instrument, which he constantly used in the slaughter of animals, had engendered in his brain the dream that he was engaged in his usual duties. He grasped it unconsciously, and with one vague movement gave what was afterwards emphatically described as a 'butcher's stroke' to the living creature beside him, without awaking for a single moment from his drunken slumber.

"The eldest child, a boy of sixteen years, was aroused, by hearing his mother moaning. He got up from the floor, and leant over her. She was leaning back upon the knife, as if she had fallen against it, and was evidently dying. He drew it away from under her shoulder, where it was, in fact, embedded, without, however, it seems, apprehending that it was the cause of her serious condition. In another moment she had expired, still holding in her hand the last piece of bread she had cut from the loaf.

"The boy, greatly terrified, roughly awoke his father, who was lying unconscious in heavy sleep. Wheeler opened his eyes, bewildered and amazed,



scarce able to take in the sense of his son's statement that the mother was dead. He sprang out of bed, and hurried round to the other side to look at her. When he saw that she had in fact ceased to breathe, he fell on his knees beside her, and burst into a passionate flood of tears. After a time, his attention was drawn to the hæmorrhage from her lips, and he exclaimed that she must have broken a blood-vessel. The cries of the children soon attracted neighbours to the room, and one of them, seeing the knife lying on the bed, asked Wheeler if he had stabbed his wife.

“ ‘My God, no!’ he exclaimed; ‘I never did it!’ All seemed to acquiesce in the idea that the death had resulted from the natural rupture of a vessel; but next day, when preparations were made for the burial, it was found that a deep wound in the back was the undoubted cause of the fatal result.

“Wheeler was at once arrested on a charge of wilful murder.

“There was the strongest possible conviction of his innocence on the part of a very large number of persons; and this opinion was unanimously held by his fellow-workmen, who united in bearing testimony to the humane and gentle nature of the unhappy man. His children positively affirmed that there had been no struggle or quarrel between their parents, and that silence—broken only by the heavy breathing of the sleeping man—had reigned in the little bedroom from the time they all lay down till the sad discovery was made. That period, Wheeler solemnly declared, was to him a complete blank; he had not the faintest remembrance of anything that had occurred, excepting that he had gone to sleep



at seven o'clock drunk, and awoke at ten, to find his wife dead."

To the legal mind, no doubt, the theory that this act had been committed while in an unconscious state did not commend itself, and so the defence, most ably conducted, was that the poor woman had fallen back upon the knife, and been accidentally killed. The medical evidence negatived this; the judge summed up so strongly against the unfortunate prisoner, that the jury seemed to be bound by his ruling to bring in a verdict of guilty, but they added a strong recommendation to mercy—to no purpose, however. The Home Secretary took the judge's opinion, who, being determined in his own belief, would not be deterred by the recommendation of a thousand jurymen: and so, in spite of monster petitions, in spite of widespread and openly-spoken doubts as to the justice of the sentence, the Home Secretary decided to take no notice, and the poor fellow's fate was sealed.

It was stated in the papers that some sort of quasi confession had been made by the condemned man, just before his execution; but as a matter of fact, I believe I am right in saying no confession was made at all, and the words he oft repeated to the chaplain of the jail were these: "I pray to the Lord day and night, to bring back to my remembrance what took place from seven to ten that evening, but my memory is a complete blank."

That the most extraordinary actions take place during unconsciousness, whether from sleep, drink, or that condition of the brain preceding, or taking the place of, an epileptic fit, is well known to the practical student of the human mind. I know a case where a gentleman in the period preceding his fit will do the most motiveless



acts, such as putting his fist through windows, stripping himself of his clothes, trying to set fire to the furniture, etc., and yet when he is better again will have not the slightest remembrance of anything that has taken place, and even go so far as to deny in the most positive manner that he could ever have done what had been laid to his charge. To see him when he is in this state, to note the deliberate way in which he goes about his work, and the expression of fiendish delight at accomplishing it, would seem to make it impossible that he could have no remembrance of all he had gone through. Nothing in fact could be so seemingly supernatural.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### Ghosts. Haunted Houses.

*Ghosts in all Countries—Causes of Belief in Ghosts—Reasons Against Reality of Ghosts—Ominous Night Noises—Explanation of Phantasms of the Dead—Unexplained Ghost Stories—Phantasms of the Living—Telepathy.*

IT is just as well, in discussing the question of apparitions, to keep distinct the appearance of phantasms of the dead and those of the living; though my explanation of both is almost identical. The theory of telepathy or thought transference, which is the basis of the explanation of phantasms of the living given us by the Psychical Research Society, is one which must be fearlessly discussed.

#### PART I.—PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD.

Can we trace in the history of man any period antecedent to the belief in ghosts?

Ghosts in all Countries.

Can we name any single nation, past or present, who have scorned the possibility of the spirits of the departed being able to come back to earth in a materialised form?

Did not the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans* believe that the souls of the dead wandered about the earth, to haunt the wicked, to terrify the good, and generally to



interfere in the affairs of the living? Even from *Scandinavia* we have evidence of ceremonies performed at the tombs of the dead to propitiate the spirits of the departed and help them to enter into the realms of perfect bliss. Possibly the belief in ghosts in *Hindustan* is to this day the most deeply-rooted superstition of that country. The natives live in a very atmosphere of spectral beings, assuming devil-like natures, and exercising their evil powers in the affairs of men; whilst they haunt and terrify good and wicked, friend and foe.

The *Chinese* have a wholesome dread of the spirits of those who have come by their death in any unnatural manner. They will hold services at the graves of the departed and have large feasts, with the idea of "keeping the spirit of the departed down," so that he should not in any way interfere with their daily lives.

In *Egypt* and in *Arabia* ghosts still thrive apace, and many of the stories told by those who have lived for years in these countries prove how, in almost all cases, active imagination and universal superstition are the real and almost only "ghost-makers."

In our own land we know too well that, though the numbers may be diminishing, yet we still have amongst us many persons who firmly believe in ghostly visitations, and in the unearthly reality of noises and visions in so-called "haunted houses." Can we wonder at it, when we know that there are still, in almost every town throughout our island, people who, priding themselves upon their intellectual superiority to many around them, derive the utmost satisfaction in going to private spiritualistic séances; returning home, may be, truly com-



forted in having seen their dead boy's face in a crystal mirror, and having had a conversation with his spirit, making them happy and contented that he has been called away from this earth below?

This may seem far-fetched; but I do not hesitate to say that it is the truth, and that any attempt to argue in a rational way with such persons is only tantamount to bringing down upon one's head the bitter, though ridiculous and illogical, rebuke—"Oh, you are an Atheist!"

Let me now point to some of the possible causes for this traditional belief in ghosts. In so doing, I shall to a large extent make use of hints borrowed from Dr. J. Addington

Symonds's able essay on *Apparitions*:

*Cause I.*—Looking at the universality of the belief in ghosts, we may, I think, at once reason out a more or less rational cause for that belief. Instinctively men in all parts of the globe are strangely impressed with the notion of a Deity and of some future state; and as Dr. Symonds truly says, "the transition from this to a belief in the possibility of the re-appearance of a departed spirit is easy and natural." It is, in fact, more than this; for to many religiously-minded persons any attempt to disprove the existence of ghosts is only proof positive of a disbelief in a God and in a future state. It is, perhaps, difficult to realise that there are such persons, so devoid of common-sense and logical minds; but that they do exist, and are to be met with at every turn of one's road through life, is only too true.

*Cause II.*—The next cause of ghost belief is doubtless the very frequent and apparently authentic stories of



the re-appearance of departed spirits. These stories are told so often by those who are supposed to be persons of integrity, and the facts are related with so close an attention to the most minute details, that all who have any superstitious leaning towards ghost-lore are easily led away, and their belief in ghosts very materially strengthened.

If, however, such a tale comes to the ear of a common-sensed mind, free from superstition and capable of reading between the lines, as it were, the majority of these ghost-like romances very soon admit of a simple and easy explanation ; as we shall see later on.

*Cause III.*—Another cause is, that these so-called “appearances” generally occur in a place and at a time when the mind is not so capable of properly distinguishing the various deceptions of the senses ; and when also the brain is perturbed by some sort of apprehension of danger, or even from its surroundings is actually expectant of some supernatural appearance. “Thus, the glen where murder had been committed ; the pond in which the mother had immersed her new-born infant ; the hoary ruin pregnant with horrible legends of the past ; the rocks over which the inebriated drunkard fell ; the four cross-roads where the suicide was impaled ; the dwelling of the miser, or of him who did unjustly to the orphan ; and the willow-banks of the still flowing river into which the love-lorn maiden had cast herself—each had its spectre, and at the midnight hour the ghost of the murdered bared to the moon the mementoes of its foul and most unnatural end ; the spectre of the murderer, writhing in agony, rattled its gibbet-chains ; the suffocating sobs of the drowning infant were borne



on the fitful breeze; hideous spectres hovered o'er the deserted ruin; the ghost of the miser guarded its quondam treasures; the cruel guardian and the suicide shrieked forth the agonies of the damned; and the phantom of the deceived maiden, gliding on the banks of her watery grave, mingled its plaintive wails with each sigh of the midnight wind."\*

The medium of terror, a superstitious and ignorant mind, will, indeed, lead people to fill with spectres, all places with a history of some past crime and wickedness; though happily not to so great an extent as in days gone by.

*Cause IV.*—Sometimes the appearance of a ghost-form may give warning whether of danger, trouble, or even death; and if such warning come true, it is clear that the reality of such appearance must be believed in by large numbers of persons, who never consider for a moment how such a seemingly supernatural phenomenon can be probably very clearly explained on natural grounds.

*Cause V.*—The almost universal love of the marvellous, to be met with amongst persons of all grades of education, must of necessity predispose to a belief in anything that is ghost-like and uncanny.

It is an absolute passion with some of us, and will readily and easily carry the mind to lengths hardly to be conceived. *It is this love of the marvellous, too, that makes the most truthful person so colour and so improve his tale, that every argument against its reality seems to be met and combated with, as the minute details are gradually unfolded.* The love of the marvellous and strict truth cannot, I

\* *Fiends, Ghosts, and Sprites.* J. N. Radcliffe.



fear, ever be expected to go hand in hand. Unfortunately, it is not only the original narrator of the mysterious tale who is led away by his passion for relating something extraordinary; his listeners also add their little to the already "doctored"-up story, and so the absolutely "miraculous" is soon reached.

"The flying rumours gather'd as they roll'd,  
Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told;  
And all who told it added something new,  
And all who heard it made enlargements too;  
In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew."

POPE.

To give an instance of the untruthfulness—or, shall I say forgetfulness?—of some ghost-story tellers, I cannot do better than quote from a foot-note in Dr. Maudsley's book, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*. To my mind, it is the best possible example of how the bias of the love of the marvellous will affect the recounting of some simple and easy-to-be-explained phenomenon:

"No ghost stories are more striking, more wide-spread, and apparently better attested, than those of the visible apparitions of persons at the moment of death, to friends or others, who may be hundreds of miles distant. The writers of an article on 'Visible Apparitions' in the *Nineteenth Century* of July, 1884, who are secretaries of a Ghost-seeking Society, relate a case of the kind communicated to them by Sir Edmund Hornby, late Chief Judge of the Supreme Consular Court of China and Japan, who describes himself as a lawyer by education, family, and tradition, wanting in imagination and no believer in miracles.

"It was his habit to allow reporters to come to his



house in the evening to get his written judgment for the next day's paper. On this occasion he had written out his judgment and left it with the butler for the reporter, who was expected to call for it. Having gone to bed and to sleep, he was awakened soon by a rap at the door, which, when he took no notice, was repeated.

"In reply to his call 'Come in,' the reporter solemnly entered and asked for his judgment. Thereupon ensued a dialogue between Sir E. Hornby—who referred him again and again to the butler, protesting against the unwarrantable intrusion—and the reporter, who persisted in his earnest request for his judgment. Impressed at last by his solemn earnestness, and fearful of awakening his wife (who had slept soundly during all the energetic and animated dialogue), Sir Edmund gave him the gist of the judgment, which he appeared to take down in shorthand, after which he apologised for his intrusion and withdrew. It was then just half-past one. When Lady Hornby awoke, as she did immediately, the whole incident was related to her.

"Next day, when Sir Edmund entered the Court, the usher announced to him the sudden death of the reporter, sometime between one and half-past one. The cause of death as ascertained by a formal inquest was heart disease. The poor man had not left his house the night before.

"Here then, is a precise and circumstantial story, related by a person of eminence and ability, accustomed to weigh evidence, and confirmed (for the writers say so) by his wife. Naturally it attracted much attention, and much jubilant attention, from those who were specially



interested in ghosts and apparitions. The *Spectator* saw in it, I believe, incontestable proof of the reality of the spiritual world. Amongst others, it attracted the attention of Mr. Balfour, the editor of the *North China Herald*, who was well acquainted with Sir Edmund and the reporter alluded to. In a letter to the *Nineteenth Century* (November, 1884), this gentleman asks the editor to compare the story with the following remarks :

“‘1. Sir Edmund Hornby says Lady Hornby was with him at the time, and subsequently awoke. I reply, no such person was in existence. Sir Edmund’s second wife had died two years previously, and he did not marry again till three months *after* the event he relates.

“‘2. Sir Edmund mentions an inquest on the body. I reply, on the authority of the Coroner, that no such inquest was ever held.

“‘3. Sir Edmund’s story turns upon the judgment of a certain case, which was to be delivered next day, the 20th of January, 1875. There is no record of any such judgment in the *Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, of which I am now editor.

“‘4. Sir Edmund says that the reporter died at one in the morning. This is wholly inaccurate; he died between eight and nine a.m., after a good night’s rest.’

“The editor of the *Nineteenth Century* having submitted Mr. Balfour’s letter to Sir E. Hornby, subjoins that gentleman’s rejoinder, in which, after accusing Mr. Balfour of want of good feeling and taste in not having written to him privately instead of amusing the public at his expense, he practically, though ungraciously, admits the whole case against him.



“It is probable that similar stories of the kind would collapse in a similar manner, were they tested properly by independent observation and inquiry, and were someone willing to take the trouble to make the inquiry and, having made it, to take the trouble of contradicting and exposing them.”

Dr. Johnson was always very earnest in his recommendation of a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars, and he often gave this advice to parents: “Accustom your children constantly to this,—if a thing happens at one window, and they, when relating it, say it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them: you do not know where deviation from truth will end:” and once in correcting a lady, who thought nothing of varying her narrative, he said to her, “Madam, it is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world.”

I. Where do they get their clothes from?  
Reasons against  
Reality of Ghosts  
etc. Has a ghost ever been heard of stalking about in Nature's garb? I think not. How, then, do the believers in ghosts account for the possession, by these materialised spirits, of their outward habiliments? How does the fabric, long since turned to dust, or devoured by moths, become again regenerated or fashioned in shape and size so exactly like the clothing worn by the ghostly spectre, when he walked this earth as one of us? Have believers in apparition ever thought out this problem? If so, what is their explanation?

Newton Crossland, in her work on *Apparitions*, tries to account satisfactorily for the spectral appearance of



garments as well as persons. She quotes the humorous reply of one she terms a "scoffing logician" to a candid ghost-seer, who is relating his experience: "I have no objection to believe in the apparition of the soul of your grandmother, but don't tell me that you really and literally saw the ghost of her nightcap and apron. Your dead uncle, too, whom you saw drowning when you and he were a thousand miles apart; is his pea-jacket endowed with an immortal spirit?" Now, let us see how she works out the problem. She offers, as a solution, the following hypothesis, which I will not attempt to discuss, but will leave entirely to my readers, to accept or discard as they like: "Every significant action of our lives—in the garments we wear, and in the attitude and gestures of our humanity—is vitally photographed or depicted in the spirit-world; and the angels, under God's direction, have the power of exhibiting, as a living picture, any specific circumstances or features to those who have the gift of spiritual sight, and who are intended to be influenced by the manifestations. These tableaux may represent still life, or they may be animated by certain spirits appointed for the purpose, or by the identical spirits of the persons whose forms are shown, when the apparitions are the images of those who have departed this world."

II. If these spirit forms are sent from another world, can it be proved that any single so-called authentic ghost has ever done any real good? As Capt. Grose points out, "In cases of murder, a ghost, instead of going to the next justice of the peace and laying its information, or to the nearest relation of the person murdered, appears to some poor labourer,



who knows none of the parties; draws the curtain of some decrepit nurse or almswoman; or hovers about the place where the body is deposited. Nor is the pointing out lost writings generally managed in a more summary way; the ghost commonly applying to a third person ignorant of the whole affair. But it is presumptuous to scrutinise too far into these matters; ghosts have, undoubtedly, forms and methods peculiar to themselves!"

III. Is it not strange that it is rare to hear of a so-called ghost ever appearing to more than one person at a time? We do hear of recorded instances of a "spirit form" being seen by a few persons of a company, but such an occurrence is either the result of trickery, or may be clearly explained by the well-known psychological fact that expectancy may give rise to subjective sense deception.

But how can ghost believers explain the fact that a phantom is generally seen by only one person at a time? Can there be any materialised reality about such a spectre, or are those who do not see it to be considered blind, for a time at least?

IV. How often does it happen that the ghost, taking his nightly walks through the passages of some haunted house, assumes at different times a very different appearance in shape, dress, and feature? What a store of clothes, what a stock of disguises, this visitor from the spirit world must have!

Does not this fact alone prove the *subjectiveness* of these midnight wanderers?

V. Again, it is not an uncommon thing to hear of these phantoms being accompanied by animals—cats often, sometimes dogs.



Do the believers in these spirit forms from another world agree that animals too have a future state? Not that I, for one, see any reason why they should not have another world to go to after, in many instances, their hard and hunted lives in this one. Still, I doubt if those spiritualistically inclined individuals would care to advance such a theory as that of a future state for animals. If not, how then do they account for the fact of "ghost animals" being included in so many so-called authentic stories of haunted houses?

VI. Why is it that daylight is not propitious to ghosts? Why is it that they want, and *will have*, a dim religious light, a heavy gloom, a shadowy arena? As an old writer so aptly puts it: "Why are ghosts eternally banished from the sunshine and from a crowd? What mighty causes restrain them from stalking in the daylight and in company?" And he goes on to ask this very telling question: "If they are benevolent to mankind, why should they decline opportunities of at once securing indubitable testimony of their existence, and of accepting that reverence their nature would attract, and that gratitude their kindness would excite?"

Before I proceed to attempt to explain the causation of apparitions, let me, as  
Ominous  
Night Noises. shortly as possible, deal with the noises which in the night are such frequent causes, by illuding the sense of hearing, of mysterious tales of ghostly visitations.

In the first place, let us remember that the silence of the night renders the least sound most audible.

Cats are very prodigal agents in producing sounds



which may be variously interpreted by the timid mind. They can glide about with noiseless step, or descend the stairs with *sounding* footfalls. This last fact I have myself observed on more than one occasion, and have been perfectly surprised that an animal whose movements are usually so silent could at times walk so heavily that in the stillness of the night its footfalls might easily be mistaken for those of some human being. They have sometimes been known to come and knock their heads against the door of any room to which they seek admission, and then to steal noiselessly away.

Rats too are busy in the dark. Strange and monotonous wailings, like a heart-broken human voice, are not unfrequently produced by air passing through empty water-pipes, or any confined space.

“An edifying story is told of a haunted house, in which, it was said, an heir-apparent had been murdered by his uncle. Dreadful sounds, shrieks, and unearthly moanings were heard in the mansion (a baronial castle); and for nearly a century no one dared to inhabit it. At length one of the heroes of Waterloo, to whom the property descended, was determined to unravel the mystery; for which purpose he resolved to sleep in the castle alone on the night he took possession. After his first slumber, the screams and hollow moans were, as usual, audible; and leaving his bed, he followed the sounds till he arrived, as he thought, in their immediate vicinity. This was the great hall of his ancestors. The unseen voice evidently came from behind the arras in this place. Springing towards the spot, he ran his sword into it, but the blade was so fixed that he could not withdraw it.



“Having retraced his steps to his chamber, he betook himself to his couch, and slept till morning; then several persons called at the castle, inquiring if he had met the ghost.

“‘Oh, yes,’ he replied; ‘the disturber is now dead as a door-nail. He lies behind the screen where my sword has transfixed him. Bring a crowbar, and we’ll have the spectre out.’

“With such a leader, and broad day to boot, the throng tore down the screen where the sword was fixed, when, in a recess, they found the fragments of a chapel organ, of which the wooden trunks had, a hundred years ago, been used as props to shore up the work when the hall was repaired. These had been forgotten; and the northern blast, finding its way through crannies in the wall, had played wild and discordant music on the pipes.” \*

The rattling of doors, of shutters, of window-frames, and even of blind-cords; the simple moaning of the wind through the keyhole of a door—all are sufficient, in the stillness and darkness of the night, to create in some minds, and at certain times, suspicions of something uncanny and unearthly.

Furniture and timbers from swelling and contracting according to the state of the weather, backs of stoves and fire-places cracking during the process of cooling, cane chairs creaking some time after they have been used—all for want of sensible investigation have, we all know, been the source of great terror, and have laid the foundation of many of the tales of haunted houses.

\* Ollier on *Ghosts, Dreams, &c.*



By this time my readers will doubtless be saying to themselves, "Bless the man! he <sup>Explanation of Phantasms of the Dead.</sup> has told us all about the reasons for belief in, and given us arguments against the reality of, departed spirits again visiting the earth; but how is he going to explain the many authentic tales of the appearance of ghosts? how is he going to show us their origin, and yet prove their objective unreality?"

Well, though the attempt has been made by far more experienced heads than mine, I must do my best to clearly tackle the subject, and give you, as far as I am able, what I truly and really believe to be the right and proper explanation of these phantasms of the dead.

Mr. Stead, who evidently means to be a veritable ghost hunter this Christmas, no doubt will call me unscientific, because I do not believe in objective apparitions. Well, he must do so; but whatever he or anyone else says, I shall still hold to my opinion, until I have seen some better argument against my belief in the absolute *subjectiveness* of all so-called phantasms, with, of course, the one exception of those caused by deception and trickery.

No one who has had any experience with the insane, and can logically argue from that experience, can, I think, hold any other belief than I do myself; unless, of course, superstitious bias, the love of the marvellous, or ecstatic religious fervour has led them away from the path of cool reasoning. We cannot, however, dismiss the whole subject of "ghost causation" with Scrooge's argument, though that he was right in the abstract is not to be denied.



"You don't believe in me," observed Marley's ghost, when he had sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to the chair and its surroundings. "I don't," said Scrooge. "But what evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?" asked the ghost. "I don't know," said Scrooge. "But why do you doubt your senses?" "Because," said Scrooge, "a little thing affects them; a slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of underdone potato! There's more of *gravy* than of *grave* about you, whatever you are!"

I shall now give you what I consider to be the real causation of so-called phantasms of the dead:

- (a) *Common Deception and Trickery.*
- (b) *Mistaken Identity.*
- (c) *Illusion*, by which, from morbid fancy and certain surroundings, a real object is falsely perceived and manufactured by the mind into a supernatural appearance.
- (d) *Hallucination*, by which the morbid imagination calls up, as if before the very eyes, an object having no real objective existence.

Under this latter heading we have, of course, the hallucinations of dreams, nightmares, and that extraordinary type of hallucination which I have explained in the chapter on "Dreams," under the title of "Persistent Dream Hallucination."

(a) *Common Deception and Trickery.*—It has been said by a writer on the subject of Haunted Houses, that he believes there are few authentic tales of ghosts and



mysterious noises that have not been traced to trickery. I cannot agree with him. In all ages deception and trickery have played a prominent part in the production of the so-called supernatural, whether we look back to the cheating oracles of old, to modern Spiritualism so-called, or to the latest craze, the mysterious doings of the wonderful Mahatmas and their power of projecting their "astral bodies" thousands of miles.

I take up the volumes edited by Camden Pelham, entitled *The Chronicles of Crime*, and I find abundant proof of the mischievous pranks played by very human ghosts. The Cock Lane Ghost must be known to all my readers, and I need not give any description, save only to say that when we think of the numbers of well-known, and presumed to be, thoroughly sensible persons who for a long time implicitly believed in the reality of the doings of this ghost, it does not seem so astonishing that, even in this more enlightened century, we have many who love to believe in the marvellous, without any attempt at cool calm examination.

The story of the haunted Royal Palace of Woodstock must also be well known :

"It was in 1649 that the Commissioners who were sent by the Long Parliament to take possession of it, and efface all the emblems of royalty about it, were fairly driven out by their fear of the devil and the annoyances they suffered from the roguish Cavalier, who played the imp to admiration."\*

They had not long been in the house before tables and chairs began to dance ; glass cracked and shivered to pieces ; sounds as of a dog were heard under their

\* *Chronicles of Crime*. Pelham.



*Witchery at Woodstock.*



beds, and they declared they felt gnawing at the very bedclothes ; then a *something* came into their bedrooms and fetched the warming-pan, and made a terrific noise with it ; and finally things came to such a pass, that in real terror, and with a firm belief that it was the devil's own work, the worthy Commissioners "did a bolt." It was many years before the real cause of all these extraordinary manifestations was discovered. It then came out that the instigator and perpetrator was Giles Sharp, the trusted clerk to the Commissioners. He was a concealed Royalist, and knew every hole and corner and every secret door of Woodstock Palace.

It was only a short time since that I was consulted by a clergyman of a neighbouring parish about a poor woman, a farmer's widow, whom he feared was being driven out of her mind by most mysterious, and to her unexplainable, events taking place in her house. Bells would ring, but no one could be found who had touched the bellpull ; plaster fell down ; clothes hung out to dry, suddenly disappeared, and were found almost at once on a neighbouring hedge ; no sooner was the poor woman in bed than noises prevented any attempt to sleep, and it became evident that the effect on her mind was beginning to be very marked. After hearing a full account of the household and the general arrangements, I advised a strict watch to be kept, with the result that a little impish servant was found to be the culprit. She would have made a grand medium !

Not long since, the road near my house was supposed to be visited every night by a "ghost in white," and all sorts of rumours were rife as to the goings on in a certain house quite close to the scene of the midnight wanderings.



Threats, very clearly given out, of a sound thrashing for the ghost the next time it made its appearance, banished it from the "haunted road," and the occupant of the house in question soon after taking himself to foreign climes, no more was heard of the mysterious and supernatural noises and doings within its walls.

The Hammersmith Ghost and the tragedy which it caused may be remembered by some, but it is well worth repeating. The ghost haunted the churchyard, and on one occasion so frightened a poor woman that death soon followed. Many persons were so terrified, so many accidents were caused by this apparition, that at length a man called Francis Smith determined to watch for and shoot the ghost. Unfortunately, instead of meeting with the real culprit, he shot a poor fellow, Thomas Millwood, a bricklayer, who in the white dress of his trade was returning from his work. Smith was arrested, tried before the Lord Chief Baron, Mr. Justice Rooke, and Mr. Justice Lawrance, convicted, and sentenced to death; but on the strong recommendation to mercy of the jury was respited, and finally allotted one year's imprisonment.

It is needless to say that the "*Ghost*" took such alarm at the consequences of his idiotic trickery, that he was not again seen; and, fortunately for him, he never became identified.

(*b*) *Mistaken Identity*.—This explanation of a few ghost stories, applies perhaps, more forcibly to phantasms of the living, than to those of the dead. When anyone is known to be dead, though a person exactly corresponding to the one who has passed from this





*Shooting a Ghost.*



world may be seen, it is usually at once recognised as only an extraordinary likeness.

There have been many instances of mistaken identity, and I can call to mind during the past few months some five or six recorded cases, but not either of them is so interesting as the following, which appeared in the *Bristol Times and Mirror*, in September, 1891:

“A case of mistaken identity has just occurred at Aldershot. About two months ago, a man was discovered in one of the copses adjoining Rushmoor Common with his throat badly cut. Life was not extinct, and he was conveyed by the military police to the Cambridge Hospital, where he died before being able to give an account of himself. Subsequently he was identified as Charles Gilbert, by Mrs. Gilbert, who was acting as a housekeeper at Aldershot. After the inquest he was buried in that name, the supposed widow attending the funeral. On Monday, however, the man Gilbert made his appearance, and was met in Aldershot by his wife, who at once recognised him. Some tradesmen, who believed him to be dead, were also surprised to meet him, and the man has now returned to his trade as a painter, in Short Street, Aldershot.

“At the inquest above referred to, Mrs. Gilbert deposed that her husband had been to see her, and had offered her money; but she told him to go away, and buy better clothes. He had been confined in the Lunatic Asylum at Fareham, and strong comments were made respecting the propriety of the medical officer allowing a person, who was then supposed to have been the lunatic, to be at large. Various rumours were after-



wards current respecting the visit of Gilbert to Aldershot, for the real Gilbert was, without doubt, in the town previous to the man committing suicide, as he met several acquaintances, and had breakfasted with a well-known tradesman.

“ It has now transpired that Charles Gilbert suffered from religious mania over fifteen years ago, and that he had been an inmate of Fareham Asylum till last May, when he was discharged as cured. Not very long after this he went to Aldershot, and called on his wife, after previously looking for employment, and it was only a couple of days or so after this visit that the suicide was discovered. The wife was the principal witness at the inquest, and positively identified the suicide as her husband, while a well-known hotel proprietor, who had been on friendly terms with Gilbert, also stated that, to the best of his belief, the dead body was Gilbert's.

“ A very curious fact is that at the inquest Mrs. Gilbert stated her husband had a deformed finger on his right hand ; the dead man had such a deformity, and so has the living Charles Gilbert.

“ Mr. Batchellor, of Union Street, Aldershot, one of the oldest residents, states that on Monday, while on a ladder painting, he was hailed by name from a voice familiar to him. He looked down, and at once shouted out, ‘ Hullo, Charlie, is that you ? ’ recognising the man as Charles Gilbert ; and he has since found him employment.

“ Mr. Fricker, another tradesman, states that he cannot possibly be mistaken about the identity of the man as Charles Gilbert. He called at his house in



Victoria Road and breakfasted with him a couple of days or so before the suicide. Mr. Fricker says Gilbert many years ago worked for his father, and that he was on particularly friendly terms with him. At the time of his last visit Gilbert gave Mr. Fricker his cousin's address. After the inquest this address was given up; and, strange to say, a bill for funeral expenses for burying Charles Gilbert was forwarded to this address, and fell into the hands of the supposed dead man himself. Of course up to the present time the name of the man who committed suicide and was buried as Charles Gilbert is unknown. The strange affair is causing quite a sensation."





(c) ILLUSION, *by which, from morbid fancy and certain surroundings, a real object is falsely perceived, and manufactured by the mind into a supernatural appearance.*

Without morbid fancy or a superstitious mind, it is somewhat difficult to understand how *illusion* could account for many ghost stories. If the mind is in a thoroughly healthy state, the correction of a false perception is so quickly made that instead of a ghost story being the result, we have an honest and straightforward explanation of what might have been thought to be a real phantom from the other world.

Short-sighted people are naturally more liable to illusion of sight, just as persons whose hearing may be defective are prone to falsely perceive various sounds.

With regard to illusions of hearing, we must not forget that unless our auditory apparatus has been especially trained and cultivated not only to distinguish class of sound, but also direction and distance from which it comes, it is very difficult for any of us to definitely trace any noise, especially if at all indistinct.

Ollier gives a very good instance of a *ghost illusion*. A young lady was terrified one night by seeing at the foot of her bed a tall, shadowy phantom, making perpetual obeisances. Hiding her head under the bedclothes, she collected her scattered spirits, took courage within herself, and again, but with a scrutinising eye, looked at the spectre. There he was, still making salaams, according to the Eastern mode of adoration. Frightened out of her senses, she again endeavoured to acquire self-possession, and trembling in every limb, she rose, went towards the window, and at once detected



the cause of the effect. The house was on the border of a suburban road, and a gas-lamp, recently placed there, had projected into her room the shadow of an intermediate tree, whose branches swayed in the night breeze.

The Cornish miners used to be very superstitious concerning what they termed "knockers," which the author of *Yeast* tells us were considered by them to be the ghosts of the old Jews that crucified our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman Emperors to work the mines. These ghosts did not make any actual appearance, but contented themselves with causing extraordinary noises in the mines. These noises were no doubt simply due to dropping of water, displacement of pieces of rock, &c., in the old and deserted workings. The superstitious, morbid minds of the miners falsely perceived natural noises, and their ghost tales were undoubtedly to be classed under the heading of Illusions.

A very good story of illusion, implicating more than one sense, is told by Ollier in his work entitled *Fallacy of Ghosts, Dreams, and Omens* :

"In 1807 a baronet was summoned from school to a town on the coast, where his father had died suddenly. Arriving late at night, after a fatiguing journey, with spirits exhausted by the unexpected loss he had sustained, the young heir requested to be shown to his bedroom, where his sorrow and agitation were soon lulled by sleep, the 'balm of hurt minds.'

"Between one and two o'clock in the morning he was awakened by a low, wailing sound, dirge-like (so it seemed to his half-slumbering senses). He lifted



himself from his pillow, and listened. It was no dream. The moaning noise continued, and grew louder and louder.

“While our youth looked about by the gleam of a night-lamp in his chamber, the two leaves of a folding-door opposite him swung open, as if to give space for the entrance of a ghostly pageant. It was as startling an announcement as that which, in Spenser’s *Faery Queen*, was made to Britomart, when ‘in cheareless night’

‘The yron wicket open flew  
As it with mighty leavers had been tore;  
And forth yssewd, as on the ready flore  
Of some theatre, a grave personage.’

Having remained awhile motionless with dismal apprehension, the young baronet crept out of bed, took his lamp, and stole breathlessly into the adjoining room. The first object that met his view was a figure in white drapery, with a visage of the same colour as its robes. It advanced towards him, face to face. Being for a moment terrified, the youth dared not proceed; and as he stopped, the spectre also became immovable.

“But this was not all that encountered his gaze in that grim apartment. A coffin was there, and as it were, the plumes of black feathers, waving and bending as if supernaturally forced to take part in some dreary ceremony.

“The lamenting sound, the sudden swinging open of the folding-doors (seemingly by their own impulse), the white figure, the coffin and bowing plumes, were all calculated to impress him who beheld them with a



belief that ghostly influence was at work; and had he yielded to his fear, and rushed from the place, he would have given another phantom-story to the already existing *veritable* stock.

“But, though only sixteen years of age, the youthful baronet was one of those few persons whose presence of mind rarely deserts them. Summoning his faculties, and coolly investigating what he saw, he ascertained that the pale spectre was a reflection in a pier-glass (till then unperceived) of himself in his night-gear, which, as he moved, would of course seem to be moving towards him. The wailing noise was produced by wind through partially-opened windows, near which the corpse lay; this wind increased in strength during a gusty night, had forced open the folding-doors, which had been imperfectly and hastily secured by the servants (perhaps in trepidation) when they prepared a bed for the youth; and the strong breeze had also given a waving motion to the black plumes placed on his father’s coffin.”

Here, then, we have the moaning of the wind mistaken for something supernatural; we find the young lad’s own reflection in the glass mistaken for a spectre; and the whole scene made the more ghastly and ghost-like by the real coffin, and the real plumes waving in the wind.

Sometime ago a considerable correspondence went on in the *Daily Telegraph* concerning “The Truth about Ghosts,” and among several instances of illusion being at the bottom of ghost stories, I find a very good one described by “H. A. E.” It is as follows:—

“Some years ago I was staying at the rectory of a



village near Congleton. The grounds of the rectory were divided from the churchyard by a narrow lane, and joining the churchyard was a large meadow. One lovely moonlight night, about ten o'clock, I was looking out of my window, when I was startled by seeing a female form, clad in white, standing in the middle of the field. It was swaying to and fro, as in pain or trouble. After looking at it for some time, I went to fetch my companion, who occupied a room on the other side of the house. I did not tell her what I had seen, but merely asked her to look out of the window, which she accordingly did; but to my disappointment the figure had disappeared. However, my friend—who was at a loss to know why I wanted her—suddenly exclaimed, 'Who is that in the field? She seems unhappy in her mind.' Again the figure vanished, but re-appeared almost immediately. This was too much for Miss —, who, wildly screaming 'It's a ghost!' fled from the room. I remained watching for some time longer, and at last came to the conclusion that the 'figure' was really the pond, which was of an oblong shape, and stood in the middle of the field. The moon shining on it, gave it the appearance of a white-robed figure, and the motion was caused by the ripple of the water. When a cloud passed over the moon, the figure disappeared."

The narrator wisely concludes his letter by saying :

"I fancy a great many so-called 'ghosts' may be accounted for in much the same way, if the seers would watch them quietly."

This advice is sound; but not, I fear, easily carried out by a nervous, superstitious person, under the cir-



cumstances and surroundings usually accompanying the appearance of the phantom spectres.

Illusions play a very prominent part in those tales of haunted houses, in which ghost-like noises, clanking of chains, footsteps through long corridors and lonely passages, sighing, groaning and moaning sounds, cause many old mansions to be looked upon as distinctly under the ban of some spirit of the dead. These have been touched upon already in the paragraph on ominous night noises.

(d) HALLUCINATION, *by which the morbid imagination calls up, as if before the very eyes, an object having no real objective existence.*

This is by far the most frequent explanation of ghost stories. All who have carefully read the chapter on "The Physiology of Hallucinations," and who have still further paid the necessary attention to Sir David Brewster's clear account of Mrs. A.'s hallucination, will, I am sure, readily understand how this form of sense deception must be the origin of the large majority of tales of apparitions.

Mr. Podmore, in a very able article, entitled "Phantasms of the Dead from Another Point of View," published in Part 16 of the *Proceedings of the Psychological Research Society*, very wisely says: "We have seen that the authentic ghost, with any characteristics to distinguish him from a subjective hallucination, is rarely recognised; that he rarely brings any message from the dead to the living; that his connection with skeletons and tragedies is obscure and uncertain. He is, in fact, usually a fugitive and irrelevant phantasm. He flits across the scene as the figure cast by a magic-lantern,



and he possesses apparently as little purpose, volition, or intelligence."

*Cause 1.*—*Superstitious fear and expectancy* will often give rise to this form of sense deception. A good example is the story told by Mr. Joseph Skipsey, the miner poet, and custodian of the Shakespeare Museum at Stratford, to the Psychical Research Society:—

"When I was ten years old, working in the pit at Percy Main Colliery, near North Shields, I yoked a horse to a train of rolling waggons and waited at a siding, a spot on which, some thirty years before, a man had been killed. I had frequently been at this point before without thinking about this circumstance. Upon this morning it suddenly occurred to me strangely that this tragedy happened; I felt afraid, and blew my light out lest I should see anything. A few minutes afterwards everything around me became visible—the coal-wall, the horse, etc. I was astonished at this, because there was no visible source of light. I then heard a footstep coming, and saw along the drift-way a pair of legs in short breeches, as a miner's would be, and hands hanging down the sides. The upper part of the advancing figure was shrouded in cloud. The figure carried no light. This imperfect figure came to me, took hold of me, and I felt a man's grip, but I also felt that it was friendly. It fondled me, and I felt both hands and the body. I looked earnestly for the face, but saw nothing but dark cloud. Then the figure passed me and disappeared. I felt paralysed and unable to speak. I felt no fear after it had left me, and I often went to the same place and saw nothing. On my telling this to Tom Gilbis, a miner friend, he told



me that he had seen a light in a hand in a tramway in another mine, but no body. The light swung round and disappeared.

“(Signed) JOSEPH SKIPSEY.

“*Dec. 13th, 1884.*”

Here, then, we have an example of a hallucination of both the sense of sight and the sense of touch, no doubt somewhat enlarged upon by the narrator, but evidently caused by superstitious fear.

The  
Hallucinations  
of  
Thos. Perks.

Thos. Perks was a young man living at Mangotsfield, a gunsmith by trade. He was extremely skilled in mathematical studies; after this he applied himself to astrology. He con



*The Hallucinations of Thos. Perks.*



sulted the Rev. A. Bedford, minister of Temple Church, Bristol, as to the lawfulness of conversing with spirits. He further stated that, having a book of directions, he accordingly went in the dead of night to a cross-way with a lanthorn and candles, consecrated for this purpose by several incantations. He had also consecrated chinks, consisting of several mixtures, with which he made a circle. He, however, was too enterprising. On one occasion the spirits appeared faster than he desired, and in most dismal shapes, like serpents, lions, bears, &c., hissing at him, and attempting to throw spears and balls of fire, which did very much affright him, and the more so that he found it was not in his power to lay them, insomuch that his hair stood upright, and he expected every minute to be torn to pieces. This happened in December about midnight, and he continued there, daring not to leave the circle, until break of day, when they left him. Perks never recovered from the shock, he pined away and died. These hallucinations were no doubt caused by his superstition and belief in the supernatural, and were clearly the immediate result of expectancy.

This account is taken from a letter which the Rev. A. Bedford sent to the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol in 1703.

*Cause 2.—An illusion of sound will often give rise to a hallucination of sight.* Natural noises at night may, as I have previously mentioned, very readily be interpreted into something eerie and mysterious: to many imaginative minds, a visual sense deception may easily follow in the train of such false perception of sound.



A good example of this is given by the Psychical Research Society before mentioned. It is given far too exhaustively for me to repeat *in toto*, but I will do my best to give a short account of the real facts of the case :

A landlady, Mrs. G., took a house in London in Sept., 1887. On the first night she slept with a friend in the back drawing-room. Both heard rustling sounds in the front room, as if several ladies were walking about in silk dresses. On other occasions Mrs. G. heard the same noises, and sometimes fancied people were coming upstairs. Mrs. G. evidently became frightened, slept with lights in her room, and told her fears to two lodgers, Messrs. I. and D. Guthrie, who also said they heard the rustling noises, and being also alarmed, they took the precaution to sleep with swords by their bedside ! Towards the end of November, Mrs. G. states that she awoke at 1 a.m. with a feeling as if someone was in her room. When she turned round in bed, she was horrified to see a figure of a woman in a red dress and a mob-cap. Mrs. G. spoke to her. She did not answer, but bent her head backwards, and Mrs. G. then noticed that she had her throat cut. Mrs. G. rapped the wall to awaken her two lodgers who slept in the next room, and when they knocked at her door to enquire what was the matter, the figure slowly vanished like a shadow. Both the Messrs. Guthrie confirmed her story, and stated that they also had heard strange noises and had seen a peculiar light, and Mr. I. Guthrie further said that he saw one night the figure of a tall woman in his room.

A niece of Mrs. G. some months afterwards, when



these ghost stories had become common talk, declared that she, too, had seen the figure of a woman in her room, but it differed from the one described by her aunt. The house had been searched, and, as may be imagined, nothing had been found. Some members of the Psychical Research Society slept in this house, but, I presume, *not* being imaginative beings, they neither saw a ghost form, nor did they hear any sounds that could be at all deemed inexplicable.

Here we have different figures seen by three different persons: we have no connection given to us between either of these figures seen, and any story told about the house and its earlier occupants; and, as far as I can gather, Mrs. G. was not cross-examined as to whether she had, previous to the night when she saw the phantom of the woman with the cut throat, either heard of such a catastrophe, or read of such a case in a book or newspaper. The explanation of all this is, I think, pretty clear; viz., that some natural sounds (peculiar no doubt) being misinterpreted by both Mrs. G. and her lodgers, had started superstitious fear, and consequently, expectancy *plus* probable belief in the ghost-like, readily produced the hallucination of sight, and very possibly at a time when the mind was in some stage of semi-sleep.

Lord Lyttleton's Apparition. One night on his retiring to bed, after his servant was dismissed and his light extinguished, Lord Lyttleton heard a noise resembling the fluttering of a dove at his chamber window. This attracted his attention to the spot, and looking up he saw the apparition of an unhappy lady whom he had treated basely, and who as a consequence had put a



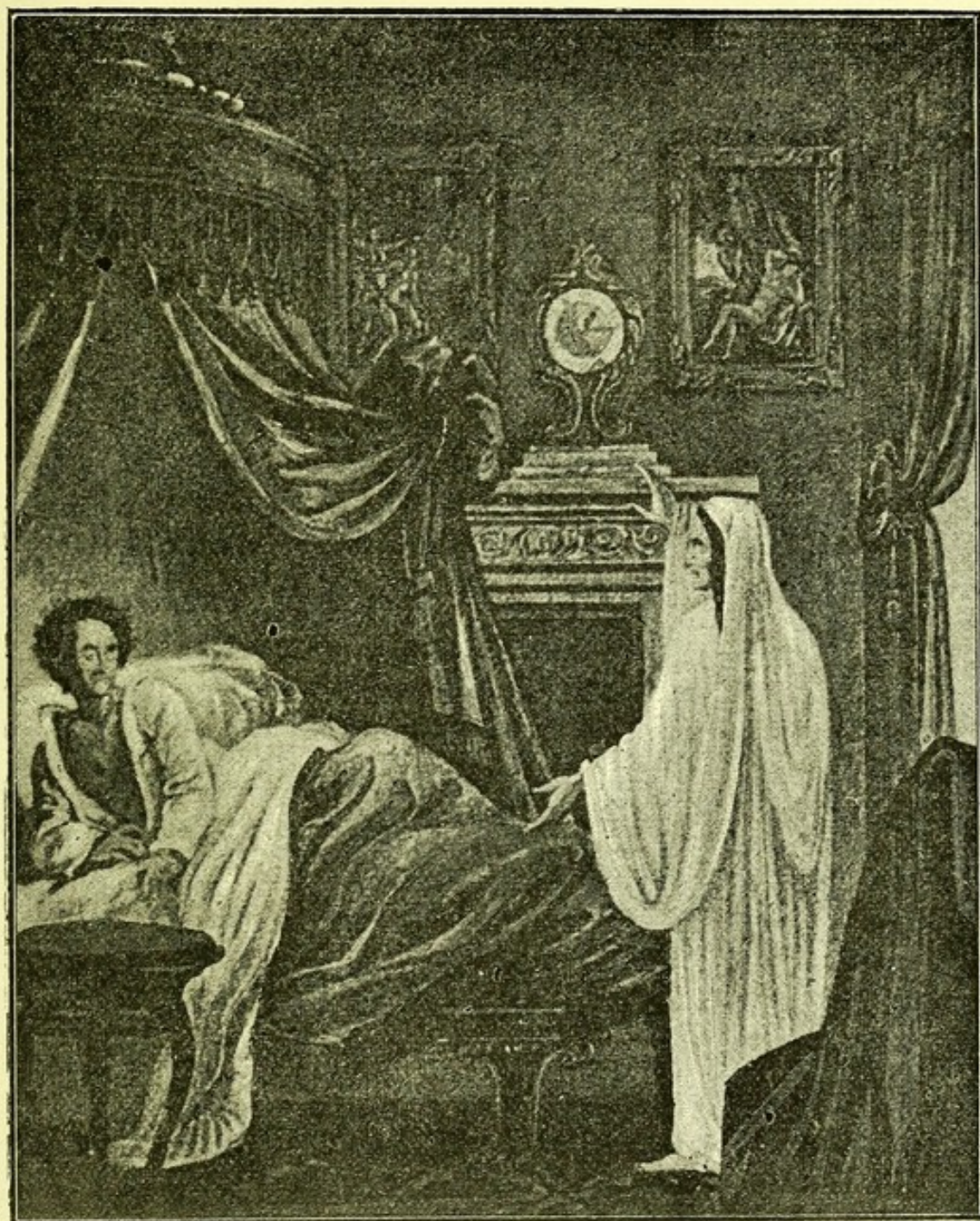
violent end to her existence. The form approached the end of the bed. The room was preternaturally light, so that the objects in the chamber were visible. Raising her hand and pointing to a clock that stood on the mantel shelf, the figure, with a severe solemnity of voice and manner, announced to the appalled and conscience-stricken man that at that very hour in three days his life and his sins would be ended. Then the spectre vanished. In three days the dissolute lord breathed his last.

According to a foot-note in Scott's *Demonology*, this tale has very little true basis. A friend who was staying at the same house with Lord Lyttleton states that a lady of the party had one day lost a favourite bird, and all the gentlemen tried to recover it for her. Next day, on assembling at breakfast, his lordship complained of having passed a very bad night, and of having been worried in his dreams by a repetition of the chase after the lady's bird. His death occurred soon after.

*Cause 3.—Emotion*, such as affliction, remorse, or fear, will often render the mind liable to hallucination of the senses, and it would be easy to trace many ghost stories to this cause.

Dr. J. A. Symonds mentions a case of a relation of his own who, at a time of great affliction, had a very distinct hallucination of sight. She had lost, by death, a particular friend, resident in a distant part of the country, and she was walking near a large common on the evening of the day on which she knew that the funeral must have taken place. It was then that she had a vivid perception of a funeral train slowly moving across the heath ; and although she had





*Lord Lyttleton's Apparition.*



strength of mind enough to be conscious that it was only a hallucination of sight, the appearance was so distinct that she could not help being much affected by it.

Dr. Conolly, to whom the insane of this and other countries owe so much, tells us of a man who once, when he was in great peril in a storm off the Eddystone Lighthouse, beheld his family-circle as distinctly as any of the objects actually around him.

The  
Hallucination  
of Mr. Cassio  
Burroughs. Cassio Burroughs was a dissolute man about town in the reign of Charles II. On his way to fight a duel, that ended fatally for him, he had to pass through a churchyard, when he





encountered the ghost of a beautiful Italian lady whom he had wronged and deserted, and who died broken-hearted. On the other hand was a grinning skeleton—omen of his coming death. Fear of his probable fate; a conscience, struck no doubt at such a time with the enormity of his great misdeeds; and a brain, rendered unhealthy by his dissolute life, were no doubt the causes of these hallucinations.

Miss Bailey's Ghost. The following humorous ballad, which I have taken from *Modern Street Ballads*, by John Ashton, is too good to be left out in any book on Ghosts. It is evidently founded on fact, and is another instance of hallucination. The writer evidently realised the subjectiveness of "poor Miss Bailey's ghost," and the one line, "For he had caught a fever," tells its own tale :

MISS BAILEY'S GHOST.

A Captain bold, in Halifax, who dwelt in country quarters,  
Betrayed a maid, who hang'd herself one morning in her garters ;  
His wicked conscience smited him, he lost his stomach daily,  
He took to drinking ratafie, and thought upon Miss Bailey.

Oh, Miss Bailey ! unfortunate Miss Bailey !

One night betimes he went to rest, for he had caught a fever :  
Says he, " I am a handsome man, but I 'm a gay deceiver ;"  
His candle just at twelve o'clock began to burn quite palely,  
A ghost stepp'd up to his bedside and said, " Behold, Miss Bailey."

Oh, Miss Bailey ! unfortunate Miss Bailey !

" Avaunt, Miss Bailey ! " then he cried, " your face looks white and mealy."

" Dear Captain Smith," the ghost replied, " you 've used me ungentlely ;

The crowner's quest goes hard with me, because I 've acted frailly,  
And Parson Biggs won't bury me, though I 'm dead Miss Bailey."

Oh, Miss Bailey ! unfortunate Miss Bailey !



"Dear corpse," said he, "since you and I accounts must once for all close,

I've really got a one-pound note in my regimental small clothes ;  
I will bribe the sexton for your grave." The ghost then vanish'd gaily,

Crying, "Bless you, wicked Captain Smith, remember poor Miss Bailey."

Oh, Miss Bailey ! unfortunate Miss Bailey !

*Cause 4.—Nightmare.*—I have gone into this cause of apparitions pretty exhaustively in my chapter on "Dreams." It is well known that Mrs. Radcliffe culled many of the dreadful scenes which abound in her romances from visions caused by nightmare, intentionally induced by eating the most indigestible suppers. Let anyone of a superstitious turn of mind wake suddenly from a nightmare with all the striking vividness of some phantom before him, and it is easy to understand how he may believe in the reality of what was only a result of his morbid and unhealthy imagination. To nightmare may undoubtedly be traced many ghost stories.

*Cause 5.—Dreams and Persistent Dream Image.*—This cause I have also referred to in my chapter on "Dreams"; but it is so interesting, that I feel it my duty to show more fully how this peculiar power of the mind may give rise to a distinct belief in the visit of a ghost form.

Dr. J. A. Symonds writes very clearly upon this origin of apparitions: "When a person is half asleep, whether prior to full sleep or on his progress towards waking—that is, when the nerves of sense are torpid, though not wholly insensible to impressions, and surrounding objects assume a shadowy indistinct outline—



it is then that his mental shadows or phantasms are liable to be confused with the former. Everyone must have experienced this more or less while dozing ; but if it should happen that one of the mental images was the figure of a deceased individual, his feelings are perturbed, he becomes completely awake in an instant, and the more readily from the slightness of the torpor that oppressed his senses ; and he then believes that he has seen a ghost. He perhaps communicates his conviction to someone ; and on its being suggested that he must have been troubled with a dream, he asserts the insufficiency of such an explanation, because he remembers that the apparition was present near the chair or table, or any other article of furniture in the room. Many a ghost story has doubtless been built on such a foundation as this."

"In sleep, what forms will ductile fancy take,  
And what so common as to dream awake?"

CRABBE.

What better instance of a ghost story, having its origin in dream and persistent dream image, than the one told us by Mr. Walter Besant?—

"I was travelling in Northumberland. The day I had spent in driving over a wild and lonely moor to a village situated in the midst of it—a village built round the quadrangle of what had been a monastery. There was the old gate left, part of the buildings, part of the wall, the quiet village enclosed by the old wall, the convent chapel, now the parish church. There were only two or three hundred people living here ; outside ran and babbled the trout stream, with its high banks covered with bushes and brambles and wild flowers.



All round stretched the moor. At the inn, where I took some tea or something, they talked to me about the past. The place was filled with echoes of the past. Whispers and voices were heard at night; things had been seen in the bedroom. A wonderful place! No where else in England is there a more wonderful place. I drove back, and spent the evening alone in my inn, reading certain books of the Queen Anne time; and at eleven o'clock went off to bed. My room was a very old room, and the inn itself was at least three hundred years old. All this is introduction, *in order to show you why the thing that I saw took the shape that it did.\** For in the middle of the night I woke suddenly, and sat up startled. I found the room perfectly light. The door which I had locked flew open, and there walked in three ladies dressed in Queen Anne costume, with the pretty old stiff cardboard ornament of the head, and everything. Never before had I understood how beautiful was the Queen Anne dress. The ladies, sitting down on chairs round the fire (*which was now burning merrily\**), began to talk, but I knew not what they said. Suddenly—it shames me to confess the thing—I was seized with a horrid terror. I leaped from the bed, pulled back the curtains, and pulled up the blind. It was about three in the morning, and twilight. Then I turned to my visitors: they slowly faded away. The light slowly went out of the room, the fire slowly burned low, the figures slowly became faint, they slowly vanished. Who were they? Well, you see that I have seen things; but I have heard nothing. No communication has ever been made to me from the

\* The italics are mine.—L. A. W.



other world at all, except by the spirit Katie; and she only talked rubbish through a medium, and I had to pay a pound for it."

The story so graphically told by such a past-master in description as Mr. Walter Besant wants no explanation. It explains itself. There could not be a better instance of dream and persistent dream image.

The next case to illustrate this cause of the appearance of a phantasm of the dead has been related to me by a great friend of mine, a lady whose writings are known, and who, although holding opinions upon Swedenborgian philosophy which I cannot agree with, is yet thoroughly sincere in her beliefs.

Mrs. P. writes as follows, heading the story, "As it was told me by the Rev. T. H., brother-in-law to Mr. H., a medical man living near Bristol":—

(I may here remark that upon cross-examining Mrs. P., I elicited the fact that both the rev. gentleman who told her the story, and Mr. H., the percipient of the phantasm, are ardent believers in the visits of the spirits of the dead.)

"Mr. H. at Bristol one day read in the morning paper of the death of Mr. W., of Bath. That evening a servant told him a gentleman had called, and wished to see him. He went into the drawing-room, and standing by the fireplace was Mr. W. He was startled, but said nothing, supposing the announcement of the death a mistake. They *shook hands*, and Mr. W. said:

"‘I want you to look at my arm’ (Mr. H. being a doctor).

"Mr. H. *examines* it. It had been injured, and they exchange remarks how the accident occurred. Finally,



Mr. W. asked Mr. H. to take charge of a parcel for him, and then departed.

“On returning to the room where his wife was sitting, Mr. H. told her he had just *seen* and *felt* and *spoken* with Mr. W., who had given him a parcel to keep for him, which he requested his wife to lock up. She was uncomfortable about the circumstance, having read of Mr. W.’s death in the paper. However, she locked up the parcel in her wardrobe, and they concluded there had been some mistake.

“The same day this there was a dinner at which all those who had studied at the Infirmary and Hospital met together. Mr. H. was one of the number. Seated next to him was a gentleman who had come from Bath. They began talking, and remarked upon the havoc death had made in their numbers, when the gentleman from Bath said :

“‘And there’s poor W.’

“‘Oh, he is not dead!’ replied Mr. H.

“‘Pray don’t jest,’ returned the other gravely.

“‘I am not jesting,’ said Mr. H.; ‘for I have only just seen him, spoken to him, and *felt* him.’

“‘Impossible!’ cried the other; ‘for I attended him on his death-bed, and his death was put in the papers.’

Mr. H. said nothing more, but on his return from the dinner he said to his wife :

“‘My dear, how about that parcel I gave you to keep for W.? I wish you would go and get it.’

“She obeyed. *Going to her wardrobe where she had put the parcel, she found it was gone!*”\*

\* The italics are mine.—L. A. W.



In sending me this account, Mrs. P. adds :

" I was so impressed with this story when the Rev. T. H. told it me, that I came home and wrote it in my commonplace book, from which I have just copied it for you. Therefore you can rely that *my* memory has not embroidered the tale, as I allowed no lapse of time between my visit and noting down the facts as told to me ; which might have been the case had I written from memory to-day for you what I heard quite two years ago.

" The extraordinary part of this story is, the servant saw Mr. W., as also did Mr. H. The wife *felt* and *handled* the *parcel*, which she locked away. Hence the *double* evidence.

" Mr. H. is convinced he *felt* and spoke to Mr. W. He tells his brother-in-law the story. It becomes a permanent *fact* to him. All these points must be met."

It is, of course, very easy to say, " All these points must be met ; " but Mrs. P. knows too well that, unfortunately, I am unable to see the different parties to this appearance, and consequently no cross-examination is possible. Where is the servant who is said to have seen Mr. W. ? No one knows. Did the servant tell the Rev. T. H. that she had seen Mr. W. ? Mrs. P. cannot say. Mr. and Mrs. H. are now so old that any attempt to elicit further evidence from them would only be met by failure ; and besides, as Mrs. P. writes, " It becomes a permanent fact to him." No doubt ! It is this that gives so many ghost stories such a tinge of reality when listening to the ghost-seer recounting his experiences. And then the parcel ! Where was it ? Mrs. H. goes to her wardrobe shortly after the Rev. T. H.



says she had put it there—and *it was gone*. Dear me! Why, Mrs. P., cannot you see the whole case at a glance?

Mr. H. was an old friend of the deceased Mr. W., and no doubt had some time been his doctor. He reads the account of his death in his paper after his dinner, and what more likely than that, while in a slight doze, back from memory comes the dream of some incident connected with his dead friend? What more likely that in past years he had come to him to consult him about his arm, and possibly also had at that same visit given him a parcel to keep? Waking from his doze, he sees before him the image of his friend as he had seen it in his dream. He does not realise he has been asleep, neither does he believe that he is otherwise than *quite* awake; for is he not conscious of being in his own room, and does he not see all the familiar objects about him? Certainly; but, as I have before explained, this peculiar property of the mind in certain conditions to be the victim of a persistent dream hallucination is a well-known fact.

This, I take it, is the true explanation of this story; and no doubt the servant's announcement of Mr. W., the handing of the parcel to the wife, were either parts of the dream, or, shall we say, added by degrees, as the phantasm "became a permanent fact!"

Unexplained  
Ghost Stories. We must admit that there are some ghost stories which *appear* authentic of visits of departed spirits, which are difficult to explain by ordinary laws, though we must not forget that, so far, the Ghost-hunting Society has not yet been able to unearth a real objective ghost. Now this learned



Society has flown to the theory of thought transference, calling it telepathy; and in trying to explain some of the phantasms of the dead, and more especially those that have appeared to more than one person at the same time, suggest that these "hallucinatory ghosts" are caused by telepathic communication between *that part of the departed person which has survived the change of death* and the mind of the subject of the hallucination. This is too far-fetched, too wildly theoretical for me to either believe in or discuss. I shall have more to say upon this point when dealing with Phantasms of the Living.

Let us, then, leave the ghosts (spirits of the departed) to those who fondly believe in their existence, and to those who, as Spiritualists, consider themselves capable of summoning them back from Spirit-land. A writer in a very old number of the *Saturday Review* is clear, if sarcastic, when he says: "Some surprise would be excited if the names of all the English families to whom their haunted rooms are realities were published. Granted a Banshee, an old lady in grey, a drummer with his drum, a monk with his head under his arm, evanescent footsteps on the stairs, or spectral carriages at the front-door, and it is undoubtedly difficult to contend that a familiar may not be evoked by uneducated persons for the purposes of a livelihood. We are surprised, by the way, at not seeing any offer from the trade to supply the ancestral or family ghost ready-made. The retired soap-boiler should be able to contract for his own private demon, as well as for his coat of arms."

## PART II.—PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING.

I have purposely divided this chapter into two parts,



because I think that it is only right to keep the question of ghosts (apparitions of the dead) distinct from the far more serious and difficult question of the appearance of the form, or the hearing of the voice, of a living person to another living individual, though hundreds of miles of sea and land may at the time divide them. The majority of these appearances happen at a time when the body of the person who "appears" is either dying or in some serious trouble, danger, or difficulty.

The general causes of these appearances are undoubtedly—1st, *mistaken identity* (more or less rare), and 2nd, *hallucination*, whether in the sleeping or waking state.

1st. *Mistaken Identity*.—Some may ridicule this as a cause, but I am certain that though the instances may be comparatively few in which one person may be mistaken for another, and at the time of such mistake something should have been happening to the person whose identity was falsely perceived, they are nevertheless sufficiently numerous to be placed on record as one of the causes of the Phantasms of the Living.

I well remember, some few years ago, when on the Thames (some hundred of miles from my home) with a party of friends, that as we entered the lock below Cookham, I saw seated in the stern of a steam-launch a young fellow whom I at once thought I distinguished beyond a shadow of doubt as one of my brothers, and whom I had left at home hard at work.

His face was so identical, his cap, his light-grey coat, his peculiar collar which had long given him the nickname of the "Grand Old Man," his blue-and-white bird's-eye tie, and even a ring which looked to me exactly like a bloodstone, and which he always wore on his



little finger—all made me think I was looking at my brother, and no one else. I called him by name. No response. Again I hailed him, and was only rewarded by a fixed stare, as if to say, "Who the deuce are you?" My companions at once said: "Oh, leave him alone; he evidently does not want you to recognise him;" and so on we went. Never was a man more convinced than I was that I had seen my brother. Yet what was my surprise, on reaching home, to find that he had never been absent for a single hour! Here, then, was a striking example of mistaken identity.

Now, supposing something had happened to my brother at that time, and on that day, what more likely than that I should have rushed off into print to record the most wonderful instance of "a Phantasm of the Living"? The Pyschical Research Society would have welcomed it, and with solemn faces would have at once said: "Yes, here is another instance of the power of telepathy. No doubt his brother at that moment had all his thoughts concentrated on him, and a *visual* hallucination was the result!"

2nd, *Hallucination*.—The difficulty I have to contend with in discussing this cause, is to avoid repetition; for almost all I have said with regard to hallucination in the first part of this chapter will apply equally well here.

To my mind, the natural explanation of those recorded cases of Phantasms of the Living which have happened either in the dreaming or waking state, and which are undoubtedly hallucinatory in character, is that they were due to coincidence. This coincidence having no doubt a more natural origin than in many cases would at first seem possible,



Let us take the case, which recently caused some excitement, of Mrs. Kenon Bruce. She started from England for America, to join her husband in Nebraska. On board ship, shortly after it left Queenstown, she fell ill and became delirious. She declared that she saw her husband lying dead in the middle of a field, and her agony was excessive. On arriving at New York, she received a telegram stating that Mr. Bruce, thrown from a horse, had broken his neck ; and this occurred at the very hour when she, thousands of miles away on board ship, said she saw him lying dead in a field—as, in fact, he was at the time.

This is the bare story, and the explanation of such an appearance as “simple coincidence” will be scouted by many, who read in this distinct evidence of some communication between the mind of the poor fellow who came to such a sudden and untimely death and his loving wife, just at the commencement of that sea journey which she fondly but vainly hoped was once more to unite them.

Now, it seems to me that nothing was more likely than that Mrs. Bruce should in her dream, or her delirium, have seen a vision of her husband, not once but often. Whose form could have been more uppermost in her mind at such a time ? Superstitious dread, added possibly to the knowledge of dangers he had to go through, may easily have invested the vision with the character of death amidst the surroundings of field and farm. She might have had such a vision, as hundreds before have also had, and yet nothing come of it. But not so this time, though the stated fact that the day and hour of the appearance were exactly identical



with the death of her husband thousands of miles away, may be open to some *slight* doubt.

Now this case is one which the Society, so often referred to, would explain as one of telepathic communication, causing the hallucination which Mrs. Bruce had.

What, then, is Telepathy ?

Let us first see what the Psychical  
Telepathy. Research Society say about this mental power. A work entitled *Phantasms of the Living*, by Edward Gurney, M.A., Frederic W. H. Myers, M.A., and Frank Podmore, M.A., all leading members of the Society, enters very fully into this theory. Do not think that this theory is traceable to these gentlemen. It is as old as the hills, though never before has the attempt to prove its reality been so systematically worked out. The great philosopher Bacon spoke of "experiments in consort touching the emission of immaterial virtues of the minds and spirits of man, either by affections, or by imaginations, or by other impressions." And did not Goethe believe in the transference of thought, which, especially in the case of lovers, being particularly strong, *could act even at a distance* ? The book divides telepathic phenomena into two classes: I. The *Experimental*. II. The *Spontaneous*. With the first of these we have nothing to do. Mr. Maskelyne has touched upon it very shortly in his chapter on "Spiritualism," etc. The spontaneous cases are those in which the mind of one person, who at the time is either dying or passing through some crisis of excitement or emotion, can so act upon the mind of some other person, as to cause some distinct impression, either of feeling, sight, or hearing. In the majority of cases it is an apparition which is seen ;



in many others it is the voice of the absent one that is heard. It may, however, result only in some peculiar feeling, acting therefore through the emotions. A case of this kind is recorded by Archdeacon Wilson, late Head Master of Clifton College, and sent by him to Prof. Sidgwick, an ardent supporter of the Psychical Research Society :

“ Clifton College, Jan. 5, 1884.

“ The facts were these, as clearly as I can remember. I was at Cambridge, at the end of my second term, in full health, boating, football-playing, and the like, by no means subject to hallucinations or morbid fancies. One evening I felt extremely ill, trembling, with no apparent cause whatever ; nor did it seem to me at the time to be a physical illness, or chill of any kind. I was frightened. I was totally unable to overcome it. I remember a sort of struggle with myself, resolving that I *would* go on with my mathematics, but it was in vain : I became convinced that I was dying. I went down to the rooms of a friend, who was on the staircase, and I remember that he exclaimed at me before I spoke. He put away his books, pulled out a whisky-bottle and backgammon-board, but I could not face it. We sat over the fire for a bit, and then he fetched someone else to have a look at me. I was in strange discomfort, but with no symptoms I can recall, except mental discomfort and the conviction that I should die that night.

“ Towards eleven, after three hours of this, I got better, and went upstairs and got to bed, and after a time to sleep, and next morning was quite well. In the afternoon came a letter to say that my twin-brother had died the evening before, in Lincolnshire. I am quite



clear of the fact that I never once thought of him, nor was his presence with me even dimly imagined. He had been ill of consumption; but I had not heard of him for some days, and there was nothing to make me think his death was near. It took me altogether by surprise.

“JAMES M. WILSON.”

If the P.R.S. had given us many other instances of this so-called telepathic communication from a dying person acting on the emotions of a twin-brother or sister; if, further, the Archdeacon Wilson had had, besides his peculiar feeling, some indication of the death of his twin-brother—had heard his voice, or seen his re-presented figure,—one might pause to think out the possibility of the truth of their theory concerning the great bond of union between twins. But here is one isolated case: it is only a peculiar sensation that is felt; the rev. gentleman has not even a thought of his twin-brother, though he admits he knew he was dying of consumption. Might not the sensation in this case have been a perfectly natural one? Hard brain-working men (and results tell us that Archdeacon Wilson must have been a hard worker) are usually addicted to that vice of strong tea drinking. I know of nothing more likely to induce that indescribable feeling which makes the sufferer imagine that he must be near his end. I have had it myself—it is horrible! I get it no more; for I have for ever banished tea from my diet-sheet.

With regard to death, it is said by these theorists that because there is often intense mental activity during the moments preceding a sudden death, and because they believe that this mental energy is peculiarly fitted



for thought-transference, that this can be the only valid and sound explanation of the real cause of such tales as the one I have just related about Mrs. Bruce and her vision of her dead husband. They especially draw attention to the well-known fact that many who have recovered from drowning have told of the marvellous rapidity and lucidity of thought during those moments when life seemed to be gradually leaving them. Now, in the case of poor Mr. Bruce, his death, a broken neck, was all too sudden an affair to have allowed his mind to think of anything but the momentarily necessary effort on his part to save himself in his fall. How, then, can such a case be explained by this theory of telepathy?

On the other hand, let us ask these gentlemen what is, to my mind, a very important question.

If there is any sound truth in your theory of telepathy, how comes it that with the thousands of deaths and times of danger of those far away from all whom they love and hold most dear, so few cases of so-called telepathic communication are recorded?

Take, for instance, the case of any great battle-field. Look at the hundreds of dying soldiers, whose thoughts must be concentrated with all the mental force possible upon wives left sorrowing, of children whom they will never see again, of fathers and mothers who are anxiously waiting to welcome them once more to their happy homes; and then ask the question; How many cases do we read of, in which a vision of the dying soldier has appeared at the time of his death to those he has left at home?

Again, if there is such a mental property as this telepathy, which can, by great mental concentration



and increased mental energy, flash across hundreds and thousands of miles such a sensation, that the mind to which the message is sent can see the re-presented figure, or hear the re-presented voice, how do these three learned men explain why this is not more often and more effectively used? Why is it that such a wonderful power is not made the means of doing some substantial good, of preventing dangers by warnings, of summoning to the death-bed the one the dying person so longs to see, of signalling to the nearest medical man for that help which may save the life fast ebbing away? The telegraph is not laid on to every country village, neither is it to be met with in the wilds of far-off lands; the telephone is still an instrument for the few, and for those who are able to pay a substantial sum for its use; why, then, is not this wonderful mental power made more use of? Because, I answer, it is all in the theoretical fancy of those who believe in it, and has no true reality at all. Remember, I am not now writing of experimental telepathy so called, but of the spontaneous telepathic theory as an explanation of the cause of Phantasms of the Living.

I have never yet read of a case which could not be explained by saying it was a simple hallucination having its origin in some coincidental association of ideas, which had given the hallucination its definite and specific characteristics.

Let me give you a case of persistent dream image, started no doubt by nightmare, which Dr. J. A. Symonds mentions in his article on "Apparitions":—

"A few years ago a friend of mine, who often suf-



ferred from dyspeptic symptoms, mentioned to me that one night, awakening suddenly, he saw standing by his bedside two figures: the one an elderly gentleman, whose appearance and dress he described minutely; the other, a young man and an intimate acquaintance. To convince himself that he was not dreaming, he turned in bed, and then resumed his former position: the figures were still there. Again he tried the experiment, and with the same result. He then lay a considerable time in a state of great agitation, with his eyes averted from the spot, till he fell asleep. In the morning he was so convinced that he had been in the company of disembodied spirits, that he lost no time in sending his servant to inquire for his friend, who happened to belong to the same college. It was no small relief to him to hear that the latter was in the enjoyment of his usual health and spirits. On questioning my friend, I found that he had formed one of a supper-party the evening before, and although he had not indulged in strong potations, he had been so rash as to partake heartily of meat, which never failed, when taken at so late an hour, to produce great inconvenience."

No clearer vision could have appeared to anyone: but, had anything happened to the dreamer's friend? Was he dying? Was he passing through any crisis of excitement or emotion? No; for we read: "He was in the enjoyment of his usual health and spirits."

Some year or more ago, I woke up one night and called to my wife, telling her I had had a most vivid dream about a lady who was godmother to our eldest child. I had seen her in a church, and there was something in her appearance which made me imagine



that some evil had happened to her. To my astonishment, my wife said she had dreamt also of the same lady, and had seen her coming out of church. We said to ourselves at once: "Well, if there is any truth in telepathy, surely we shall hear some sad news of Miss —— to-morrow." But did we? No; we only met her hale and hearty a few days afterwards at a friend's house. What was the origin of this dream? Well, I believe we had both been talking of this lady a few days before, and of an accident which had happened to her, and that the question of meeting her at church had also been a subject of conversation. This, then, had coincidentally caused us to have the same dream. But, nothing came of it.

Supposing she had died that night; or again, that she had met with some accident, or some great trouble? I presume it would have been welcomed with open arms by the P. R. S. as another proof positive of telepathic power.

I wish I could go far more exhaustively into this subject. I wish I could take case after case and trace the real cause of the hallucination to its natural origin. I wish I could give time to make a collection of the instances of dream visions, of waking hallucinations of the senses, of peculiar emotions, in which nothing especial has happened to the person seen, heard, or whose influence might have been felt. I fancy if anyone would do this, they would soon find that their study would not hold the *thousands* of cases which would be sent them. The P. R. S. have been on the look-out for records of cases proving this theory of telepathy; have invited, by circulars, by private collection, and by



their journals, all persons who have ever heard of or experienced themselves such sense deception to communicate with them. For some years have they done this. Yet the number of cases which they have examined, and which may be ascribed to this mental power, are comparatively few. I am certain, that whereas the *affirmative* evidence may be counted in hundreds, the *negative* would rapidly run into millions. I wish, indeed, that I could have made this chapter longer, could have explained my reason for not believing in this certainly fascinating theory; but, alas! my publisher points out that the number of pages is limited, and there is yet much to be written.

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## CHAPTER VII.

I.—**Oriental Jugglery**, (by J. N. Maskelyne).

*Introductory—Fiction and Romance—Travellers' Tales—The Genesis of Oriental Miracles—Oriental Literature concerning Magic—The Basket Trick—The Mango Tree Trick—The Burial Trick.*

Introductory. **I**T is probable that there is no subject on which man has ever written, which embodies so wide a field of investigation as the records of the many marvels of Oriental Jugglery. At the same time, there is no subject which, in so far as actual results are concerned, would be so very deficient in anything that may claim to be worthy of serious consideration, were it not for the alarming amount of misconception and falsehood to which it has given rise. In the history of Mankind, nothing has ever been productive of so much cry and so little wool. In fact, no more fitting subject could be found to illustrate the prevalence of "sense deceptions" among those whose faculties are intact.

There are certain topics which occasionally arise for the consideration of poor humanity, which appear to exercise upon a great number of persons an effect analogous to that of the proverbial red rag upon a bull. Just as the approach of the "Dog-days" now and then evolves, in our canine companions, inexplicable aberrations from their customary demeanour, so, in like



manner, the mere mention of certain themes is sufficient to awaken in some people erratic, unaccountable, and hitherto unexpected traits of character.

Examples of this will readily occur to the mind of everyone; matters religious, political, scientific, or occult, producing at times an effect amounting, perhaps, in some cases to monomania. But if there is one subject more than another, the deliberation of which appears to be calculated to produce qualities of mind and habit at variance with the usual tenor of a person's existence, that subject is Oriental Jugglery; and vast indeed must be the number of those who cannot, will not, or at any rate do not, approach it with anything like calm consideration. So much high-falutin has been written concerning it, and so deeply have travellers drunk of the Asiatic Soma provided for them by their predecessors, that it has become with many well-nigh impossible to hear, see, write, or say anything in connection with it that will not bear out and tally with what they have taught themselves, or have been taught to believe.

True, there occasionally arises an Iconoclast to whom even the idols of Asiatic romance are not altogether sacred, and to whom the doctrines of Mendax are not exactly gospel. Still, on the whole, man is an imitative animal, and as such follows where others have led, sees just what others have seen, adopts any fashion which others have adopted; and since it has ever been the fashion to eulogise the wonders of the East, there are few who can find it in their hearts to do otherwise than follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before them.



Every student of literature, ancient or modern, must be familiar with the astounding descriptions of the Eastern juggler and his skill, which have from time to time appeared, generally in books of travel, and occasionally nowadays in the newspaper. In fact, it may be safely inferred, that everyone has heard, more or less, of the wonderful legends of Oriental mysticism, which have so constantly formed the theme and text of a large portion of every Eastern traveller's recollections and recorded experiences. And considering the ready credence with which, for the most part, these glowing accounts are received, it would almost seem as though the boasted enlightenment of the 19th Century is not proof against the fascinating influences of the *Arabian Nights*; and that those who pride themselves upon their advancement in knowledge, and their freedom from all that may savour of superstition, are yet led, by an innate love of the marvellous, into the belief that some remnant of the power which built Aladdin's Palace still lingers in the lands of the rising sun.

Who has not heard of those wonderful beings, whose performances are given with no other theatre than the level plain, roofed in by the wide canopy of the heavens; with no apparatus or accessories, save of the simplest kind; with scarcely more raiment than that with which Nature has endowed them; and who produce, in the broad light of day, wonders which might arouse the envy of witchcraft itself, and to equal which European mystery-men might strive in vain?

Oriental Jugglery! The very words call up a thousand thoughts and fancies associated with all that is



weird and mysterious. For Asia was the birthplace of Magic; and of Magic we may truly say that, could we but write its history, we should also write the history of Philosophy, of Science—in fact, the history of the world.

The limits of a chapter such as this, however, obviously preclude the possibility of attempting to deal with the subject historically. I must, therefore, confine myself to the endeavour to give, as far as possible, a practical insight into the real nature of that which has generally hitherto been the sport of those whose only object has been to make a good story. This course, at any rate, has the advantage of dealing with matters of absolute fact, rather than with mere speculation as to the value of the vague, uncertain, and untruthful records which constitute the history of the subject.

Looking at the matter in the abstract, it would appear to most persons that so infinite must be the number of marvels accumulated during countless ages, and handed down to us in those regions of the Gnomes and Genii, that it must need more than an ordinary lifetime to unravel the many wonders there to be found. Certainly, it would occur to the average reader that modern jugglery, as practised in the East, is not a subject which can be treated by any means exhaustively in a single chapter. Let me, however, once, and for all, distinctly state that such is not the case. Leaving out romance, misinformation, and mendacity, the entire subject is comprised within the very narrowest limits; and applying the touchstone of truth and common-sense to the vaunted wonders of the East, they are found to resolve themselves into two or three barefaced



impostures which, judged by Occidental standards, cannot even be dignified with the name of illusions.

It may be asked, then, and with good Fiction and Romance. reason, how we are to reconcile this statement with the numberless miraculous narratives which are current among travellers and others. I, for one, do not attempt to do so. I make the statement with the full knowledge that it is in direct antagonism to most that has been previously written on the subject. It is the antagonism of Fact and Fiction—of Reality and Romance.

On the other hand, let us ask how we are to reconcile these various narratives with the fact that the exhibitions of Oriental skill which they chronicle are displayed, day by day, for a beggarly pittance of the most precarious nature, whilst European illusionists would be willing to pay sums which would make the fortune of an Eastern juggler, for mysteries only one-tenth as startling as those of which we read and hear? Europe is a market for such wares in which the dusky Necromancer could obtain in a single hour more money than the amount of his receipts in a whole year in his native land if—and this is the point—if his illusions were only what they are said to be. But they are *not*! Enterprising “impresarios” have scoured the East through and through in search of marvels. Jugglers and snake-charmers, the best that can be found, have been brought over, with the hope that they might make a sensation; but, alas! in leaving their native shores they seem to lose the powers with which they are credited. Being deprived of their usual surroundings, stripped of the glamour of their associations, and



brought into the clear cold light of matter-of-fact criticism, they prove to be the direst failures, the most transparent frauds, and, as the Americans say, "don't draw a cent."

Travellers' Tales. What conclusion, then, can we come to with regard to these marvels of which we hear so much? Of what nature are they, that they will not bear transplanting to a cooler climate? What of the skill of those mystic beings, the Oriental Jugglers, which deserts them entirely and evaporates when they set foot in an alien land? What of those terrible and venomous serpents, fangless and innocuous, which require to be pinched by the tail before they exhibit even a sign of life, and for whom, even then, the voice of the charmer has no charms? What of those feats of dexterity, said to eclipse everything to be found in Western civilisation, and yet which prove to be such as a circus juggler would look upon with contempt? Wherein lies the merit and mystery of all these things? Briefly and in plain English—in travellers' tales.

There is a significant passage in Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*, which might very well form the text for a chapter such as this. It runs as follows:—

"But we love the old travellers. We love to hear them prate and drivel and lie. We can tell them the moment we see them. They always throw out a few feelers; they never cast themselves adrift until they have sounded every individual and know that he has not travelled. Then they open their throttle-valves, and how they do brag, and sneer, and swell, and soar, and blaspheme the sacred name of Truth! . . . I love them for their witless platitudes; for their delightful asinine vanity; for their luxuriant fertility of imagi-



nation; for their startling, their brilliant, their overwhelming mendacity."

To be taken literally, this would appear a somewhat sweeping condemnation of a large class of individuals; but, possibly, Mark Twain uses the term "old traveller" in much the same sense as we understand the expression "old soldier." Personally, I have no intention, no wish to say that all who have written startling accounts of the wonders of the East have been guilty of wilfully perverting the truth; I merely desire to impress upon the reader that, whatever may be the opinions of the narrators themselves, they certainly have not delivered a plain, unvarnished tale, and the facts are not as they state.

It may, at the first glance, appear strange that so many persons, otherwise of undoubted veracity, should, as far as this subject is concerned, be guilty of misrepresentation of facts; yet a little reflection will show that such really is the case, and indeed must necessarily be so. The reasons are not far to seek, and it may help us to a better understanding of the full scope and limit of the subject just to glance at them.

In the first place, then, we must take into account the fact that the writers of these distorted histories have been, as a rule, entirely lacking in any knowledge of magic whatever. Thus they have approached the subject in an absolutely uncritical mood; being totally unprepared to investigate what they see, and also incompetent to do so even had they the inclination. Now, in dealing with anything which is even approximately of a technical nature, what value can we possibly



attach to the opinions or impressions of those who know nothing of it?

Secondly. We must consider the necessarily existing difficulty of gathering every essential detail of an unfamiliar experience.

Thirdly. There is the impossibility of accurately remembering circumstances which have occurred at any distance of time.

Fourthly. We must allow for the mental bias inseparable from the legends, the traditions connected with everything Eastern, all of which tend to throw a halo of meretricious glamour around the subject and lead the mind astray from the real facts.

And finally, we must not lose sight of the necessity in story-telling of a little exaggeration and amplification of detail, to make the narrative attractive. A tale which has nothing extraordinary in it is not worth telling, and would arouse no enthusiasm if told.

The Genesis  
of Oriental  
Miracles.

Bearing these simple considerations in mind, it is easy to arrive at the genesis of Oriental miracles generally. Given a small substratum of fact and an untrained observer; allow for a lapse of time with the corresponding lapse of memory; add to this a little harmless exaggeration, combined with a little natural vanity and love of the applause which attends a good story—and *voilà tout*. The snowball has started rolling. The molehill has become a mountain. The twig has become a tree. The little fact has blossomed into a traveller's tale. The insignificant trick has assumed the proportions of a mystery, the like of which man has never seen, nor may ever hope to see,



There is, however, another source to which, no doubt, a few of the supposed wonders of the East may be traced. It occasionally happens that some writer of fertile imagination evolves from his inner consciousness a romance embodying suppositional incidents and fictitious miracles. This, on being published, is seized upon with avidity by those in search of the marvellous, and repeated as a record of something which has actually occurred. An instance of this happened quite recently. In a well-known and highly entertaining periodical there appeared, some few months ago, a most ingenious little story, the outlines of which are as follows. The supposed narrator has a theory that the wonderful achievements of the Indian jugglers are not the result of any great manipulative skill which they possess, but are produced by the aid of Hypnotism. That is to say, the spectators do not really see what they suppose, but are mesmerised into the belief that certain things happen which are in reality only the outcome of the imagination. To test this theory resort is had to the aid of photography. The camera, being unsusceptible to the influence of hypnotism, will give a truthful record of the real occurrences. The jugglers, therefore, whilst engaged in their performances are photographed instantaneously, with the result that the impressions secured on the sensitive plates showed no evidence of the phenomena which the spectators imagined they were witnessing. This clever story, pure fiction as it is, has been repeated again and again as a matter of absolute fact. I understand that it is now going the round of the Continental press, and has been translated into well-nigh every European



language. No doubt we shall find it cropping up from time to time in the most unexpected places. Folks will read it and believe, and thus the Oriental Juggler will be credited with yet another power—viz., Hypnotism.

Oriental Literature  
concerning  
Magic.

Having thus given a general outline of the real nature of these supposed wonders, we may enter a little more into detail and proceed to the consideration of a few examples of the kind of literature which one has to deal with in making a study of the subject. And, by way of instituting a comparison between the supposed facts as illustrated by the various writings and the facts as they really are, I will afterwards give an explanation of one or two of the most prominent feats of Eastern necromancy. Thus the reader will be able to judge, *ex pede Herculem*, as to the merit of Oriental Jugglery generally and the value which can be attached to existing writings as evidences of Oriental skill.

The difficulty of separating the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false, will be evident to all upon a perusal of the following extracts. One thing, however, is very noticeable. As a rule the more modern the authority, the less improbability there is in the story; the less predominant is the element of romance, and the more nearly it approximates to the facts as we know them to be. We are, on the whole, keener observers nowadays, and we are more sceptical. It is seldom, however, that an author is found who can free himself entirely from the spirit of romance which hovers round the earlier writings.

The following excerpts are culled from various autho-



rities who have written on the subject, from the 14th to the 19th centuries.

Sir John Mandeville, giving an account of his experiences in Tartary, says that at the Court of the Grand Khan, he saw magicians whose powers enabled them "to make the appearance of the sun and moon in the air, and then they make the night so dark that nothing can be seen; and again they restore the daylight, and the sun shining brightly. Then they bring in dances of the fairest damsels of the world and the richest arrayed. Afterwards they make other damsels to come in, bringing cups of gold, full of the milk of divers animals, and give drink to the lords and ladies; and then they make knights joust in arms full lustily, who run together, and in the encounter break their spears so rudely that the splinters fly all around the hall. They also bring in a hunting of the hart and the boar, with hounds running at them open-mouthed; and many other things they do by the craft of their enchantments, that are marvellous to see."

Richard Johnson, in his journal, tells of a Samoied priest who "took a sword of a cubit and a span long (I did mete it myself) . . . put the sword into the fire till it was warm and so thrust it into the slit of his shirt, and thrust it through his body, as I thought, the point being out of his shirt behind, I laid my finger upon it, then he pulled out the sword and sat down. . . . Then they took a small line made of deer's skins of four fathoms long, and with a final knot the priest made it fast about his neck and under his left arm and gave it unto two men standing on both sides of him, which held the ends together. Then the kettle



of hot water was set before him in the square seat (at this time the square seat was not covered), and then it was covered with a gown of broadcloth, without lining, such as the Russes do wear. Then the two men which did hold the ends of the line, still standing there, began to draw, and drew until they had drawn the ends of the line stiff and together, and then I heard a thing fall into the kettle of water which was before him in the tent. Thereupon I asked them that sat by me in the tent what it was that fell into the water that stood before him, and they answered me that it was his head, his shoulder, and left arm, which the line had cut off—I mean the knot which I saw afterward drawn hard together. Then I rose up and would have looked whether it was so or not; but they laid hold on me and said that if they should see him with their bodily eyes they should live no longer. . . . Then the priest lifted up his head with his shoulder and arm and all his body, and came forth to the fire.”

I have quoted the above as showing how very much has to be taken on trust in this connection. Had Johnson had as little honesty as some writers, he would have said that he *saw* the forequarter of man fall into the cauldron, and would probably have added that he saw it parboiled and, possibly, carved up and devoured by wild beasts. However, he distinctly states that it was done under cover, so that we have only to conceive a means whereby the priest could slip out of the noose and there is no further mystery.

Of all the Munchausens, however, who have ever written on Oriental Jugglery, the palm must certainly be awarded to the Emperor Jehangire. No one else can



arrive within measurable distance of the stupendous untrustworthiness which characterises all his utterances. To this monarch may be traced quite fifty per cent. of the marvels which are generally quoted in illustration of the powers possessed by Eastern Jugglers. Some folks consider this to be owing to the superior opportunities he had as a native of India to observe the doings of these men. Others think that it is to his superior talent of falsification that we owe his ultra-marvellous records. Whilst I have heard some sceptics say that the cup which cheers and also inebriates, entered largely into their composition. However this may be, we may truly say of him that he touched nothing that he did not adorn. Many writers, for instance, have spoken of that feat, so popular in India, the growth of the Mango tree; but Jehangire, though first in the field, transcends all in his description of it. Not only do his magicians grow the mango, but also fig, apple, walnut, almond and mulberry, and all in as few seconds as it takes to write of it. Not only do the trees grow, but on their branches, among the flowers, fruit and foliage, appear birds "of such surprising beauty in colour and shape and melody of song as the world never knew before,"—nor since, probably.

It is to Jehangire we trace the story of the chain thrown into the air and remaining fixed, up which chain lions, tigers, dogs, pigs and panthers are made to ascend and vanish at the top. (The American's tale of the tree'd coon is nowhere, compared with this.) It is to him we owe the account of the arrows shot into the air; the first one remaining fixed, and the others attaching themselves to it, the last arrow scattering the whole, which fell to



the ground. It is he who tells of the production of the apparitions of any animals desired by the spectators, either bird or beast, which are made to fight till the blood streams from them.

Again, he tells us how "one night, and in the very middle of the night, when half this globe was wrapped in darkness, one of these seven men stripped himself almost naked, and having spun himself round several times, he took a sheet, with which he covered himself, and from beneath the sheet drew out a splendid mirror, by the radiance of which, a light so powerful was produced, as to illuminate the hemisphere to an incredible distance around; to such distance, indeed, that we have the attestation of travellers to the fact, who declared that, on the night on which the exhibition took place, and at the distance of ten days' journey, they saw the atmosphere so powerfully illuminated as to exceed the brightness of the brightest day they had ever seen."

I wonder what a modern counsel would make of those travellers in cross-examination? But to proceed:—

"They placed in my presence a large cauldron, and, partly filling it with water, threw into it eight of the smaller maunds of Irak of rice; when, without the application of the smallest spark of fire, the cauldron began to boil, and in a little time they took off the lid, and drew from it nearly a hundred platters full, each with a stewed fowl at the top."

And yet we read, at times, of famine in India.!

"They produced a man whom they divided limb from limb, actually severing his head from the body. They scattered these members along the ground, and in this state they laid for some time. They then extended



a sheet over the spot, and one of the men went beneath it, and in a few minutes came out, followed by the individual supposed to have been cut into joints, in perfect health and condition, and one might have safely sworn that he had never received any injury."

Certainly, anyone so swearing need have no fear of laying perjury upon his soul! I have seen this same thing done—by the clown in a Pantomime.

Coming down to the present century, I may quote the following account of the "basket trick" given by the Rev. Hobart Caunter. He says:

"A stout ferocious-looking fellow stepped forward, with a common wicker basket of the country, which he begged we would carefully examine. This we accordingly did; it was of the slightest texture, and admitted the light through a thousand apertures. Under this fragile covering he placed a child about eight years old, an interesting little girl, habited in the only garb which nature had provided for her, perfect of frame, and elastic of limb—a model for a cherub, and scarcely darker than a child of Southern France. When she was properly secured, the man, with a lowering aspect, asked her some question, which she instantly answered, and as the thing was done within a few feet from the spot on which we were seated, the voice appeared to come so distinctly from the basket, that I felt at once satisfied that there was no deception.

"They held a conversation for some moments, when the juggler, almost with a scream of passion, threatened to kill her. There was a stern reality in the whole scene which was perfectly dismaying; it was acted to the life, but terrible to see and hear. The child was



heard to beg for mercy, when the juggler seized a sword, placed his foot upon the frail wicker covering under which his supposed victim was so piteously supplicating his forbearance, and, to my absolute consternation and horror, plunged it through, withdrawing it several times, and repeating the plunge with all the blind ferocity of an excited demon. By this time his countenance exhibited an expression fearfully indicative of the most frantic of human passions. The shrieks of the child were so real and distracting that they almost curdled for a few seconds the whole mass of my blood: my first impulse was to rush upon the monster, and fell him to the earth; but he was armed and I defenceless. I looked at my companions—they appeared to be pale and paralysed with terror; and yet these feelings were somewhat neutralised by the consciousness that the man would not dare to commit a deliberate murder in the broad light of day, and before so many witnesses; still the whole thing was appalling.

“The blood ran in streams from the basket; the child was heard to struggle under it; her groans fell horridly upon the ear; her struggles smote painfully upon the heart. The former were subdued gradually into a faint moan, and the latter into a slight rustling sound: we seemed to hear the last convulsive gasp which was to set her innocent soul free from the gored body, when, to our inexpressible astonishment and relief, after muttering a few cabalistic words, the juggler took up the basket; but no child was to be seen. The spot was indeed dyed with blood; but there were no mortal remains, and, after a few moments of undissembled wonder, we perceived the little object of our alarm com-



ing towards us from the crowd. She advanced and saluted us, holding out her hand for our donations, which we bestowed with hearty good-will; she received them with a most graceful salaam, and the party left us, well satisfied with our more than expected gratuity."

If we make allowance for the obviously powerful dramatic instinct of the writer, the above will give a very good idea of the renowned "basket trick" as it appears to the uninitiated. More of this, however, anon.

One of the facts described by writers as being practised among the Orientals, is that of allowing themselves to be buried alive for lengthened periods. Boileau, writing about half-a-century ago, thus records it :

"The place in which the man was buried at Jaisulmer, is a small building about twelve feet by eight, built of stone; and in the floor was a hole, about three feet long, two and a-half feet wide, and the same depth, or perhaps a yard deep, in which he was placed in a sitting posture, sewed up in his shroud, with his feet turned inwards towards the stomach, and his hands also pointed inwards towards the chest. Two heavy slabs of stone, five or six feet long, several inches thick, and broad enough to cover the mouth of the grave, so that he could not escape, were placed over him, and I believe a little earth was plastered over the whole, so as to make the surface of the grave smooth and compact. The door of the house was also built up, and people placed outside, that no tricks might be played, nor deception practised.

"At the expiration of a full month, the walling of the door was broken, and the buried man dug out of the grave. . . . He was taken out in a perfectly



senseless state, his eyes closed, his hands cramped and powerless, his stomach shrunk very much, and his teeth jammed so fast together that they were forced to open his mouth with an iron instrument to pour a little water down his throat. He gradually recovered his senses and the use of his limbs; and when we went to see him he was sitting up, supported by two men, and conversed with us in a low, gentle tone of voice, saying that we might bury him again for a twelvemonth if we pleased."

Sir Claude M. Wade also gives an account of a similar occurrence, in which a Fakir was buried for forty days and afterwards resuscitated.

Louis Jacoilliot, among other remarkable experiences, gives an account of the so-called "levitation." He says that Govindaswasmi, the Sadhu, "taking an ebony cane, which I had brought with me from Ceylon, put the palm of his right hand on its knob, fixed his eyes steadfastly on the ground, and commenced to recite the necessary 'Mantras' for the occasion, and to perform other mummeries. . . . Supported by one hand placed lightly on the cane, the Sadhu gradually rose ten feet from the floor, his legs continuing crossed in the Eastern fashion. . . . For more than twenty minutes, during which the 'levitation' lasted, I endeavoured to comprehend how the Sadhu could thus break through the laws of gravity and equilibrium." I give it up. My own gravity gives way at the assertion that a man resting his hand on a walking-stick, presumably about three feet six inches, raised himself *ten feet into the air*. He must have had a long reach; yet I doubt whether he could draw the long bow more effectually than the gentleman who recounts his doings.



Well, it must be admitted that many of the above excerpts are certainly somewhat in the nature of doubtful bills ; and I very much fear that anyone endeavouring to negotiate them in the market of common-sense would find great difficulty in getting them endorsed ; and even with the best of names to back them, they would only be marketable subject to a heavy discount.

It may surprise the reader, however, to know that there are some who regard the matter in a very different light. There are those who believe implicitly in the truth of all the outrageous statements I have quoted. Men to whom Ahriman is an absolute entity, Mahound and Termagant potential personalities. Men who, we may presume, are negatively endowed with a great lack of mental stability and an overwhelming allowance of that ignorance which is not by any means bliss, which qualities lead them to look askance at all things connected with even the most innocent forms of magic. Men who class all deceptions, however heinous or however harmless, in one category, and decry the whole ; who concoct an *olla podrida* including such elements as the Oriental Juggler, the Spiritualist, the Conjuror, the Mesmerist, the Card-sharper, the Faith-healer, the Clairvoyant, the Theosophist, the Thought-reader, *et hoc genus omne*, and warn their fellow-men that the doings of all such are the works of Belial. What think you, for instance, of the following example of modern enlightenment ?

“The Indian jugglers have ever been famous for their conjuring tricks all the world over, as almost every officer who has been in India can testify, and many of their *seeming* miracles are undoubtedly per-



formed by them in a natural way, through long practice, by mere dexterity and sleight-of-hand; but *some* of them are far beyond what any mere unassisted human being could possibly accomplish, and must of necessity have been wrought by demoniacal power."

The date of the book in which this appears is 1889; A.D., not B.C.! Think of it! The end of the 19th century, when man, by the sheer force of his knowledge, has learnt to work, by natural means, wonders undreamt of in the Supernatural Philosophy of even a few decades ago. Yet even in these *fin de siècle* times, we find a man honestly and sincerely expressing his convictions in a manner that would do justice to the obscurity of mediæval ignorance. Surely this can only be accounted for on Darwinian principles, by assuming a reversion to some former mental type.

In this same work, commonplace, every-day tricks of Western conjuring, things which, to use the stereotyped phrase, "are known to the meanest tyro," are placed in the same demoniacal category, and held up to reprobation. Truly, a little common sense and a five-shilling *Hoffman* would save some people a world of disquietude.

If it were only possible to take the various accounts from which I have quoted, investigate them thoroughly, and find out exactly on what they are based, it would undoubtedly form a most interesting study. Unfortunately, however, this is impossible. We really have so very few reliable data upon which to work. But one thing is very certain; namely, that the modern juggler of the East, with his incantations, his "mantras," and gesticulations, is very much the same sort of person



that he has always been. Alexander, seeking for new worlds to conquer, found the same superstitions, the same religious castes and observances that are familiar in the East to-day. The conservatism of the Oriental races precludes the possibility of much change, and the probabilities are therefore distinctly in favour of the theory that the modern Eastern illusions are precisely similar in technique to those of which so much has been made by the earlier writers. In fact, so far as we can gather, they are precisely the same, and have been handed down from generation to generation with but the very slightest modifications.

The only conclusion, then, at which we can arrive with regard to some of the supposed miracles of the earlier ages, is that they are fabrications pure and simple. There is nothing in existence, nothing which has ever been witnessed by any credible observer of modern times, which the greatest stretch of imagination could possibly enlarge into a similitude of such things as, for instance, the chain thrown into the air, the arrows shot up and remaining fixed, the mirror which made the night as bright as day, etc. On the other hand, many of the recorded wonders, such as the sword thrust through the body, the "mango tree," the "basket trick," the "levitation," etc., can be traced to their origin, and are found, for the most part, to be simply exaggerated accounts of what may be seen any day in the East.

It is worthy of remark, in this connection, that these latter mysteries are, generally speaking, those the accounts of which bear the least impress of the marvellous. Is it probable, then, that the Oriental jugglers of



to-day would retain the inferior feats of their predecessors, and discard those which were so vastly superior, if such superior wonders ever existed? I think not. One might as well believe that the jugglers having, as some think, supernatural powers, would go to the trouble of acquiring the skill necessary to perform inferior feats by natural means.

Without further troubling ourselves, then, as to how much or how little reliance may be placed on the written evidences, we may proceed to deal with what we know of the Oriental Necromancer and his skill.

There are many tricks of Eastern origin, such as the "Chinese rings," the "bowls of fish," and the "suspension" or "levitation," which have been introduced into the *repertoire* of the Western conjurer. They are to be found described in any book on conjuring, vastly improved in most cases, so they need not be dealt with here. The two great tricks which are mentioned by nearly every writer, the Basket Trick and the Mango Tree, will require individual attention.

The Basket Trick. Firstly, then, the Basket Trick. Reading the account of this feat quoted above, it appears simply marvellous. Unfortunately, it loses much on explanation. The basket used is, as described by the author as above, a common, rough wicker affair, so closely woven, however, that it cannot be seen through. It is almost spherical in shape, and has a narrow mouth, just large enough to allow the entrance of the juvenile who is apparently spirited away. The little boy or girl, as the case may be, is produced by the performer and promptly blindfolded, ostensibly with the view of shutting out from his or her view the awful



doom which is imminent, but in reality it is more to blind the eyes of the spectators than those of the subject. The child thus prepared is placed in the basket, where it coils itself, "elastic of limb," as Mr. Caunter says, head and heels together, around the inner periphery of the basket. In this position it is invisible to anyone looking in through the narrow opening which forms the mouth of the receptacle. Then the play begins. The sword is thrust through the basket again and again, the performer usually concluding his operations by jumping into the basket, and trampling, supposedly, on its occupant. Knowing the position, assumed by the child, however, one sees that it is not possible to do any damage by that means. This crime having been committed, the basket is turned up and shown to be empty—so far as one can see. At this juncture the performer leaves no time for anyone to suggest an examination. *Another* little child, often a twin brother or sister of the subject, who has been lying *perdu* round the corner, arrives on the scene, and is passed off as the one operated upon. The donations are then collected as quickly as possible, the traps collected together, and the performers vacate the scene of their exploits with all available expedition. Wonderful, is it not? And the blood! Well, well, I think you or I reader, could manage that. Our *raconteurs* don't usually travel with a microscope.

The Mango  
Tree Trick.

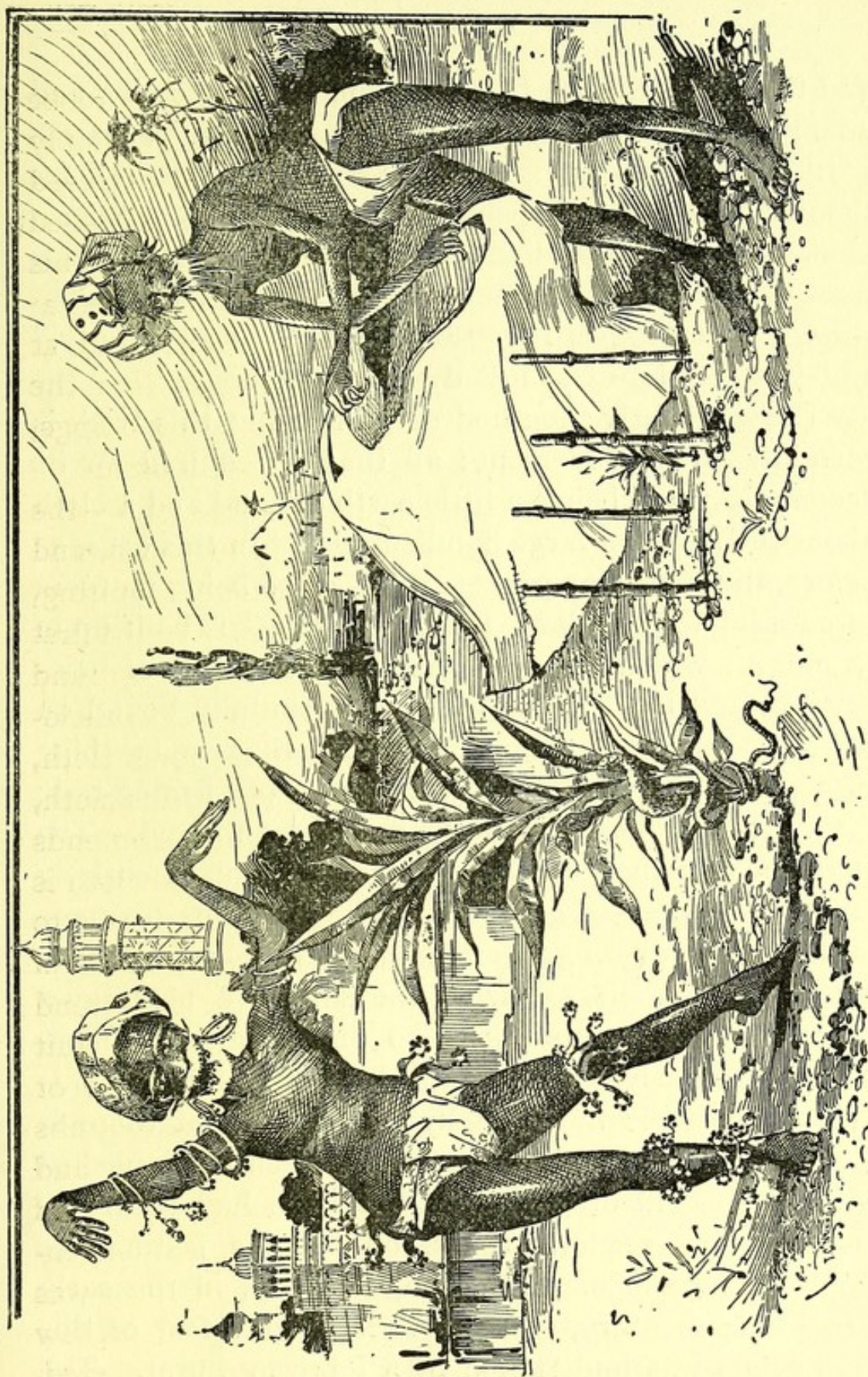
Then there is the growth of the Mango. When one thinks of the amount of misconception to which this trick has given rise, it is really astonishing; which is more than can be said of the trick itself. A gentleman who witnessed this feat in



China, and of whose veracity I have no reason to be suspicious, told me that the performer he saw simply planted the seed in a little sand on a table and watered it with a small watering-pot, and as he gently sprinkled it, it grew and spread, blossomed and bore fruit. This he firmly believed; and I believed him—with reservations. Some points, of course, he had overlooked at the time, and some he had forgotten since; so that the main fact, thus divested of its suspicious surroundings, dwelt in his mind as a mystery he could not fathom.

There are two methods of performing this trick—the original, which can only be managed in the open, and the improved which can be done anywhere, requiring, however, more skill for its accomplishment. In the first of these methods, the performer thrusts into the ground four sticks three or four feet high, forming a parallelogram around which he arranges a sort of horse-cloth, thus making a small enclosure. The centre of the cloth, be it noted, is towards the spectators, and the two ends join behind, where the performer stands. This cloth is not given for examination—it contains the secret; to wit, a series of pockets, containing the little plants in all stages, from those just germinating, to the grand final “tree,” about three feet high, with a little fruit about the size of a walnut, either growing on it or affixed. The performer having produced a seed, grubs up a little loose earth in the centre of his enclosure and plants it. Then he hitches the cloth round the tops of the upright sticks, and in closing it behind and fastening it, he contrives to substitute for the seed which was planted, one which is in course of germination. A few incantations having been recited, the cloth is removed,





*Romance.*

*The Mango Trick.*

*Reality.*



and the seed is shown to have commenced growing and no mistake about it. This same process is repeated, until the trick is completed and the fruit gathered for the delectation of the spectators. It is this poor, miserable, stunted shrub which has been magnified into the trees with "spreading branches," bearing "most exquisite fruit," and with the "birds of surprising beauty," and "sweetness of song" dwelling thereon.

The alternative method of performing this trick is certainly an improvement; all that is required for its accomplishment being a little earth or sand and a cloth about the size of a large handkerchief. In this case, as before, the cloth has pockets; but there being no room to conceal a large plant, the final "tree" is built up in segments; which are, apparently, small pieces of bamboo forming the stem, which have skilfully bound on to them sprays of mango. Thus, the whole thing fits together, somewhat after the manner of a fishing-rod; the final joint bearing the fruit to be gathered. The cloth, in this case, is used to cover the plant entirely during the supposed growth, and the additions are made in the act of covering.

The Burial  
Trick.

Before leaving the subject I may say a word with regard to the burial alive, mentioned previously. A great deal has been made of this by some writers; but I really fail to see that there is much in it, even though it had actually been accomplished without the aid of trickery. We have had plenty of instances, in modern times, of persons fasting for lengthened periods. Hamilton, however, in the early part of last century, gives an account of a feat of this kind which was undertaken by a Fakir at Surat. The



man was to be buried, and a guard set over the spot to preclude any attempt at trickery ; notwithstanding this, he was to appear at a place two hundred miles distant within ten days of his interment : the only condition being that the superincumbent earth should be supported on a layer of reeds two feet above his body. This was agreed to and the interment took place. The suspicions of the officer of the guard were aroused, however, by the doings of a party of Fakirs, who were seated around a large vessel filled with water which stood at some little distance. After considerable opposition from these gentry the vessel was removed, and below it was found a shaft leading to a subterranean passage which reached to within two feet of the grave. This is a little fact which speaks for itself.

If the few explanations I have given should prove disappointing, you must remember that the fault is not mine. If the Oriental Juggler has fallen in your esteem, I am sorry for it ; but it cannot be helped. Facts are facts, and, as such, stubborn things which cannot be brought to harmonise with all our individual predilections. I have given the facts—you can compare them with the fictions, without further aid from me. Much more I might write in the same spirit of Iconoclasm ; but probably you will have had sufficient. You may grieve, possibly, over your fallen idols ; still I think, on the whole, no one need feel surprised to find that the works of the Oriental Jugglers are not of a very superior order of merit, when one considers what class of men are the jugglers themselves. For the most part, nomads, wanderers on the face of the earth, of the very lowest castes ; scorned even by those who hold them in



superstitious dread. They are to the Orientals just what the gipsies are to us, and no more. True, in India, the Fakirs and lower castes of priests are given, to some extent, to quack-doctoring and mystery-mongering ; but magic is not their recognised profession. The Fakirs are men leading austere lives, who have forsworn both the comforts and the vanities of the world, and whose existence is passed in self-abnegation, penance, laziness and filth. They are holy men. The odour of sanctity is upon them, and is evident to our material senses.

No, the jugglers proper are such as I have described. Not the mighty magicians of romance, but poor, degraded beings struggling for a precarious livelihood. It has remained for Western civilisation and intelligence to idealise vagabonds who are held in contempt, even by the most superstitious of their own creed. If it should be your lot to meet with any of them, give them a helping hand. They need it as a rule. But give sparingly, or the money will be spent in debauchery and excess.

In conclusion, let me give a word of advice. If, during your travels, you should ever witness any of the marvels of Oriental Jugglery, do not be led into the belief that in publishing a vivid description of what you have seen you will achieve immortality or even originality. It has all been done, and overdone, before. No matter how good the story you feel you could write, be advised, and keep it to yourself—unless, indeed, you happen to be connected with the navy, in which case you may tell it to the Marines. Above all things, do not vex your soul with fruitless speculation as to how the tricks—and you—were done. If it really be your



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desire to investigate the phenomena, I can give you an "*open sesame*" to these hidden mysteries which is infallible. It consists in the application of a little of that commodity known, in the language of Science, as "*Silver salve*." Offer the man a few rupees for his secret, and see if he will sell. You will not be disappointed, except with your bargain. He will sell fast enough, and you will be sold. If, on the other hand, you are inclined to follow what I consider to be the most sensible course, you will save your money, and rest content with gauging the probable merit of the performances by the mental calibre of the performers themselves, without troubling as to the actual methods employed. If you can do this, and, at the same time, refrain from talking nonsense with respect to matters which are foreign to your previous experiences, you will accomplish far more than those who have simply dropped the bridle-reins on to the neck of their imagination and galloped headlong into the realms of Fiction.



## II.—Modern Spiritualism. (*J. N. Maskelyne.*)

"ONCE, too, Spiritualism's medium, to relieve the social tedium,  
 Threw a phosphorescent light upon the scene,  
 And, an occult power revealing, floated lightly to the ceiling,  
 Or banged, with ghostly hands, a tambourine.  
 Then were tables rapped and twisted as the knowing spirits listed,  
 And Society its former fads forsook,  
 In 'dark séances' to revel, which at least but reached the level  
 Of a fourth or fifth-rate Maskelyne and Cook.  
 But in course of time stern Science, caring not to place reliance  
 In tricks which even darkness could not hide,  
 Analysed the fraud completely, and exposed its shams so neatly,  
 That Spiritualism rapped its last and died.  
 Yes, to knavery addicted,  
 And of trickery convicted,  
 Dark Spiritualism rapped its last, and died !"

*Truth, Xmas Number, 1890.*

*Andrew Jackson Davis—The Fox Family—Mrs. Culver's Statement—Daniel Douglass Home—The Davenport Brothers—Annie Eva Fay—Dr. Slade—Prosecution of Slade—Eglinton—So-called Materialisations—Artemus Ward on Mediums—What has Investigation Proved?—Table-turning—Thought-reading—Spirit Photography—Report of the Seybert Commission.*

IN this year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-one, to write upon the deceptions which have been practised under the name of Modern Spiritualism is surely akin to thrashing a dead horse; but since this pernicious doctrine has ever been productive of so much evil, and has done so much to fill our lunatic



asylums, the author of the present work considers that it would be incomplete without a chapter on the subject, and this I have promised to contribute.

In the limits of a single chapter it is impossible to treat this gigantic imposture in an exhaustive manner, or even to allude in passing to the hundreds of mediumistic small-fry and the thousands of exposures of their frauds. Therefore I must content myself with touching upon the chief actors in this drama of deceit, and that in the briefest manner possible.

There does not exist, and there never has existed, a professed "medium" of any note who has not been convicted of trickery or fraud. This is a sweeping assertion to make; but it is nevertheless an indisputable fact, as the following outlines of the history of the creed will prove.

The doctrine of so-called Spiritualism embodies an abstract principle and a concrete fact—the *principle* being that "those who have plenty of money and no brains were made for those who have plenty of brains and no money;" and the *fact* is, that the ranks of the Spiritualists have ever been largely recruited from these two classes.

It is the old story re-told—the story of Duplicity feeding upon Folly. It is a doctrine, cradled in credulity and fostered by fraud, which teaches, and professes to prove, that the spirits of those departed can be brought again into material contact with those still upon earth. It is an evidence of the smouldering fire which ever lingers among the depths of human nature, occasionally bursting out with a lurid flame, and, anon, dying down to the merest spark; yet still, in some form or



other, it has always been in our midst, only awaiting an unscrupulous hand to fan it into new life. It is a remnant of the superstition which produced the folklore of ghosts and spectres in former times, a superstition that has weakened the intellect and destroyed the mental faculties of thousands, rendering them an easy prey to the avarice of impostors, who have found it easier to live by their wits than to work honestly for a living.

The foundation-stone of this spiritualistic craze was laid by one Andrew Jackson Davis, otherwise the "Seer of Toughkeepsie," born at Blooming Grove, Orange Co., New York, in the year 1826. A kind of minor Swedenborg, this ex-tailor had "ecstatic" periods, during which he gained an insight into things unseen, more remarkable for voluminousness than intelligibility; and upon his works—or, rather, the works of those who were "running" him—Spiritualism has been built up. Strange to say, however, he was a Materialist. Think of it, you Spiritualists, who are so much inclined to describe those whose opinions differ from your own as Materialists and Atheists! The man whose visions created *your* religion was one who denied the existence of everything save matter, in various degrees of refinement!

In Davis the world may possibly have lost a good tailor, but it certainly did not gain much of a philosopher. His works, in so far as they concern this world, were simply a barbarous *rechauffé* of doctrines which had been promulgated long before his time. As regards the ultra-mundane, they were, for the most part, a mass of confusion and nonsense.



Shortly after the publication of Davis's  
<sup>The</sup>  
Fox Family. rabid effusions, history was found to repeat  
itself in the most complete manner; for the  
good old "Cock Lane Ghost" of Dr. Johnson's time  
was served up fresh, with results almost identical, in  
the form of the world-famous "Rochester Knockings."  
About the year 1847 there was resident at Hydesville,  
Arcadia, Rochester Co., New York, a family of the  
name of Fox (significant name), who were "startled"  
by mysterious rappings in various parts of the house.  
We are told that the noises increased "in loudness and  
frequency," and not the slightest clue to their origin  
could be discovered. One evening Mrs. Fox had seen  
her two youngest children—Margaret, aged twelve  
years, and Kate, nine—nicely tucked in between the  
sheets, when the sounds were heard again, and the  
children, hearing the noise, tried, we are told, to imitate  
it by snapping their fingers. Little Katey Fox cried  
out, "Here, old Splitfoot, do as I do," and the knocking  
instantly responded.

Soon the news travelled, and persons from a distance  
flocked in until the excitement became intense. The  
rapping began to assume coherency, and was soon  
giving the details of a murder which had been com-  
mitted in the house occupied by the Fox (and very  
foxy) family. The spirit of the murdered man—a  
pedlar—declared that his murderer was a former occu-  
pant of the tenement, a certain John C. Bell, a black-  
smith; and the spirit pedlar further informed his gaping  
audience that his trunk was packed up, and all the  
members of his body neatly disposed of beneath some  
ten feet of earth in the cellar. Now, it is said that,



beyond doubt, some portion of a skeleton was found at the precise spot indicated; but it is also said that opinion was mostly in favour of the remains being not the framework of humanity, but that of a sheep.

J. C. Bell, the supposed murderer, hearing of the matter, came from a distant part of the country where he was then residing, and endeavoured to exculpate himself by swearing that he knew nothing whatever about it. As Mr. Bell, apparently, had not read up the "Cock Lane Ghost" story, he did not prosecute the Foxes, or they might have been "run to earth" just as the little girl Parsons was some years before. However, it must have been a terrible blow to the Fox family when the murdered pedlar turned up again alive and well, "still clothed with mortality, and having a new assortment of wares to sell." \*

However, the rappings continued, and it was becoming a paying thing for the Fox family. Soon after this the girls were removed to Rochester, a town on the borders of Lake Ontario, where they resided with Mrs. Fish, a married sister, who now rapidly developed into a medium, and arranged a code of signals, in which the old system of receiving one rap for a negative, two as doubtful, and three as an affirmative, was supplanted by calling over the alphabet, the "spirits" rapping at the required letter, and so spelling the message out in very bad orthography. Thus the rapping was both "Foxy" and "Fishy."

In November, 1849, so great was the excitement, that a meeting was held in the Corinthian Hall, Rochester, to inquire into the phenomena, at which the

\* *Humbugs of the World.*



Committee of Investigation gave the subject up in despair. Deluded creatures! Had they only known that *rubbing the sole or upper part of the shoe against the polished legs of a table will produce the sounds!*

But there are many ways of obtaining raps. I have produced them regularly before my audiences by a simple trick; and Dr. Schiff says that "the repeated displacement of the tendon of the *peroneus longus* muscle in the sheath in which it slides behind the external *malleous* will produce the sounds." Speaking of the Fox girls, the Professors of the Medical College, Buffalo, said that these loosely constructed girls got their raps by snapping their toe and knee joints.

The exposure, however, soon came. Mrs. Norman Culver's Statement. Norman Culver, a relative of the Fox girls, who had been taken into their confidence, made a deposition before a magistrate upon April 17th, 1871, from which I quote the following extracts:

"The girls have been a great deal at my house, and for about two years I was a very sincere believer in their rappings; but something I saw when I was visiting the girls at Rochester made me suspect that they were deceiving. I resolved to satisfy myself in some way, and some time afterwards I made a proposition to Catherine to assist her in producing the manifestations." . . .

"After I had helped her in this way for some time, she revealed to me the secret. The raps are produced by the toes. All the toes are used. After a week's practice with Catherine showing me how, I could produce them perfectly myself." . . .

"She told me that all I should have to do to make



raps heard on the table would be to put my foot on the bottom of the table when I rapped, and that when I wished to make the raps sound distant on the wall I must make them louder, and direct my own eyes earnestly to the spot where I wished them to be heard. She said if I could put my foot to the bottom of the door the raps would be heard on the top of the door.

“Catherine told me that when her feet were held down by the Rochester Committee, the Dutch servant rapped with her knuckles under the floor from the cellar.” . . .

“She said that once Margaretta spoke aloud, and that the whole party believed it was a spirit.”

Such little drawbacks notwithstanding, the success of the Fox girls and Mrs. Fish was unbounded, and soon produced shoals of imitators. They are an ingenious race, the Yankees, and they understand business. The rapping paid, but something new must be forthcoming to keep up the excitement, so table-turning and tilting were discovered and ascribed to spiritual agency. At this, New York State went mad; Massachusetts followed suit, and before long our American cousins from Maine to California were running wildly after tables and chairs. The ball was thus fairly started rolling, and, little by little, new phenomena were added until not only tables were raised but the spirits of the departed “in their habits as they lived.”

The most bright and particular star in the spiritualistic horizon—the greatest, perhaps, in the long line of impostors—was Daniel Douglass Home. No vulgar medium, giving performances with an admission of so much a head, he wound his way into the best society,



always despising filthy lucre, but never refusing a diamond worth ten times the amount he would have received in cash, or some such present, which the host of the house at which he happened to be manifesting always felt constrained to offer.\*

Daniel Douglass  
Home.

The avarice of Home proved to be his ruin. Not content with the handsome income he netted by this means, he obtained the sum of £30,000 from a silly old widow by pretending to receive messages from the spirit of her late husband. The lawsuit which followed to recover the money, and the damning evidence against him, ruined his reputation, and checked the progress of Spiritualism in this country until the appearance of the Davenport Brothers, who brought us one of the most startling and undoubtedly the cleverest performance ever attributed to spiritual agency.

The  
Davenport  
Brothers.

The father of the Davenports, a detective in the U.S.A. Police, was, doubtless, the inventor of the séance. The idea was evidently suggested by a well-known rope trick performed by the Indian jugglers, and which can be often

\* This same cunning dodge was afterwards adopted by the impostor Irving Bishop, who commenced business as a medium and afterwards appeared as an exposé of Spiritualism. This man made a nine days' wonder by the revival of the old "Willing Game" under the name of "Thought Reading." In addition he also gave performances ostensibly for the benefit of charities, but invariably took care that the "expenses" swallowed up the receipts. On one occasion, after working up an immense excitement in London, by means of a challenge made by Mr. Labouchere, the large St. James's Hall was packed, and the receipts must have amounted to quite £300; yet he had the impudence to hand to the Victoria Hospital for Children the paltry sum of £18 5s. 6d. as the net profits of the performance. This sum the Secretary refused to accept.

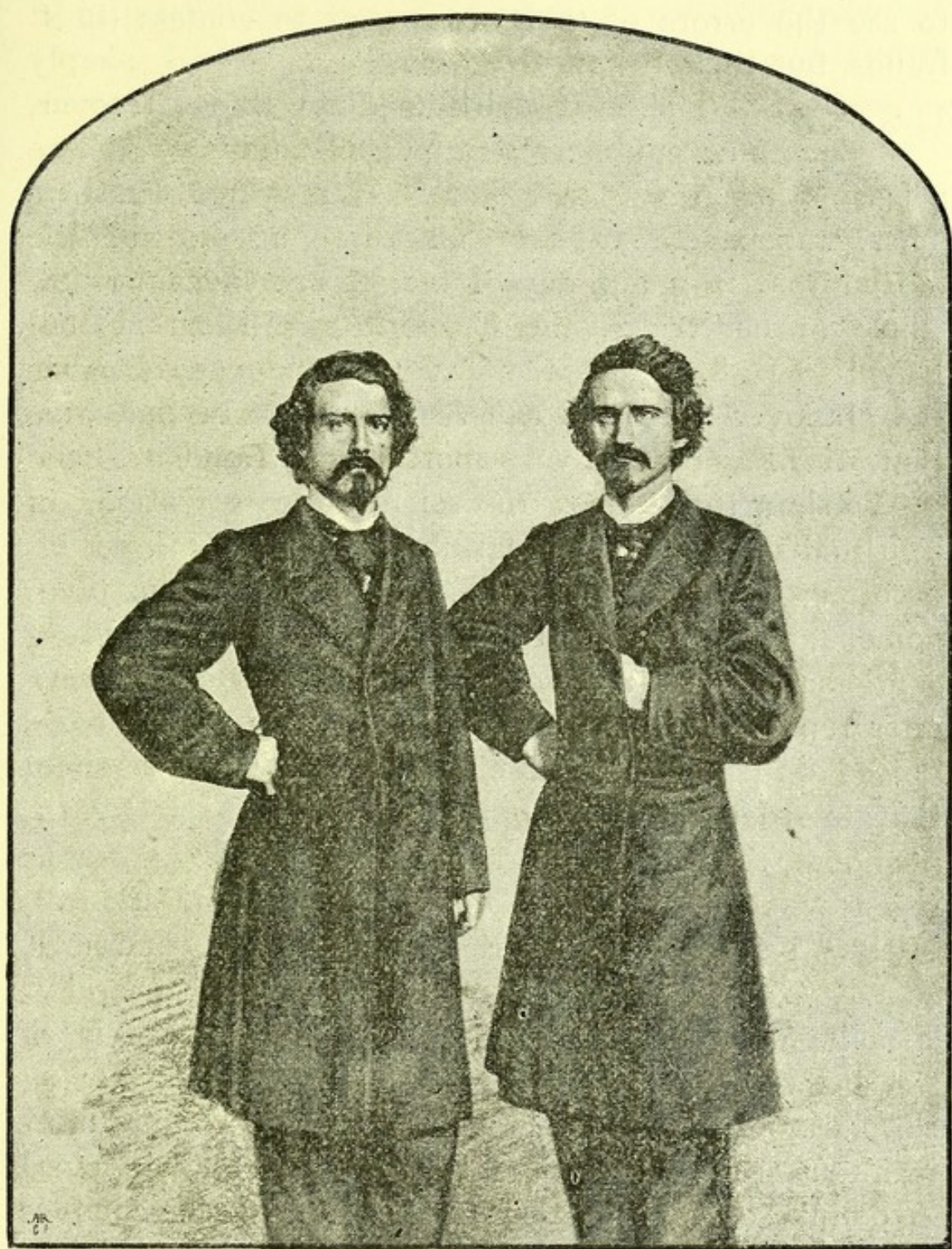


witnessed in the streets. The performance of the Brothers, however, bore very little resemblance to it. The instantaneous tying and untying was simply marvellous, and it utterly baffled everyone to discover, until, on one occasion, the accidental falling of a piece of drapery from a window at a critical moment let me into the secret. Armed with this secret, and with the help of my colleague Mr. Cooke, I was able in a few months to reproduce every item of the Davenports' cabinet and dark séance. So close was the resemblance to the original, that the Spiritualists had no alternative but to claim us as most powerful spirit-mediums, who found it more profitable to deny the assistance of spirits.

In reply to this assertion I made a promise that, some day, I would explain the whole of the secrets. This promise I have kept, and during 1883-4 I gave upwards of 200 performances at the Egyptian Hall, in which I explained every trick, together with several improvements of my own.

About this time one of the Brothers died in Australia; the other retired from the business, and is now, I believe, a farmer in America. Before the death of one, however, both of them publicly renounced Spiritualism, and declared that the whole performance was the result of trickery and dexterity. Notwithstanding this admission and my exposure of the tricks, Spiritualists still maintain that the Davenports were assisted by spiritual agency. This is blind faith with a vengeance, and serves to show how readily fanatics believe that which accords with their own ideas, whilst one might move heaven and earth before they would be convinced of anything





*The Davenport Brothers.*



to the contrary. Impostors themselves may be brought to see the errors of their ways and to confess their frauds, but their believers never.

Annie Eva Fay. The next spirit medium who attracted much public attention was Annie Eva Fay, a fascinating American blonde. Her séance was the most transparent trickery all through; so simple, indeed, that in a few days I taught my colleague the whole of her tricks, and he performed them at the Egyptian Hall, whilst Miss Fay was holding séances at the Hanover Square Rooms. The result of this was that Miss Fay made a very short stay in London.

To show the value of the scientific investigations of Spiritualism which the faithful are never tired of parading as evidence of the genuineness of the phenomena, I may mention that a well-known scientific gentleman of undoubted ability and world-wide renown, after repeated visits to Miss Fay's séances, was so convinced of the supernatural character of the performance that, in order to test his opinion, he invited the lady to his house, there to give a demonstration of her powers, under what the Spiritualists term "test conditions." Result—he discovered no trickery whatever. And how should he? The man of great attainments is, generally speaking, the one most easily puzzled. There is a simplicity of high intelligence, just as there is a simplicity of ignorance. An ignorant person may not be able to see through the simplest trick; and a person of culture may be as readily deceived, for the simple reason that he cannot bring his mind *down* to the level of the deceptions practised.

Let me give a short description of "Miss" Fay's dark



séance. Some fifteen persons from among the audience sat in a circle round the "medium," her husband, "Colonel" Fay, being one. The little blonde then commenced to clap her hands with steady, rhythmical beat, and when darkness was made "visible," still the clapping continued, while—wonderful to relate—instruments which had been laid upon the knees of the "sitters" were played upon, &c., &c.; that is, the guitar was strummed in the air, bells were rung, knees pinched, whiskers tugged, old fogies chucked under the chin by, oh! such nice little hands, and the other interesting work of the spirits at séances was gone through. Now, all this while, the "Colonel" was in the circle, and supposing that the persons to his right and left, instead of holding, as they thought, his two hands, were really both holding one of them, still he could do but little to assist his interesting spouse. She, still clapping those dainty little palms, could do nothing for herself, *unless*, when the lights were extinguished, she were to change her tactics, and beat—not her hands together—but one hand upon her forehead or arm, or any other exposed part of her body which would produce exactly the same sound, and leave the taper digits of one hand free to produce the manifestations.

To show the impossibility of any such thing, however, one gentleman may now hold the medium's hands. Still a bell rings, a guitar is strummed, and possibly the gentleman holding the fair one's hands has his face fanned. How, then, can all this be accomplished? Simply thus:—"Miss" Fay passes a bell to the "Colonel's" mouth, which he shakes as a terrier does a rat, while his bcot operates upon a guitar placed on



the floor and produces the thrumming ; and the medium, with a fan held between her teeth, will gently wave it in the face of him who holds her hands. And this is all that happened in the darkness ; and this is what the scientific gentleman described as " wonderful " !

After her London season, Miss Fay betook herself to the provinces ; but owing to my exposure of her tricks, the business fell off sadly, and being in low water, she made me an offer, through her manager (the letters are still in my possession), to come to London and explain publicly, for a sum of money, how she performed her tricks, and how she humbugged the scientific gentleman aforesaid. I declined her offer, however, in the belief that my own exposure of the fraud was sufficient.

Dr. Slade. Again the spiritualistic thermometer fell to freezing point, and remained so until public curiosity was again aroused by reports of mysterious writing that a certain " Dr." Slade caused to appear on slates ; and crowds of people rushed to witness the phenomena (?), paying one guinea each for a séance lasting a few minutes. The " Dr." must have netted some hundreds of pounds weekly.

At that time I possessed considerable knowledge of slate tricks ; but the Doctor had invented a few new dodges, which were rather difficult for me to discover, inasmuch as all my information had to be obtained second hand. Being so well known to the spiritualistic fraternity, I found it simply a waste of time and money to attend seances personally, for the " spirits " always refused to manifest in my presence. However, from the reports of my deputies and others, the secrets were



in my possession within a few weeks, and I was planning a grand exposure, when Professor Lancaster and the late Dr. Donkin caught the gentleman red-handed, and prosecuted him and his manager.

Prosecution of  
Slade.

The trial took place at Bow Street, and lasted several days. I was called as an expert, and performed the tricks in the witness-box. The result was that Slade was sentenced to three months' hard labour. An appeal was made against the magistrate's decision, and it was quashed owing to a technical flaw in the indictment. New summonses were at once taken out, but Slade and his manager Simmonds—both Yankees—made tracks for the Continent before the summonses could be served. I shall have occasion to refer to Slade and his doings later on.

This prosecution has had the effect of stopping the flow of American impostors to this country. At least, if they have arrived here, they have kept themselves very dark, and have exhibited their powers to the faithful few only. Great efforts have constantly been made to revive the interest, but it is dead to all intents and purposes so far as the public are concerned. I cannot interest an audience in it. They yawn at the name of Spiritualism, unless it is introduced in a laughable burlesque. Among the faithful it dies hard, but the palmy days are gone. The wire-pullers of Spiritualism are pleading poverty. Mediums cannot earn a living, and betake themselves to more honest work. Where twenty years ago dozens of mediums were earning handsome incomes in London alone, scarcely one is to be found.



Eglinton. Some few years ago a slight stir was made by one Eglinton, who had learned to perform some of Slade's tricks. He was once invited by an old lady to meet Mr. Gladstone, and this invitation he promptly accepted. On this occasion, upon a prepared slate, the property of the medium, some writing appeared, and, as a matter of course, the ex-Premier failed to discover the trick.

The Spiritualists, naturally, tried hard to make capital out of this fact, but very little came of it. The world is growing accustomed to find prominent persons at times hoodwinked by knaves. Such an occurrence, therefore, has very little weight with the mass of humanity nowadays.

Eglinton's doings were so much talked about among the Spiritualists, that a committee of gentlemen endeavoured to arrange a meeting between him and myself. He refused, however, to meet me upon any conditions whatever. I, for one, was by no means surprised. This being the case, all that could be done was for me to suggest certain tests for the guidance of others, and under these tests Eglinton could produce no manifestations at all. One test in particular was a poser for him. I procured two slates, upon one of which I wrote a question. Between the two slates was placed a piece of slate-pencil for the spirits to use in writing an answer, and the slates were screwed together and pasted round the edges with paper. They were then placed into a roughly made tin case and soldered up in as rough a manner as possible; particular note being taken of the disposition of the solder. It would be impossible for anyone to open such a case

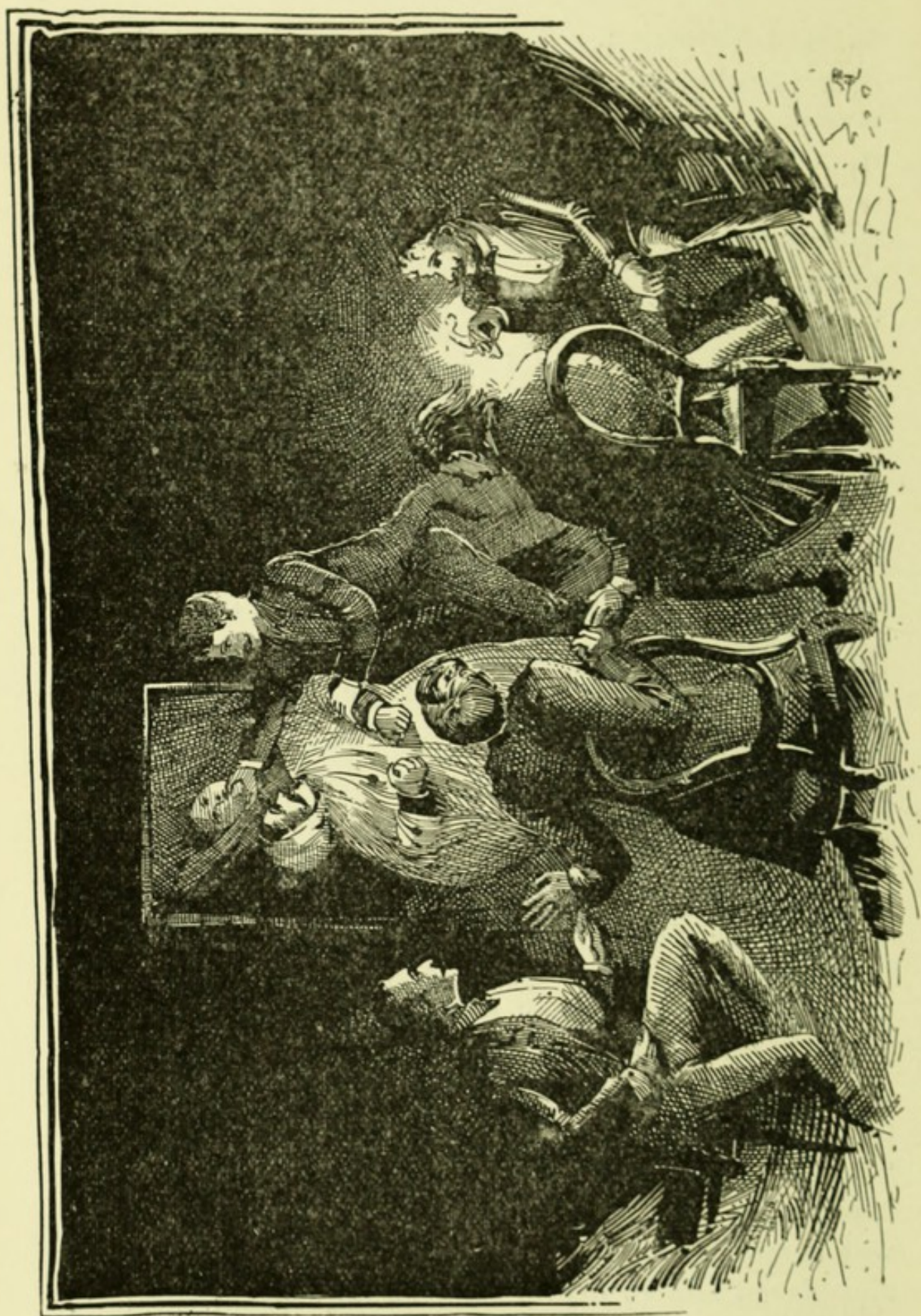


without detection. This was given into Eglinton's hands to do as he pleased with. He suggested that he should take it away with him so that he might sit with it in company with a lady medium of great power. No objection being raised to this, it was placed on one side, where it received many a furtive glance during the séance which followed. Singularly enough, when the medium left the house he quite forgot to take it with him. It is a pity, for I should much like to have a reply to the question it contains. However, I have it still, and any medium or other mystery-monger is perfectly at liberty to try his skill upon it.

Previous to his slate-writing days, Eglinton was in the habit of giving "Materialising séances." That is to say, séances during which the spirits of the departed are supposed to collect from the "circle" or the medium sufficient material atoms to clothe themselves again with flesh and blood, and to walk among the believers as living beings once again. In this line of business he suffered more than one exposure, and thus he took to the less sensational but safer "slate-writing."

So-called  
Materialisations These so-called "materialisations" have been plentiful in the history of Spiritualism. They have been investigated again and again, always with the result that they have been proved to be impostures on the part of those conducting the exhibition. Generally speaking, when a "spirit" is "grabbed," it turns out to be the medium dressed up. Then the "faithful" lament, and pity the poor medium for having been in the hands of evil spirits whilst in a trance state; which spirits have themselves dressed up the medium and placed him or her in such an unpleasant position.







And thus it is in Spiritualism always. If anything goes wrong, "evil spirits" is the explanation of everything.

There is, however, one point in connection with these materialisations which has never been satisfactorily cleared up. When spirits appear, they never come *in nuda veritas*; they are always clothed in more or less light and gauzy raiment befitting their spiritual condition. Now, whence comes this? It is a point I should very much like to have elucidated. Have they an emporium for such wares in the "summerland," where they can procure the temporary loan of suitable vestments in which to appear before their mundane brethren, whose sense of propriety might otherwise be shocked, or are we to understand that not only we ourselves but also the clothes we fabricate have spirits which are immortal and capable of materialisation? Are there ghosts of gold spectacles and cocked-hats? A nude spirit might be comprehensible; but a spirit clothed in garments which can be handled, torn and cut into pieces for presentation, as relics to the faithful, is something which the understanding refuses to accept and at which the reason revolts. It is even harder to believe than the statement that what we know to be the immutable laws of Nature can be set aside and the atoms forming the bodies of living organisms can be borrowed by an "intelligence" for a few minutes and returned to the owner when done with.

Artemus Ward  
on  
Mediums.

I think that, with regard to this atrocious creed of Spiritualism, all honest and capable investigators can come to but one conclusion; the conclusion arrived at years ago by Artemus



Ward, who says:—"Just so soon as a man becomes a regular out-and-out sperret-rapper, he leeves orf working, lets his hare grow all over his face, and commensis spungin his livin out of other people. He eats all the dickshunaries he can find, and goze round chock full of big words, scarein the wimmin folks and little children, and destroying the piece of mind of every famerlee he enters. He don't do nobody no good, and is a cuss to society, and a pirate on honest peple's corn beef barrils. Admittin all you say about the doctrine to be troo, I must say the reglar perfessional sperrit-rappers—them as makes a bizzness on it—air about the most ornery set of cusses I ever enkountered in my life."

Such undoubtedly are the professors themselves, whether their supposed powers are believed to be genuine or not. It is into the hands of such men and women that Spiritualism has been entrusted for its development and propagation. It is their works that have made it what it has been and what it now is; and upon such authority we are asked to believe, and acknowledge the benefit to mankind of a philosophy, a religion, the practice of which has given to the world, as exponents of its highest phenomena, people whose whole lives are passed among the very shadiest and most suspicious surroundings. If this is the ultimate outcome of mediumistic culture, the result of long years of devotion to the creed and training in its philosophy, surely we may reverse the words of the playwright, and say that, in such a case, "it is better to suspect and be mistaken, than to trust and be deceived."



What has Investigation Proved? If we are asked the question, "What has investigation proved with regard to Spiritualism?" in common honesty, we can only reply, "Fraud, Falsehood, Folly, and nothing more." Should you, reader, at any time be inclined to doubt this, just bear in mind one fact: We have in our midst a society formed for the express purpose of investigating matters of an occult nature. It is not a society of sceptics, far from it. On the contrary, the majority of its members appear to be men whose predilections are distinctly in favour of the supernatural. Now, although this society has pursued its labours for many years, and has investigated every case of supposed spiritual power that has come under its notice, it has never yet succeeded in bringing to light one single spiritual phenomenon that is above suspicion. Think of it; and let Spiritualists explain it if they can.

There are certainly one or two things which to the outside world appear to partake of an occult nature, and which are in reality genuine; but these are by no means "spiritual" in their nature, being, in fact, easily capable of explanation from a purely physical standpoint. As instances, I may mention "Table-turning" and "Thought-reading" so called.

These things appear to the uninitiated as being simply marvellous, whereas they are really nothing of the kind. The explanation of them is simple, and the same in both cases: Tired muscles and rapt attention.

Table-turning. Faraday proved to a demonstration that "table-turning" was simply the result of an unconscious muscular action on the part of



the "sitters." He constructed a little apparatus to be placed beneath the hands of those pressing upon the table, which had a pointer to indicate any pressure to one side or the other. After a time, of course, the arms of the sitters become tired and they unconsciously press more or less to the right or left. In Faraday's experiments, it always proved that this pressure was exerted in the direction in which the table was expected to move, and the tell-tale pointers showed it at once. There, then, we have the explanation—expectancy and unconscious muscular action.

Thought-reading. It is the same with "thought-reading," so-called. The "thought-reader" is blind-folded; the "subject" hides some small article, and is told to think intently upon it. The thought-reader then takes the subject's hand, or otherwise puts himself in contact with him, and it will be readily seen that the subject, thinking intently upon the spot where he has hidden the object of the search, unconsciously leads the thought-reader to the place, and offers more or less resistance should he be wandering from it. In fact, he unwittingly cries "hot" and "cold," as in the children's game. In the same manner, when anything has to be written upon a blackboard, the subject, if he honestly thinks hard of what has to be written, cannot help guiding the thought-reader's hand to form the proper characters. You may try a simple experiment for yourselves. Spread out a pack of cards on a table; get someone to think intently of one of them; then take hold of this person's hand and pass it to and fro above the cards. Unless the



person endeavours to the utmost to give no indication, the hand will be found to "hang" more or less in passing the card thought of. Then if you are sufficiently a humbug, you will say that you read his thoughts.

These things can be done by anyone; and the success attending the experiments will be proportionate to the degree in which the method of their accomplishment is realised. It is, however, a pastime much to be deprecated when practised, as it often is, in the presence of weak-minded or young persons. Not being able to account for the result, their minds at times become unhinged by dwelling upon what they consider to be evidences of the supernatural.

Spirit  
Photography. Whilst speaking of these little odds and ends, I may as well mention "spirit photographs." These things have been widely circulated, and have done harm sometimes. As lately as last year, a German editor gravely mooted the point whether invisible spirits might not be photographable, because they reflect the "ultra-violet" rays of light, which are invisible to the eye, but very active on the sensitive plate. These must be "good spirits"; for surely *evil* ones would only reflect such rays as are extremely "infra-red." To return to actual fact, however, there are two methods of producing these things: one, by "double-printing," and one by "double-exposure." In the first method, the scene is printed from one negative, and the spirit printed in from another. In the second method, the group is arranged with the "spirit" in its proper place, the lens is uncovered, and *half* the necessary exposure is given. The lens is again capped, everyone remain-



ing still except the "spirit," who moves out of sight, and then the exposure is completed. The result of this is, that whilst all else is sharp and well-defined, the "spirit" is represented by a hazy outline, through which all that is behind it shows. There is nothing very "spiritual" about this, is there?

Of all the evidence which has ever  
Report of the  
Seybert  
Commission. been brought to bear upon the falsity of the spiritualistic manifestations, the most recent and the most damning is that included in the *Report of the Seybert Commission*.

An American named Henry Seybert, who in his lifetime was an enthusiastic believer in Spiritualism, shortly before his death presented to the University of Pennsylvania a gift of money, with the object of founding a Chair of Philosophy, on the condition that the University should appoint a Commission to investigate "all systems of Morals, Religion, or Philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism."

The gift and the condition attending it were accepted by the University and a Commission appointed, including some well-known and learned gentlemen, to carry out the wishes of the late Henry Seybert.

So far from being prejudiced against Spiritualism, each member of the Commission affirmed positively that he was entirely free from all prejudice, and quite open to conviction upon any point connected with the subject they were about to investigate. Indeed, it is only necessary to read their report to feel assured that they approached their duties in the most unbiassed and even reverent frame of mind.



Now, in a report made under conditions and by such men as these, surely we have something to which we can turn for the most reliable evidence concerning the truth or falsity of that which they undertook to enquire into; and even the spirit mediums themselves were bound to admit the fairness and courtesy displayed by the Commission during their investigations. What more could even the most bigoted Spiritualist desire?

The researches of these gentlemen, though principally confined to the manifestations of slate-writing mediums, yet had a wide scope; and either singly or in commission they pursued their enquiries into most branches of the subject. And what was the result? In every case it proved, as anyone acquainted with the ins and outs of Spiritualism could prophesy with confidence, either that the medium was shy of producing manifestations before so critical an audience, although the Commission submitted, as they always did, to every condition imposed upon them, or the enquiry resulted in the detection of fraud and imposture. Of genuine manifestations they found absolutely none. Not one single indication of anything that could not be accounted for by the most puerile trickery. Not one iota of evidence which could be construed by any stretch of ingenuity into anything approaching a revelation of supernatural agency. Surely, if Spiritualism be for the benefit of mankind, and the spirits have power to manifest themselves, they would never have neglected such an opportunity of convincing the world of the truths of Spiritualism. And yet Spiritualists blame us for our incredulity. Call us materialists and atheists because we cannot accept their dogmas.



Let us glance at a few extracts from the *Report* of this Commission\* ; and then let any Spiritualist say whether our scepticism is not, to say the least, well justified.

In reporting their investigation of the "slate-writing" of "Dr." Slade, they speak as follows :

"At the risk of appearing inconsequent by mentioning that first which, in point of time, came last, we must premise that in our investigations with this medium we early discovered the character of the writing to be two-fold, and the difference between the two styles to be striking. . . . In short, one bore the marks of deliberation and the other of haste. This difference was found to be due to the different conditions under which the communications were written. The long messages are prepared by the medium before the séance. The short ones, answers to questions asked during the séance, are written under the table with what skill practice can confer.

"With this knowledge, it is clear that the investigator has to deal with a simple question of legerdemain. . . . All that we can do is to describe the processes which we distinctly saw this medium adopt.

"In its simplest form (and one which any person can try with astonishing results upon an artless, unsuspecting sitter) a slate, on which, before the sitter's visit a message has been written, is lying face downwards when the séance begins. There are other slates on an adjoining table within easy reach of the medium. . . . When sufficient spiritual power has been generated, the medium takes up the slate, and, still controlling with his left

\* Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia.



hand the hands of the sitters, places on it a minute fragment of slate pencil. No offer is made to show both sides (the prepared message is on the hidden side); the side in full view is perfectly clean, and it is on that side that the spirits are to write with the slate pencil; there is no need of showing the other side. With his right hand the medium holds the slate under the edge of the table, barely concealing it thereunder, and drawing it forth every few seconds to see if any writing has appeared. After waiting in vain for five or ten minutes, the medium's patience becomes exhausted, and he reaches for another slate from the table close behind him, and, ostentatiously washing both sides of it, lays it on the table in front of him (still controlling with his left hand the hands of his sitters), and removes the pencil from the first slate to the second, and on the top of the second so places the first slate that the prepared message is underneath, on the inside and next to the other slate. The trick is done. All that now remains for the medium to do is to hold the two slates under the table for a while, or rest them on the shoulder close to the ear of the sitter on the medium's right, and, by scratching with the finger-nail on the frame of the slate, to imitate the writing by the spirits with the enclosed pencil. . . . "

"At the first two séances an ordinary wooden table was used belonging to the hotel where Dr. Slade lodged. At the third séance a similar but larger table was used, somewhat the worse for wear, and the joints of its leaves were far from fitting close. Every crack, however, and every chink had been carefully filled up with paper to prevent, so the medium said, 'the electricity from flowing through !'



“When a question is written on the slate by a sitter, equal dexterity to that used in substituting the prepared slate, or even greater, is demanded of the medium, in reading the question and writing the answer.

“The question is written by the sitter out of sight of the medium, to whom the slate, face downwards, is handed over and a piece of pencil placed on it.

“The task now before the medium is to secure the fragment of pencil and to hold it while the slate is surreptitiously turned over and the question read; then the slate is turned back again and the answer written.

“Every step in the process we have distinctly seen. . . .

“At our last séance with him we noticed two slates which were not with the other slates on the same table behind him, but were on the floor resting against the leg of that table, and within easy reach of his hand as he sat at the larger table. As we had previously seen prepared slates similarly placed, we kept a sharp watch on these slates. Unfortunately, it was too sharp. Dr. Slade caught the look directed at them. That detected glance was sufficient to prevent the spirits from sending the messages which they had so carefully prepared. The slates were not produced during the séance, but when it was over, one of our number managed to strike them with his foot so as to displace them and reveal the writing. None of us present that day will be likely to forget the hurried way in which these slates were seized by the medium and washed.”

This is only one of the many investigations made by the Commission in connection with this branch of spiritual manifestation.



They also went to the expense of sending the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. George S. Fullerton, to Germany, to inquire into the real facts of the famous investigation made by Professor Zoellner of Slade and his slate-writing, and of which so much has been made by the Spiritualists. In summarising the conclusions at which he arrived, Mr. Fullerton says:—

“Thus it would appear that of the four eminent men whose names have made famous the investigation, there is reason to believe one, *Zoellner*, was of unsound mind at the time, and anxious for experimental verification of an already accepted hypothesis; another, *Fechner*, was partly blind, and believed because of *Zoellner*’s observations; a third, *Scheibner*, was also afflicted with defective vision, and not entirely satisfied in his own mind as to the phenomena; and a fourth, *Weber*, was advanced in age, and did not even recognise the disabilities of his associates. No one of these men had ever had experiences of this sort before, nor was any one of them acquainted with the ordinary possibilities of deception. The experience of our Commission with Dr. Slade would suggest that the lack of such knowledge on their part was unfortunate.”

Thus exit the celebrated *Zoellner* investigation.

Dr. Calvin B. Knerr, speaking of his experiences with another slate-writing medium, in the appendix to the “Report,” describes a method of investigation which he adopted. It was the use of a small mirror arranged in his lap so as to reflect the underneath of the table during the production of the writing. Needless to say, he discovered the fact that the medium did the writing herself. Concluding his account of the transaction, he says:—



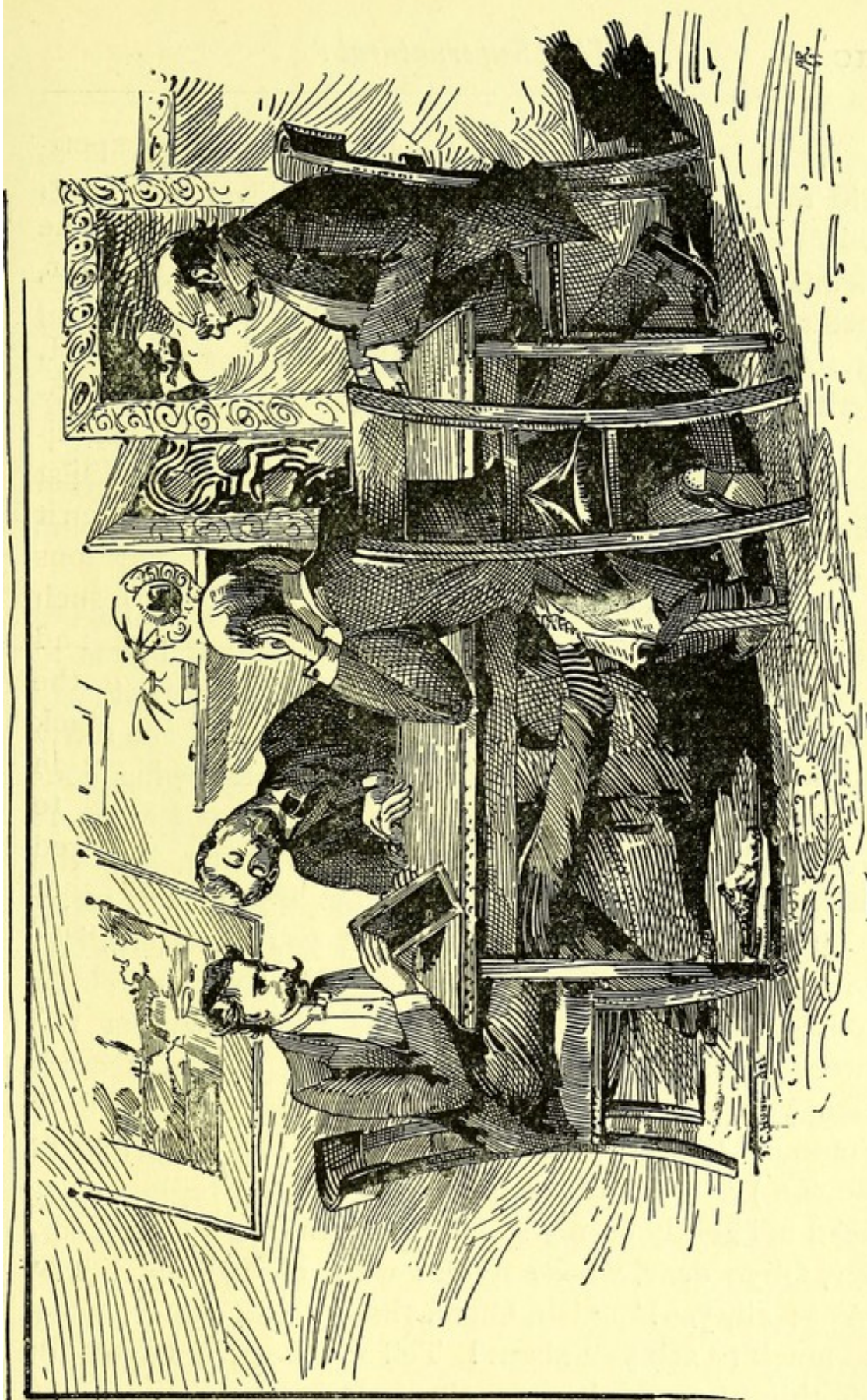
"I requested a third trial. After this last experiment, in which again, *for the third time in my little mirror, I saw the stealthy fingers write on the slate*, I told the medium I was satisfied, smothered my indignant anger, and left the house as quickly as I could."

The acting-Chairman of the Commission, Mr. H. H. Furness, appears to have been an indefatigable investigator, and recounts some of the most amusing experiences in Spiritualism that I have ever read. Whilst investigating the powers of those mediums whose spirit "controls" profess to return answers to questions enclosed in sealed envelopes, he found that such envelopes, on being returned to him, had either had the seals cut out and replaced with mucilage, or the envelopes had been opened along one side and stuck together again at the edges. The question he put in each case was whether the spirits could tell him to whom a skull, which he had in his library, belonged during life. Through one medium, the spirits said that it probably belonged to a black woman, "Dinah Melish" by name. Through another, they said it had been the property of one "Sister Belle." Through a third, they told him that it had belonged to a French woman, "Marie St. Clair." This singular experience is quite in accordance with all we know of spiritual communications as a rule.

It is, however, in connection with "materialisation" that Mr. Furness' experiences are most entertaining. In one place he says:—

"In general, then, let me say at once, and emphatically, that I have never seen anything which, in the smallest degree, has led me to suppose that a spirit can





*A Scientific Investigation.*



be, as it is termed, materialised. It is superfluous to add that I never recognised a materialised spirit; in only two instances have any spirits professed to be members of my family, and in one of those two instances, as it happened, that member was alive and in robust health, and in the other a spirit claimed a fictitious relationship—that of niece."

Again he says:—

"Perhaps this is as fitting a place as any to mention the test whereby I have tried the spirits who have come to me.

"As this same lovely spirit arose, and looked graciously down upon me, and held out her hands in welcome, I arose also to my feet, and peering anxiously into her face, asked, 'Is this Olivia?' 'Yes,' she softly murmured in reply. Then ensued the following conversation, which I reproduce as faithfully as I can. It was broken off once by the spirit retiring into the cabinet, but resumed when she again appeared to me.

"'Ah, Olive dear, how lovely of you to materialise! Did you really want to come back?' 'Very much, of course,' she answered. 'And do you remember the sweet years of old?' 'All of them,' she whispered. 'Do you remember,' I continued, 'the old oak near Summer Place?' (A happy hit, in the longitude of Boston.) 'Yes, indeed I do,' was the low reply, as her head fell gently on my shoulder. 'And do you remember, Olive dear, whose names were carved upon it?' 'Yes; ah, yes!' 'Oh, Olive, there's one thing I want so much to ask you about! Tell me, dear, if I speak of anything you don't remember. What was the matter with you that afternoon, one summer, when your father



rode his hunter to the town, and Albert followed after upon his, and then your mother trundled to the gate behind the dappled greys? Do you remember it, dear?' 'Perfectly.' 'Well, don't you remember nothing seemed to please you that afternoon? You left the novel all uncut upon the rosewood shelf; you left your new piano shut; something seemed to worry you. Do you remember it, dear one?' 'All of it; yes, yes!' 'Then you came singing down to that old oak, and kissed the place where I had carved our names with many vows. Tell me, you little witch, who were you thinking of all that time?' 'All the while of you,' she sighed. 'And do you, oh! do you remember that you fell asleep under the oak, and that a little acorn fell into your bosom, and you tossed it out in a pet? Ah, Olive dear, I found that acorn and kissed it twice, and kissed it thrice for thee! And do you know that it has grown into a fine young oak?' 'I know it,' she answered, softly and sadly; 'I often go to it!' This was almost too much for me, and as my memory on the spur of the moment of Tennyson's *Talking Oak* was growing misty, I was afraid the interview might become embarrassing for lack of reminiscences, so I said, 'Dearest Olivia, that is so lovely of you. There, be a good girl; good-bye now. You'll surely come and see me again the next time I come here, won't you?' 'Yes, indeed, I will.' I released my arm from encircling a very human waist, and Olive lifted her head from my shoulder, where she had been speaking close to my ear, and de-materialised."

It is impossible, however, to give any idea of the amount of entertaining reading embodied in this *Report*. It consists of 159 pp., dealing entirely with fraud and



the methods resorted to to discover it. It is such a bomb-shell in the spiritualistic camp as they never have experienced before, and the most aggravating part of it all is the fact that it was a Spiritualist who provided the means of launching it. Thus Spiritualism is "hoisted on its own petard," and has received its most deadly wound through the means which, it was fondly hoped, would place it once and for ever upon a sure and solid foundation that would withstand every shock which unbelief could bring against it.

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III.—**Theosophy.** (*J. N. Maskelyne.*)

"And Theosophism turning silly girls to dreamy yearning  
 For the *Yogi* and the *Llamas* of Thibet,  
 Set them talking rubbish utter o'er their tea and bread-and-butter,  
 And of Buddha made Bayswater's latest pet.  
 Stead of bonnet or of dish new, ladies prattled much of Vishnu,  
 And employed a phraseology most odd;  
 And once devotees of Ouida's, now the *Shastras* read and *Vedas*,  
 And regarded Colonel Olcott as a god:  
 But the fraud was soon so patent, spite its advocacy blatant,  
 That, unable such imposture to abide,  
 Converts soon became so weary of a creed both false and dreary,  
 That Theosophism bored its last and died:  
     Yes, Blavatsky now unable  
     To still spread so dull a fable,  
 Theosophism bored its last, and died!"

*Truth*, Christmas Number, 1890.

*Madame Blavatsky—The Starting of the Theosophical Society*  
*—Madame Blavatsky in India—Madame Blavatsky in*  
*London—The Coulombs' Confession—Mr. Hodgson's Re-*  
*port—What Theosophists say—Mrs. Besant.*

I N the early days of Spiritualism it would have been perfectly safe for anyone to prophecy that, sooner or later, the influences of Oriental mysticism would make themselves felt in connection with it; and such has proved to be the case. All the old and threadbare tricks of the Eastern juggler have been trotted out as



evidences of the occult in general, and of the truth of Spiritualism in particular.

That this influence has made itself widely felt nowadays, none can doubt. In short, just as ancient superstition resolved itself into Spiritualism, so has the latter, under the spell of Eastern magic, developed into what is known as Theosophy. I say this advisedly; for, although Theosophy has existed, in some form or other, for thousands of years, the Theosophy of to-day is not by any means the same thing as that of the ancients. Formerly, it was the evidence of direct communication with the supreme ruler or rulers of the universe; now, it is simply Spiritualism on a Pantheistic basis, embodying as its main belief the doctrine of re-incarnation.

I had intended dealing with this subject in a somewhat exhaustive manner; but recently so much ink has been spilled upon it, that I do not feel justified in troubling the reader with more than a brief *resumé* of what I had already prepared.

Let me then, briefly, state the facts of this latest development of a familiar craze.

The history of modern Theosophy is so essentially bound up with that of its founder, the late Madame Blavatsky, and so much in connection with it has to be taken on the bare *ipse dixit* of this lady, that the first consideration of those who attempt an investigation of its merits must be the amount of reliance that can be placed upon her statements. Candidly, and all prejudice apart, she is not the kind of person whose word can be accepted without corroboration.



Miss Mabel Collins, who was formerly her intimate associate and co-editor of the Theosophical print *Lucifer*, says of her: "She taught me one great lesson. I learned from her how foolish, how 'gullible,' how easily flattered human beings are, taken *en masse*. Her contempt for her kind was on the same gigantic scale as everything else about her, except her marvellously delicate taper fingers. In all else she was a big woman. She had a greater power over the weak and credulous, a greater capacity for making black appear white, a larger waist, a more voracious appetite, a more confirmed passion for tobacco, a more ceaseless and insatiable hatred of those whom she thought to be her enemies, a greater disrespect for *les convenances*, a worse temper, a greater command of bad language, and a greater contempt for the intelligence of her fellow-beings than I had ever supposed possible to be contained in one person. These, I suppose, must be reckoned as her vices, though whether a Creature so indifferent to all ordinary standards of right and wrong can be held to have virtues or vices I know not."

One has only to look at the photograph of Madame Blavatsky to feel assured of the truth of the above statements. She had every appearance of being a gross, sensual, and vulgar adventuress. This, then, was the woman who posed as the sole initiate in Theosophy who was sent, a heaven-born messenger, to enlighten mankind, and tell us of the existence of the "Mahatmas" or Masters, those mystic beings who alone are fully acquainted with the hidden secrets and forces of Nature.

A Russian by birth, she married, at the age of



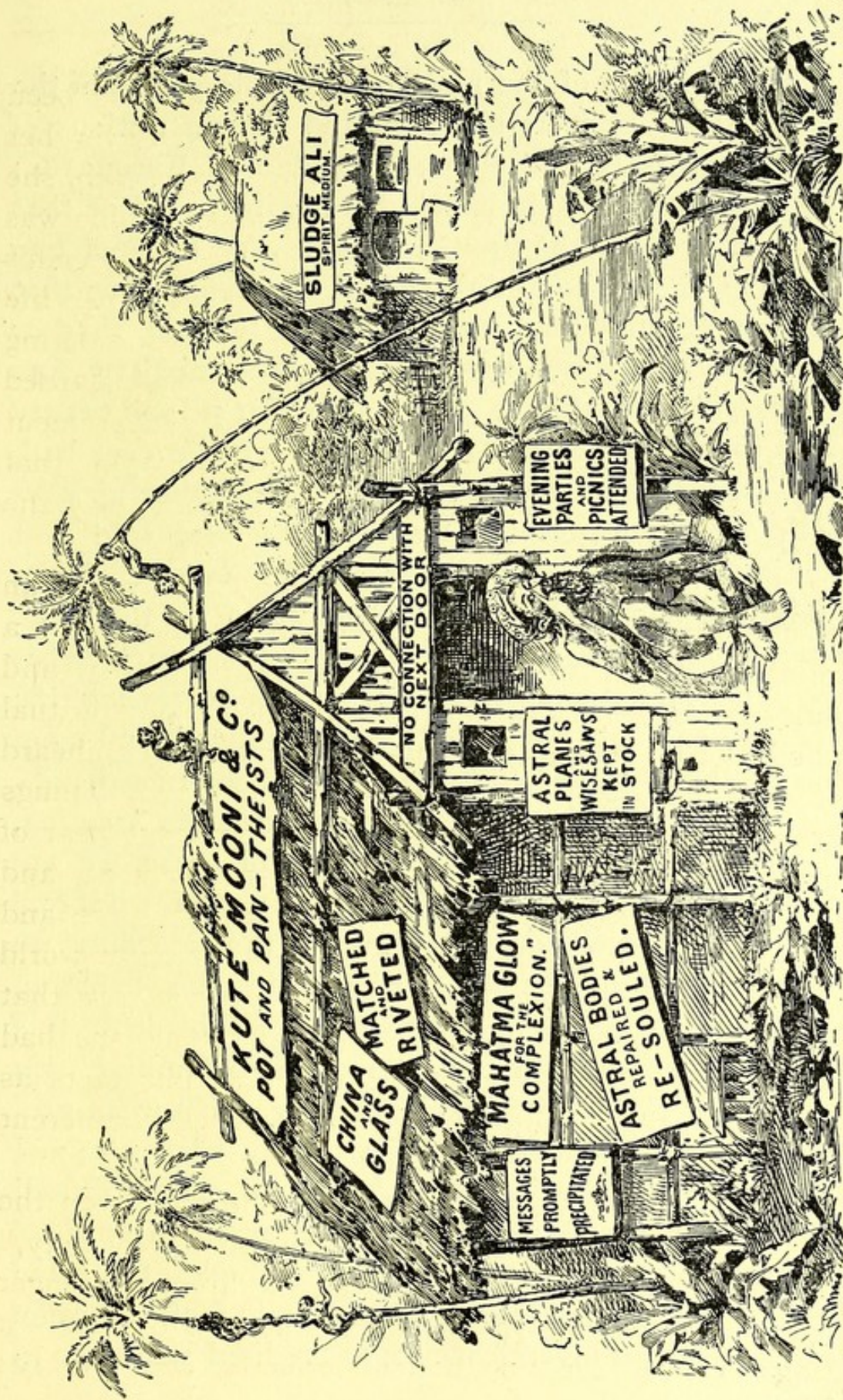
seventeen, a man of sixty. Since then she has been married once again, if not oftener; so whatever her real name may have been at the time of her death, she certainly had no right to that of Blavatsky, which was her first husband's name. Having left this gentleman's protection after a few months, the whole of her life subsequently appears to have been spent in wandering in various parts of the world—always being regarded with suspicion, frequently subjected to Government surveillance, and, at times, receiving intimation that her presence in a particular country was, to say the least, undesirable.

About the year 1870 we find her in Cairo, a woman of doubtful antecedents, and reported to have kept a gambling "hell." She was then a Spiritualist, and formed a society for the "investigation" of spiritual phenomena. At this time the Mahatmas were unheard of and Theosophy an unknown quantity. Things growing unpleasant for her in Egypt, we next hear of her in America, attending spiritualistic séances, and still bearing the character of a Spiritualist pure and simple. Not a hint of Theosophy had the outer world ever received so far. Certainly, we are told *now* that such was not the case, but that all along she had refuted the doctrines of Spiritualism. The facts as we know them, however, point to a very different conclusion.

Whilst in New York she conceived the idea of starting the "Theosophical Society," giving out that she was the direct messenger from the Mahatmas resident in Thibet—a magnificent conception and a perfectly safe venture;

The Starting  
of the  
Theosophical  
Society.





*A Mahatma at Home.*



for Thibet is one of the most inaccessible places in the world. Both from its situation and the restrictions of its natives, it is well-nigh impassable to Europeans; and we have only Madame's bare word as proof that she ever crossed the frontier at all. We know of two attempts she made to do so; and even supposing that her last attempt was successful, that was in 1855 or thereabouts. Now, the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875; thus it will be seen that it took twenty years to deliver her message, if message she ever had, or if, indeed, the Mahatmas are not altogether apocryphal. Madame herself is reported to have said that she invented the Mahatmas for the benefit of the credulous, and such I firmly believe to be the case. The statement then that she was the emissary direct from the Mahatmas is one which, on reviewing the facts, we can only conclude to be a falsehood, and upon this falsehood Modern Theosophy has been raised.

Madame  
Blavatsky in  
India.

Having started the new creed in America, she journeyed to India, and there, we are told, her teachings "went like wildfire." Marvellous, indeed, were the accounts we received of the wonders wrought in the name of Theosophy. There was, however, one blemish this new occultism had in the eyes of those familiar with Western trickery—the manifestations which were produced in evidence of the higher knowledge attained by Theosophists were simply the old, old spiritual phenomena served up fresh. The same mysterious writing, the same raps and taps and jingles, the same flower séances, the same apparitions; in fact, the same old *ad captandum* mystifications, discredited years ago in



connection with Spiritualism. Hence the conclusion we were forced to arrive at was, that this new science, religion, philosophy, or whatever it was termed, was simply our old friend (or enemy) Spiritualism in a new dress, with a new set of principles, and its manifestations ascribed to other agencies.

Having, then, given Theosophy a good start in India, Madame Blavatsky thought the time had arrived for trying her hand

Madame  
Blavatsky in  
London.

upon the people of the West. So to London she came in 1884, and for a time she created somewhat of a stir. Unfortunately, however, like our old acquaintances the Indian jugglers, in journeying here so much of her power forsook her that most of us believed that such power had never existed outside the imagination of her followers.

In 1885, therefore, the Psychical Research Society deputed Mr. Hodgson to proceed to

The Coulombs'  
Confession.

India in quest of proofs of the genuineness of the marvellous reports that had reached us. In the meantime, however, there had been a split in the Theosophical camp, and the Coulombs, confidants of Madame, had revealed that which, if true, conclusively proved the fraudulent nature of Madame's pretensions,

and discredited the whole of the supposed phenomena from beginning to end. All that

Mr. Hodgson's  
Report.

remained, then, for Mr. Hodgson to do was to investigate the statements of Madame's late accomplices. This he did, step by step, and arrived at the conclusion that the manifestations were one and all ingenious trickeries and nothing more.

This report, of course, was met by absolute denial



on the part of those most concerned; but the facts it contains cannot and never have been explained away. Madame Blavatsky, as is only natural, tried to put the matter in another light; but after all her arguments amounted to nothing more than *tu quoque*. She was branded as an impostor; she returned the compliment to her opponents, and that is all. The fact that she managed to live down the accusations brought against her is quoted by her followers as a proof of her honesty. So we might be disposed to regard it, if we were not so familiar with similar cases. As it is, it counts for nothing. It has always been the case with such "occult" impostors when detected. Believers naturally feel that to accept the exposure as genuine would be to cast a slight upon their own intelligence. One has only to turn to the history of Spiritualism for numberless examples of the kind. At any rate, with regard to the points at issue between Madame Blavatsky and the Coulombs, I can only say that my own opinion fully endorses the old saying which runs to the effect, that when certain persons fall out, certain other persons come by their own—the Truth in this case.

The Coulombs, however, are not the only persons who have thrown light upon the inner workings of Theosophy. Others besides have given evidence against its founder; and the whole of this evidence is so much more in accordance with the probabilities of the case than the statements of the devotees, that this, in itself, is strong presumptive evidence that the truth is with the accusers, even were other proof lacking. The evidence of those who have not discovered an imposture is just on a par with that of the Irishman's



witnesses: "Is yer anner goin' to convict me bekase thim three spalpeens says they saw me do it, whin I can bring a dozen witnesses that didn't?"

The solution of the problem, then, is this. Theosophy is the direct outcome of Spiritualism. All statements to the contrary notwithstanding, its founder was a Spiritualist and a spirit-medium. Spiritualists term her a *low* medium; meaning, of course, low in power.\* Finding that the investigation, which Spiritualists profess to court, was attended by such disastrous results in the way of exposure, she hit upon the idea of performing the same things under different conditions, giving a different explanation of the means by which they were produced, allowing no investigation, and according no proof to any but the disciples, or, in other words, those who proved to be capable of being readily deceived.

Yes. To start a new religion is the finest swindle in the world. It is safer than shop-lifting or pocket-picking, and more profitable.

Theosophists tell us that the phenomena, <sup>What Theosophists Say.</sup> which have made so much stir in the world, have little to do with Theosophy, but are simply applications of scientific knowledge of a higher order than that with which the world at large is familiar. Why, then, don't they do something that cannot be imitated by trickery? They accuse us of wishing to acquire knowledge of these powers when our minds are not trained to a standard sufficiently high to enable us to use them properly. But we don't

\* I think, however, Madame proved herself to possess at least *medium* ability.



want to know *how* these things are done ; only that they *can* be done ; otherwise we have no sort of guarantee that the study of the doctrines, the self-abnegation and continued striving in the paths we are instructed to take, in order to attain to the high Theosophical level, will not be just so much time and effort wasted in the fruitless search for a mare's nest.

It is to the miracles we look first of all. They are the *proofs*, the only proofs of the superior knowledge to which the study is supposed to lead. Without them it is nothing ; for unless we have some evidence of this sort, we cannot tell a Mahatma from a mountebank.

But really there is no end to the inconsistencies connected with this doctrine ; and yet, palpable as they are even to our unenlightened intelligence, the higher intellect of the Theosophists refuses to grasp them. When they are pointed out they simply jape at our methods of reasoning. Yet surely our logic is better than theirs when they profess themselves so anxious to clear the memory of their late leader, and yet refuse any proof whatever that her supposed powers are really existent. Of course they do not do so because they cannot ; then why are they not honest enough to say so ? You see, if these powers are real and the phenomena genuine, Madame Blavatsky was an honest woman, and as such we can listen to her teachings with respect ; if they are not, she was a charlatan, and only worthy of our reprobation. By its miracles, then, must Theosophy stand or fall.

Yes, ours is better logic than theirs when they say that proof of these things can only be given to those who have spent years of study and self-sacrifice, and



yet those who have been Theosophists but a few months say that they have direct evidence of the existence of the "Mahatmas" and proof of their powers. Better logic than theirs when they profess implicit belief in the intellectual attainments of their Mahatmas, and yet produce for our edification reputed communications from these gentry which contain matter that appeared some time before in the obscure spiritualistic prints which they affect to despise. Better logic than theirs when they say that the sole aim of the Mahatmas is the benefit of mankind, and in the same breath tell us that owing to the growth of materialistic thought these men, at the very time when surely their aid was most needed, withdrew themselves to the fastnesses of Thibet and elsewhere. Contrast this conduct with that of our own "materialistic" scientists in all ages, and say which side has the true heroism and which is most deserving of our respect.

And these Mahatmas, the highest exponents of Theosophy, who can project their thoughts and forces at will through space in an instant of time, with all their knowledge have done no good for mankind; and with all their power, they yet allowed such people as the Coulombs to creep into the inner circle surrounding their own emissary, and to brand her as a charlatan and an impostor. How are we to have faith in the face of such considerations as these? Truly we may say that if Theosophy is to do the world no more good than apparently it did the Coulombs, we are better without it.

It has been suggested to me by Theosophists, that Madame Blavatsky being dead, and no longer able to



defend herself from accusations brought against her, it would be more becoming on my part to pass over in silence such things as I may conceive to have been her delinquencies. I cannot, however, see the matter in this light. Judas Iscariot, for instance, is dead, yet we do not hesitate to speak what we believe to be the truth concerning him. The fact is, I am inclined to think that I have maintained silence with regard to this new occultism, perhaps, longer than I ought; and have trusted too much to the belief that it would never attain serious proportions. Even now I do not believe that it will ever assume the proportions attained by Spiritualism. Let us say, then, of its founder: "Peace be with her; and, at her next incarnation, may she see the error of her ways."

Although Madame herself is dead, there are still, however, some who appear to be very much alive; and the question which naturally arises for our consideration—in fact, the problem *par excellence*—is this: Now that the prime mover of this modern craze is no longer among us, and the Coulombs are banished from the Theosophical fold, who is it that, even now, is hoodwinking the faithful with the fictitious miracles which, as we hear, still at times occur? Who is it that still "precipitates" the private and confidential messages at the Theosophical head-quarters? If it be not indeed the Mahatmas—Koot Hoomi and his confrères—who can it be?

This is a question, the key to which I am morally certain is in my possession; but as yet the time has not come for me to answer it, and I trust it never may. There are considerations which lead me to believe that



at any rate the occult portion of Theosophy has seen its best days, and will soon be on the wane. If so, well and good—let it go. If these supposed marvels are no longer flaunted in the eyes of a credulous world, the matter concerns me no more. I have no wish to say or do anything that may have the appearance of arrogating to myself any authoritative position with regard to it, other than that involved in the duty incumbent upon all, to uphold the right and decry that which is wrong. I am neither the Public Prosecutor nor a private detective, but only a plain, straightforward man, who, having assisted in running to earth some few impostors, is regarded by many as being one who should take this matter in hand. The queries and expostulations I have received during the late excitement, on account of my apparent apathy in this particular case, amply demonstrate this much; and some persons really appear to have been inclined to believe there must be some truth in the marvels of which we have heard, because I personally, until quite recently, had said nothing against them.

This being the case, let me make one statement which will, I think—and indeed, for the present, *must*—satisfy all.

Notwithstanding my seeming indifference, I have not been altogether idle; and if it should so happen that, contrary to my expectations, the perpetrators of these outrages on common sense still persist in their nefarious practices, *let them beware!* In that case they will become fair game for me. In the language of sport, I have “marked them down,” and can lay my finger upon them whenever I need to do so. If it should



be necessary, they may depend upon it that, though the trap is not *yet* laid, I am on their track, and I shall pursue them as relentlessly as I have others before them.

This doubtless reads like a conditional threat; but those who know me best will be best aware that, at any rate, it is no idle one. No doubt, to perfect every link in my chain of evidence would require some little time; it would, perhaps, cost money; and certainly it would be of no advantage to me one way or another: nevertheless, if need be, it shall be done.

Anything more definite than this, at present, I will not say. If one has to play a game requiring skill, it is not wise to show one's hand; and if the shuffling of my possible opponents happens to have dealt me a winning card or two, I do not mind saying as much, but I am not bound to declare exactly what they are. When the time comes I shall play them to the best of my ability; but I am too old a hand at the game either to lead out of my turn or to forget what are trumps.

Mrs. Besant.

The greatest fillip, however, that Theosophy has ever had has been the conversion to its doctrines of that highly-esteemed and conscientious, though erratic, lady, Mrs. Besant. The world was startled at the fact that one who, for sixteen years, had been battling against beliefs of all kinds, should accept the teaching of such a creed as Theosophy, with all its clap-trap and hanky-panky. Such a straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel had, perhaps, never before been known. Yet there is really nothing so very remarkable in it. Possessed of a spirit of unrest, which has led her from time to time in all directions in the



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search for the best means of benefiting her fellow-creatures, from being the most sincere Christian, she suddenly became the most pronounced Atheist. Then followed Malthusianism, then Socialism, and now Theosophy. What will be the next thing? Will she complete the cycle? Let us hope so for all our sakes. We can ill spare so earnest a worker to devote herself to the propagation of that which, though it may appear to her to operate for the benefit of mankind, is far more likely to be the means of fostering a few impostors and humbugs, whose sole aim in life is free living and fool's pence.

In conclusion, I can only say that the sooner that all dabblers in these occult crazes can be brought to realise the fact that the beacon light which they have chosen to guide them through life is simply a will-o-the-wisp, haunting the dark places and mephitic swamps of our nature, aimless, purposeless, and powerless to aid them to any good or useful end, the better will it be for the world at large.

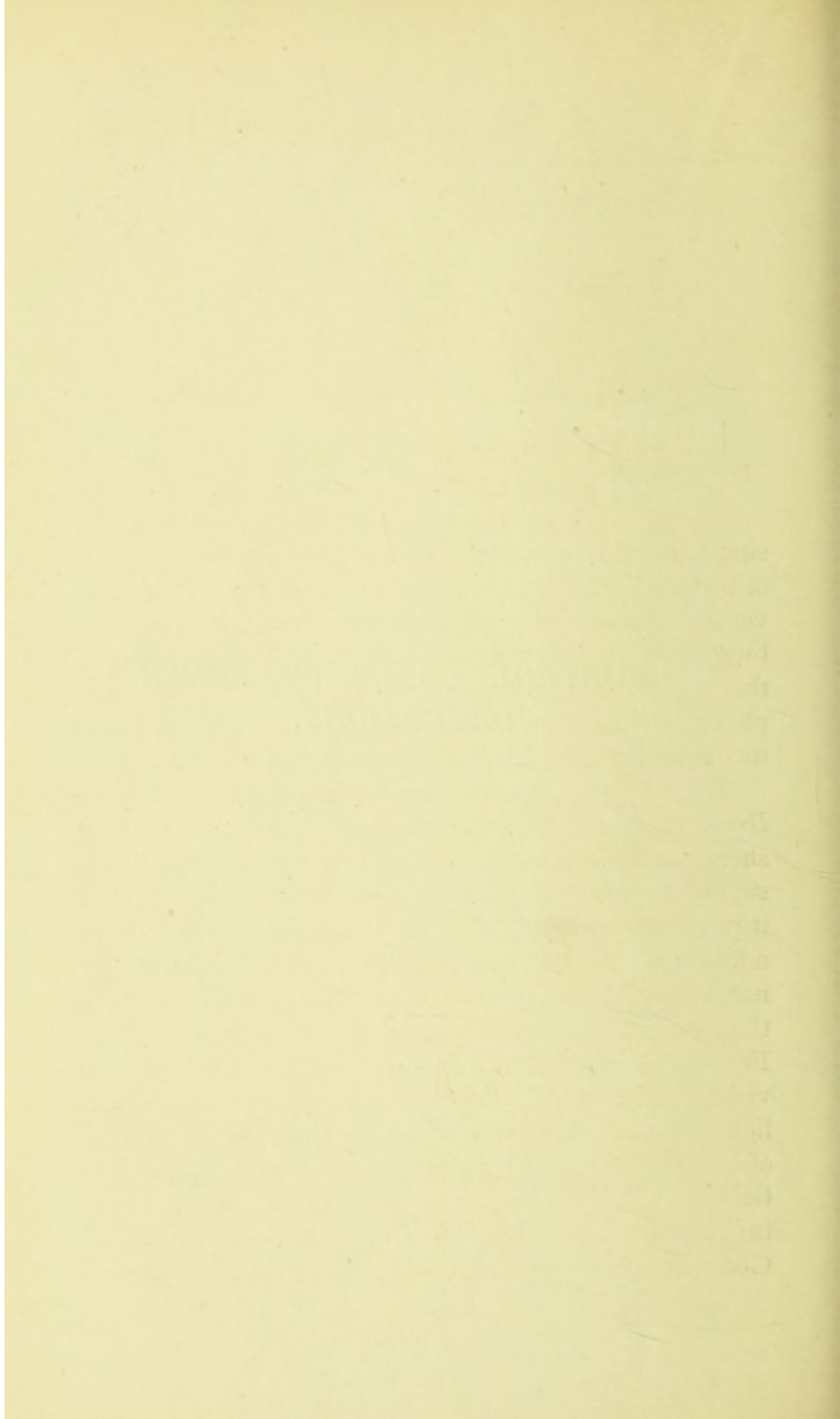


The history of the world is a subject of great interest and importance. It is a subject which has attracted the attention of men of all ages and of all nations. The history of the world is a subject which has been the subject of many different theories and opinions. Some have thought of it as a series of events, while others have thought of it as a process. Some have thought of it as a story, while others have thought of it as a science. The history of the world is a subject which has been the subject of many different theories and opinions. Some have thought of it as a series of events, while others have thought of it as a process. Some have thought of it as a story, while others have thought of it as a science. The history of the world is a subject which has been the subject of many different theories and opinions. Some have thought of it as a series of events, while others have thought of it as a process. Some have thought of it as a story, while others have thought of it as a science.



*DOUBTFUL CASES OF SENSE  
DECEPTIONS.*







## CHAPTER VIII.

*Joan of Arc — Percy Shelley — Swedenborg.*

Joan of Arc. **B**ORN in the little hamlet of Domremy, near the Meuse, in the year 1410, in a district then remarkable for the devout simplicity of the peasants, and for their romantic superstitions, so allied in those days to all forms of religion, we find her growing up to maidenhood strangely imbued with all the prevailing ideas and superstitions of the age and the village in which she lived. The prophecy then current that a virgin should rid France of its oppressors had its effect on the mind of Joan.

Dr. Ireland, in an able work entitled *The Blot on the Brain*, tells us that, as a child, she was sent to keep sheep, and at the age of thirteen she first heard a supernatural voice. It told her to be devout and good; it promised her the protection of heaven. It was about mid-day. She had fasted the day before. Her imagination, highly strung at all times, was now more prone than ever to conceive visions, to start subjective sounds. From this time she was surrounded by voices and visions; she seldom heard a voice without seeing a light. She was fond of hearing the bells, and the voices of angels and saints mingled with the chimes, and became translated by her imagination into words which in English would run something like "Daughter of God, go, go—go; I will aid you—go," which certainly



reminds one of Dick Whittington's illusion, when half-asleep on Highgate Common, and his belief that the bells had sung, "Turn again, Whittington, thrice Mayor of London."

She felt she had a distinct mission: it was to her France must look for its salvation. The Dauphin at last determined to accept the proffered aid; and when asked by those about her to perform miracles that they might believe in her power, her only answer was, "Bring me to Orleans, and you shall see. The siege shall be raised, and the Dauphin crowned King of Rheims."

History tells us the rest; of her heroism and success at Orleans; of her capture at the siege of Compiègne; of her trial and of her barbarous murder, for by no other name can it be called. As she stood before the Judge, she told him that she had conversed with the visions of St. Michael, St. Marguerite, and other saints. "I saw them," she said to him, "with my own eyes, as plainly as I see you; and when they retired, I wept, and much I wished that they would take me with them."

That this heroic girl had hallucinations and illusions of both sight and hearing is perfectly obvious, and that she acted upon them history plainly tells us. Are we to argue upon these facts that she was a lunatic? Surely not. These sense deceptions, as de Boismont points out, only reflected the opinions of the period; they resulted from the conviction that her mission had a divine origin. Love of her country, enthusiasm in its cause, and an ecstatic religious fervour, added to the prevailing ideas and superstitions, engendered and



fostered these deceptions of her senses. Still, although I would never be guilty of classing this historical character with the insane of our time, it would I think be manifestly unfair to consider that her mental powers were in such a condition to warrant calling her hallucinations and illusions perfectly sane ones ; and hence it is that I give this slight account of her life under the heading of " Doubtful Cases."

The poet Shelley suffered from frightful  
Percy Bysshe  
Shelley. dreams ; the supernatural always had powerful attractions for him. He had faith in apparitions and in the evocation of the dead ; he was a somnambulist. Dr. Dowden, in his *Life* of this wonderful poet, tells us that " one summer night he came gliding by moonlight into Medway's dormitory, open-eyed, but wrapt in slumber. He advanced to the window, which was open ; his cousin sprang out of bed, seized his arm, and waked him."

At Eton he was known by the nickname of " Mad Shelley." It is said that " an access of passion made his eyes flash like a tiger's, his cheeks grow pale as death, and his limbs quiver."

It was during his holidays that he had an attack of brain fever, and so ill was he mentally that his father was on the point of sending him to an asylum.

In his " Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," Shelley tells us how, while a boy, he sought for ghosts amidst caves and ruins and starlight woods, hoping to converse with the departed dead.

Gradually Shelley began to get visual hallucinations of a remarkable kind, including the *subjective* image of his own body ; and this is established by Lord Byron's



evidence, that Shelley thought one day that he had seen a figure wrapped in a mantle, that gradually the hood was raised, and revealed to him the phantasm of—*himself*!

John Williams, who was with him when he was staying at his house on the Bay of Spezzia, and soon after Shelley had been greatly affected by the death of the infant Allegra, and the heartless conduct of Lord Byron in preventing Claire from seeing her child, made the following entry in his diary, under May 6th, 1822:—

“After tea, walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the waters, he complained of being unusually nervous, and stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain. But he only answered by saying, ‘There it is again—there!’ He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (Allegra) rise from the sea and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him.”

All who take any interest in the life of this remarkable man must remember the supposed attack upon Shelley whilst staying at Tremadoc in North Wales. It is generally believed by those whose testimony is entitled to value that this was a pure hallucination of his mind.

Many would class Shelley as a genius—but insane; but I have placed him in my doubtful list, because of his faith from boyhood in the supernatural, and his poetic and fanciful imagination.



Swedenborg. It is not necessary for my purpose to follow the career of this great mind prior to 1745, at which date he was fifty-eight years of age. His writings, which were voluminous even then, had dealt with scientific subjects, and showed beyond a doubt the great and wonderful power of his mind. They constitute a splendid monument of the marvellous intellectual powers and the lofty religious fervour of the man. The history of modern philosophy would not be perfect without his name. It was in this year (1745) that he considered the Lord had opened his sight into the spiritual world, and had endowed him with the gift of conversing with spirits and angels. It was at this period that he forsook for ever the pursuit of science, and never again in all his many volumes does he even allude to his former work.

It must have been prior to this date, however, that Swedenborg began to be a visionary; for at Stockholm *A Diary, or Book of Dreams*, in MS., written by Swedenborg in 1743 and 1744, accidentally turned up. Its genuineness has never been disputed. This tells us of the "shudderings" and the "fits" he then had, of his visions of angels, women, palaces, and animals—all clearly indicating that some mental alteration was even then taking place. From this time onward Swedenborg became a ghost-seer, an enthusiast, mistaking the nightmares, the dreams, and the morbid visions of his brain for exterior and awful truths.

His fertile mind, his extreme fondness for metaphysical subtleties, and his very vivid imagination, must be patent to all who have read his wonderful works. But we must remember that after all mysticism



is not knowledge. Are there, I wonder, very many in the present day who acknowledge his claims of being able to receive special spiritual enlightenment by some mysterious relation with the unseen world? Are there many who, in adopting this notion of special divine favour, believe him to have the right to assume the possession of a power which should reveal not only the *arcana* of this world, but also those of the spirit world, with its inhabitants and their doings?

It is, I think, justly contended that there is *nothing* in the evidence derived from the supposed divined and illumined writings of Swedenborg which might not have pre-existed in his mind, and which is not consistent with, and a possible consequence of, his habits and thoughts.

There is no doubt that Swedenborg in 1743 and 1744 had become the subject of frequent dreams. At first he seemed to be quite conscious of the nature and the personal origin of them; but yielding to and fostering them, they gradually became habitual to him, and often passed into the state of actual vision—that is to say, of waking dreams—*hallucinations*.

The *Diary* containing an account of these dreams is now in the Royal Library at Stockholm, but as a great portion of it is really obscene in character, a limit to the number of copies allowed to be made was decided upon.

Mr. Richard Proctor, in a most interesting article on "Swedenborg's Visions of other Worlds," points out that it was surprising that Swedenborg heard nothing about the planets Uranus and Neptune; for though during his life these planets were unknown, yet one would think the spirits from these unknown places



would have felt themselves called upon to communicate with the spirit of one who knew nothing of their home, although he received visitors from the worlds in the starry heavens far beyond human ken.

It is certain that Swedenborg, in all his writings and accounts of his visits to the planets, makes no mention of other bodies in the solar system than those known in his day. But—how could it be otherwise?

To ordinary observant minds, it must be pretty clear, I think, that Swedenborg was the subject of sense deceptions; and if we do not like to call him of unsound mind, it would take a bold man to definitely state that his mental processes were from 1743 in a good and healthy condition.

Mr. W. White, who in 1867 published a most elaborate work upon *The Life and Writings of Swedenborg*, thinks otherwise however, and in a most earnest and painstaking way vindicates the claims of this philosopher and seer.

It is difficult to realise that a man like Mr. White could implicitly place faith in the reality of all Swedenborg saw, in all he heard. It is to my mind extraordinary that any common-sensed individual can read without laughing the description of Swedenborg's visits to the planet Mercury, with its men who wore "garments of deep blue, fitted tightly to the body, without folds or frills"; or, again, of his quondam residence in Mars, where he found the inhabitants living upon fruit and pulse, and having for their clothing the fibrous bark of trees, woven and stiffened with gum; or, yet again, of his journey to Jupiter, and the wonderful herds of wild horses he saw there.



Mr. White seriously declares his belief that Swedenborg merely reported what he saw with his eyes, and heard with his ears, in the land of the spirits. Well, it may be a satisfaction to those with whom the spirit world is an objective reality, but not I fear to the ordinary-thinking public.

If we in these days want to know what the sun is made of, what is going on in the deep recesses of hell, or happening in the land to which the good are summoned; or if we yearn to find out all about the residents of the planets, and whether the moon is inhabited, I do not think it probable that our faith in Swedenborg's visions would justify us in flying to his writings for an answer.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### Insane Sense Deceptions.

*Analogy between Dreams and Insanity—Hallucinations of Hearing—Illusions of Hearing—Hallucinations of Sight—Illusions of Sight—Hallucinations and Illusions of Touch, Taste, and Smell—Complicated Hallucinations and Illusions.*

ANALOGY  
between Dreams  
and  
Insanity. **I**N many cases of Insanity which come under our observation, it is indeed true to say that the patients seem to be living in a waking and active dream.

Sir Walter Scott, writing of the analogy between the sense deceptions of dreams and those of the insane, put the case very clearly when he stated: "In both cases the horses have run away with the carriage, but with this difference—that in insanity, the driver is drunk; while in dreams, he is asleep."

In other words, imagination has broken loose from the control of reason and judgment, which faculties in sleep are in abeyance, whilst in insanity they are perverted, incoherent, inco-ordinate.

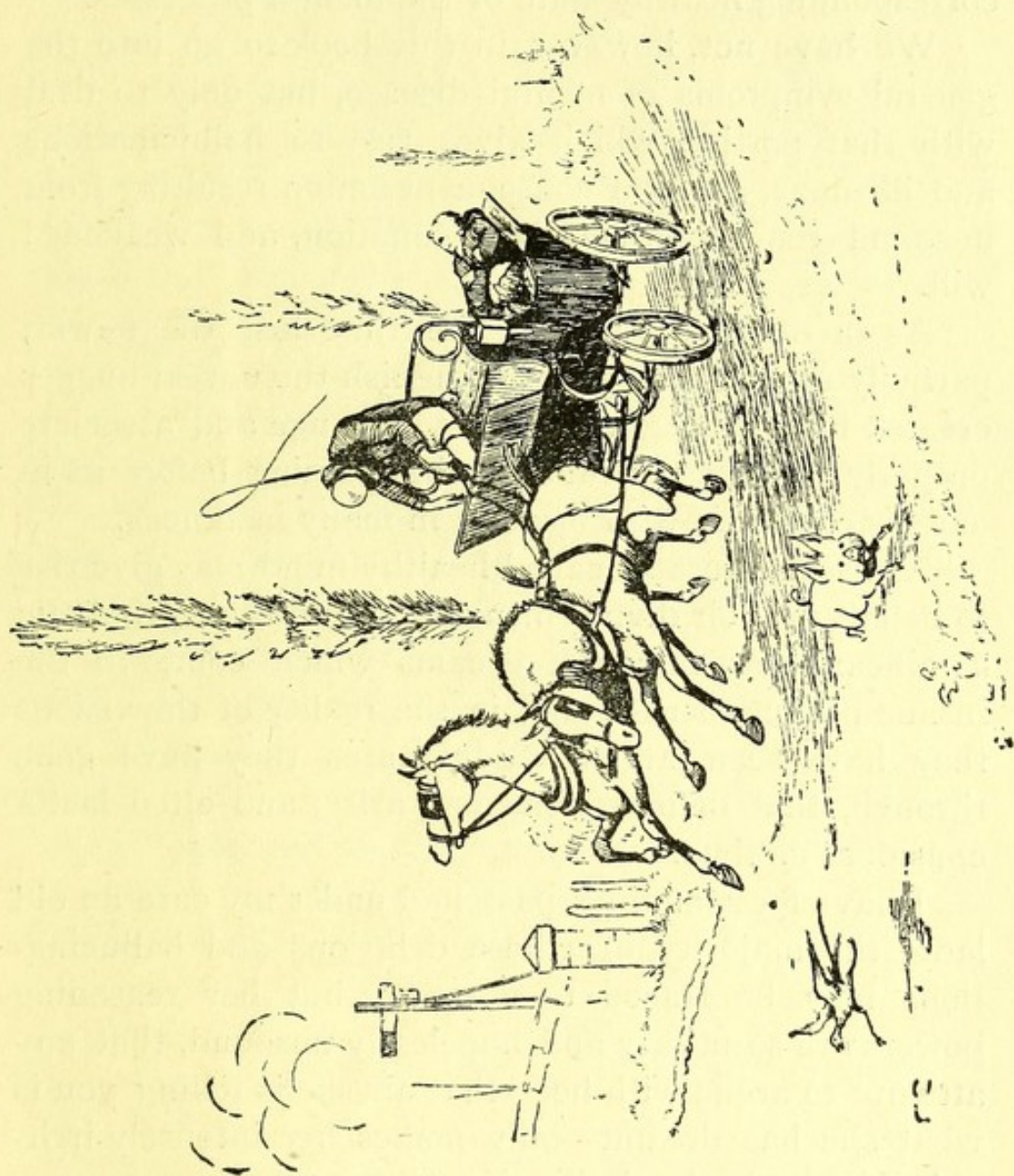
Mr. Aveline has, in a humorous way, well depicted this; and, although it would be wrong to say that the analogy is *always* true, yet it may, I think, be accepted as a general rule.

In following out any theory concerning insanity, we











can never greatly err if we trace out the connection between the symptoms of the unsound mind and the corresponding healthy state of the mental processes.

We have not, however, in this book to go into the general symptoms of mental disease, but only to deal with that portion which gives rise to hallucinations and illusions, and the consequent action resulting from unsound reasoning, perverted emotion, and weakened will.

As in dreaming, we for the time lose the power, partially or completely, to distinguish the unreal images created by our imagination, or to arrange and associate properly the consequent thoughts coming before us in our sleep, so it is with insanity in many instances.

As dreams in a so-called healthy mind may give rise to beliefs in their divine inspiration and their prophetic significance, so may the dreams which come to the insane produce such belief in the reality of the visions they have seen, and the adventures they have gone through, that definite delusions arise, and often last a considerable time.

I have for sometime past had under my care an old lady, the majority of whose delusions and hallucinations may be traced to dreams; but her reasoning powers are so utterly and hopelessly unsound, that any attempt to argue with her—that all she is telling you is what she has dreamt—only makes her intensely irritable, if not absolutely passionate.

It is no uncommon thing to find her crying bitterly in the morning, and when she is questioned as to what is the matter, we get a tale something like this: "Oh, you know well enough! My dear old grandmother was



drowned in the night. I tried to save her, but could not; and the more I called out for help, the more you all laughed, you cruel creatures!" Fortunately, however, it is not always so distressing a dream the poor old lady has, and only a few mornings ago she was intensely pleased with herself, laughing immoderately, and evidently in the best of spirits. She had been paying visits all the night; had seen many of her relations; had received presents, and was indeed thoroughly happy.

Hallucinations and illusions will start in a sound mind, as I have already described in chapter iv., and often for a time the person so affected will reason, like Nicolai, the German bookseller, and Sir David Brewster's celebrated Mrs. A., as to their unreality, and will struggle against their influence; but, alas! gradually the power of right reasoning becomes perverted, the will gets weaker, and at last he yields himself up heart and soul to their power. It may be that they are of a character which leads him to extreme contentment, but this is rare; and we usually find that the result is excitement, passion, and agitation, or silence, moroseness, and bitter grief.

A good case, illustrating this tendency of a sane sense deception to gradually govern the actions of the person so deceived, is given by Dr. Hammond, and is a marked case of *illusion of hearing*. A gentleman began to find that after he had gone to bed the ticking of a clock resolved itself into articulate words. Gradually the ticking of any clock, and at any time, sounded to him like human speech. As soon as he got beyond the range of the sound from the clock, the words were no



longer heard. Generally the expressions were in the form of commands. For instance, if at dinner, they would be "Eat no soup," "Drink no wine," or "Eat your soup," "Drink some wine," and so on.

For a long time this gentleman resisted accepting any of these illusions as facts, but, after a time, he began to be influenced by them to the extent of regarding them as guides, though he tried to conceal the circumstance. When asked, for instance, whether or not he was going to the theatre that evening, he would reply, in a *nonchalant* way, to the effect that he had not thought about it, and then, after a little while, when he thought the matter forgotten, he would saunter towards where the clock stood, and shortly afterward give his answer, either affirmatively or negatively, according to the words conveyed to him by the clock. Eventually he put clocks in every room in his house, and professed to be governed altogether by the directions they gave him.

In the sane we have seen that the sense of sight is more generally deceived than any other sense, but in insanity it is not so. We find from statistics that among the insane the hallucinations and illusions of *hearing* are by far the most frequent, and they are estimated, according to Drs. Bucknill and Tuke, to form two-thirds of the whole number.

Next comes the sense of *sight*. This organ of sense is very often deceived in insanity. Hallucinations and illusions of *touch*, *taste*, and *smell* are generally complicated with those of the other senses.

In the insane it is often difficult to say where hallucination ends and illusion begins, and *vice versa*.



I well remember a lady who was under my care some years ago, and whom, both I and other medical men considered to be suffering from hallucinations of hearing. One day I quite accidentally discovered that her auditory sense was most abnormally acute. She heard quite distinctly what I said in the softest whisper some 35 feet away. I further tested her hearing, and soon found that what had been considered hallucination was in reality illusion; that is to say, there was always an objective reality in what she heard, though her imagination perverted the sound. The case at once assumed a more hopeful aspect, and eventually she quite recovered.

Hallucinations  
of Hearing. The hallucinations of hearing in the insane consist of words, most frequently of a derisive, reproachful, jeering, disagreeable, or threatening nature; though occasionally they may be of a different character, leading the patient to a very happy and contented state of mind. The voice or voices follow the poor creatures everywhere, leaving them often no repose.

They come from all directions; they may be loud and piercing, obliging the patient to stop his ears, or like a whisper, silent and internal. A lady I once attended always declared there was some one inside her who whispered to her constantly. As a rule, these voices are most troublesome at night. Sometimes they command the unfortunate sufferer to do certain acts, and though he may know he is doing wrong in obeying their dictates, yet he cannot help himself; he feels compelled to do their bidding.

A man was taken to an asylum in France, some years ago, in consequence of a hallucination of hearing which



had had a deplorable result. A voice suddenly seemed to him to call out, "Kill your wife! kill your wife!" and he instantly shot her dead with a pistol he had in his hand. He was carefully watched, and it was discovered beyond a doubt that he was the victim of insane hallucinations.

A man heard one night an internal voice which said to him, "You must now kill your child." He rose, resisted the terrible thought, and hoped he had succeeded by his strength of will. Not so. Scarcely had two or three minutes elapsed, when again he heard the same voice, saying in a more imperative way than before, "Instantly kill your child!" Arming himself with a hatchet, he gave the poor little thing a death blow. This man was proved to be undoubtedly insane, and it afterwards transpired that for sometime the voice had been continually saying, "It is vain to resist; the boy must die; you must kill him."

As Dr. Maudsley points out, "a madman may be truly said to dream with his eyes open. Like a dreamer, he is governed by the strangest association of ideas, and feels himself irresistibly impelled to do what his reason disapproves and his moral feeling abhors, aghast at himself the while."

The fallacy of the present law concerning the responsibility in mental disease, and making the deciding point the question as to whether or no a man, at the time of committing an act, knew the difference between right and wrong, must be clear to all who give the subject a moment's consideration. Luckily, juries will not allow themselves to be bound down by this hard-and-fast illogical law.



The trial of Duncan for a homicidal attack upon his wife, near Bettys-y-Coed, will be remembered by all. It was proved that the prisoner had for some time suffered from hallucinations of hearing, that he constantly heard a voice which said, "It must be done! it must be done!" In his unsound mind, he reasoned out that this meant that he must destroy his wife, though there is no doubt he was really devoted to her. He said to Dr. Hack Tuke: "I struggled against it till the last minute. I was, and am, very fond of my wife. It was against my feelings. At the last moment, I tried to save her from it. I felt restless and excited, and hardly knew what I was going to do. I was powerless to resist the voice, but I tried to do so. It was separate from myself, in a certain way."

It will be remembered that he at last seized a large stone, and dealt his poor wife a terrible blow, fracturing the skull and rendering her unconscious. From a review of this interesting case, in the *Journal of Mental Science*, I quote the following, as it has a definite bearing upon the question of mental responsibility:

"An extremely important feature of this trial was the admirable summing-up of the Judge (Lawrence). He, fortunately and justly, did not content himself with the insufficient test of responsibility; namely, the knowledge of right and wrong; but he added, as an alternative one: Was the prisoner unable to control his action, in consequence of a disordered mind? There can be no doubt that had he laid down the law in the rigid manner which some judges consider themselves bound to adopt, it would have been exceedingly difficult



for the jury to have found Duncan irresponsible when he committed the assault. Unquestionably he knew the difference between right and wrong, and knew that murder was a crime punishable by law. From a medical point of view, it may well be argued that, so far as he felt himself unable any longer to continue the struggle, he could not consider that an act committed against his will was wrong in him at that time. But, while this position may be taken, it is hardly to be supposed that a judge would so interpret the legal test, or that a jury would easily follow this mode of reasoning. That justice has been done, no mental expert is likely to call in question. This, however, is not due to the satisfactory state of the law, but in spite of it; it is really due to a judge having the good sense to charge the jury in accordance with mental science; in fact, on lines other than those of law."

I trust my readers will pardon my turning away from my subject to this question of Responsibility; but I feel so strongly upon this point that my pen runs away with me.

That hallucinations of hearing have driven many a poor creature to commit suicide, is beyond the question of doubt.

A case mentioned by Dr. Hammond of an extraordinary hallucination of hearing, which ultimately caused the poor lady to make some desperate attempts to commit suicide, is well worthy of a place here.

She usually heard the voice as if a man was speaking and addressing an audience, but often it was only a whisper, like the low tone of a child. It almost always spoke in poetry, and Dr. Hammond on one occasion



took down from her lips the following, which she said was being "whispered into her ears all the morning":

"Ah me, how sad and drear I feel,  
What withering fancies o'er me steal,  
And load my weary brain!

"I sit and dream from day to day  
Of that fair death for which I pray—  
For which I pray in vain.

"Oh, God of Fate, make sharp thy dart,  
And pierce my aching, breaking heart,  
And set my spirit free.

"My race on earth is nearly run,  
My thread of life is nearly spun,  
Oh, God, I long for Thee."

This lady had the common delusion that she had committed "the unpardonable sin." The poetry was only too evidently the outcome of her morbid imagination, and falsely perceived by her as a voice of someone else speaking at her or for her.

Illusions of hearing have very various origins. Words, noises, songs are all sometimes interpreted by the insane in the most eccentric manner, and these illusions are often the cause of unusual, sudden, and unforeseen acts.

A lady I know misinterprets almost everything that anyone says to her. I have had, on more than one occasion, a severe box on the ear, a jug of water thrown over me, and my head knocked about by a drawing-board, as an answer to a simple question, such as "Well, how are you this morning?" which she, in her insane mind, had misinterpreted into my having said, "Oh, you ugly creature; you are a beast!"



Dr. Hack Tuke mentions the case of a <sup>Hallucinations of Sight.</sup> clergyman in Bethlem Hospital, who describes, in a most graphic manner, how he *sees* sentences addressed to him in *legible type*, as if before his eyes.

Dr. Savage, who at that time was Medical Superintendent of Bethlem, says that, while listening to the patient speaking, one would imagine that he *heard* voices, instead of which he *sees* himself addressed; *e.g.*, "I'll tell you where to go;" "I am delighted with your misery."

Then, if the poor fellow says what an agony he is in, the words at once appear, "Yes, and I'll make you worse;" "I'll make you break your head;" "You must tear up all bibles and tracts." One day when his hat was blown off, he saw the exultant words, "I did it."

The poor man's agony was unceasing, and he could get no natural sleep.

I had a lady once under my care whose hallucinations of sight were not only most vivid, but instead of an isolated figure being seen, she declared she saw whole scenes before her eyes. She would tell us that she saw her husband drowning in a river, and that the people who stood by, instead of saving him, kept pushing him back into the water. Her grief was terrible to see, and nothing for the time being would convince her of the unreality of the vision. Another time she would say that she saw some people cutting up her husband's body, and no one who saw her distress and agitation could help believing in the powerful reality, to her, of the picture of her imagination. Her hallucinations of



hearing were quite as vivid, quite as remarkable. She eventually, however, recovered.

Victor Kadinsky, a physician in Moscow, has given the result of his study of his own mental derangement, having had an attack of insanity which lasted two years. He was during this period affected with hallucinations of all the senses with the exception of that of taste.

“During the period of my illness,” he says, “my dreams were not less lively than what I had experienced in real life; and when the representations and dreams came back to my remembrance, it was only by a slow and difficult process of questioning myself that I could make out whether I had experienced these things in reality or had only dreamt of them. Some of my hallucinations were, in comparison with others, colourless and indistinct; others were vivid and diversified with the bright colours of the real objects of ordinary vision. For a week, I saw on the wall, which was hung with smooth tapestry of one colour, a row of pictures with wonderful golden frames or borders, fresco pictures, landscapes, sea-pieces, sometimes portraits with colours as bright as those of Italian artists. Another time, when I made myself ready to sleep, I saw suddenly before me a statue of middle size, of white marble, in the attitude of a stooping Venus. After some seconds, the head of the statue fell off, leaving the stump of the neck with the red muscles. The head, when it fell, broke in the middle, exposing the brain. The contrast between the white marble and the red blood was especially striking.”

This is indeed a most interesting account, and well



worthy of a place in any psychological work; but what is more important still and of greater and deeper interest, is the fact that Victor Kadinsky wrought out his own cure. He tells us that "Without energetic exertion of the will, my hallucinations would probably have become permanent and my mental powers totally extinguished; but after I had become accustomed to the hallucinations I began steadily to read. At first it was difficult, for the hallucinations of hearing disturbed me, and those of sight stood between the book and the eyes; but in time I succeeded in continuing my reading without paying any heed to the hallucinations. With the beginning of a regular mental activity, the hallucinations became paler and less frequent, and disappeared entirely some months later, after I had begun to work."

These quotations from this most deeply interesting account are taken from an article in the *Journal of Mental Science*.

Dr. Campbell Clark, of the Glasgow District Asylum, Bothwell, wrote a digest, for the same journal, of essays made by his asylum attendants on Hallucinations coming under their observation; and as some of them are very clear and very characteristic, I shall from time to time quote a few of the cases, merely marking them (Dr. C. C.)

A woman who suffered from hallucinations of hearing, sight, taste, sound, and touch, was most troubled by those of the visual organ. She would see her children in the fields wherever she went, and would point them out to those with her; she would see people running after them, and stabbing them with knives; and, as may be imagined, the poor thing got terribly excited and



depressed, wringing her hands in her mental anguish, and weeping with grief. (Dr. C. C.)

Pebbles, leaves, rags, bits of stick, etc.,  
Illusions of Sight. become, in the eyes of the insane, precious stones, rare substances, or even magnificent paintings; dirty bits of newspaper are changed into bank-notes and important documents. Some patients believe they are turned into animals; and they will look in the glass and call attention to the fact that their head is that of a sheep, a calf, a fish, or a bird, while some, again, declare they *see* their bodies and limbs swelling to a prodigious size.

Not long since I took a gentleman who is under my care to the theatre, and in the middle of one of the scenes, he told me he must go out at once, as his nose was growing so tremendously long that it nearly knocked the cap of a lady, who sat in front of him, off her head. "Don't you see how it is growing and growing every minute?" he asked me. Luckily the mere changing our seats, so that he had no one in front of him, pacified him, and he soon forgot his illusion in the interest he took in the play.

As another example of illusion of sight, may be mentioned the case of a woman who was very fond of staring into the fire and seeing, in the burning coals and flames, *witches*. Nothing gave her so much delight as to get hold of anything dry and inflammable. This she would put into the fire, and in the flames arising therefrom she saw her inveterate enemies, "visions and witches, burning." Her face then would have a look of genuine triumph. (Dr. C. C.)

The wonderful reality which hallucinations and



illusions assume in the insane mind, is truly marvellous, and the following case well exemplifies this. 2

A poor lunatic fancied his body increased to such a size, that he dared not attempt to pass through the door of his room. He declared he saw himself that his body was far too large to make it at all possible to go through such an opening. The physician attending him believed that nothing could more effectually cure this error of the imagination, than to show that the thing dreaded could be actually and easily accomplished. He caused the patient to be thrust forcibly through it. The poor fellow, struck with abject horror at the expectant idea, to his mind, of his certain fate, shrieked that he was in agony, that he was being crushed to death, and almost at once expired !

Hallucinations  
and Illusions of  
Touch, Taste,  
and Smell.

A moment's thought will at once prove how difficult it must be to distinguish definitely what is hallucination, and what illusion when any of these senses are affected.

A very slight smell may be converted by false perception into all kinds and varieties of impossible odours ; digestive disturbances giving rise to bad taste may be and often are at the bottom of those illusions of taste which make some patients very difficult to deal with. They believe they are being poisoned and refuse their food. Just the same with the sense of touch. A slight itching will be magnified by the insane mind into all sorts of extraordinary feelings ; the mere touch of an attendant will be exaggerated into blows, severe pinches, and general ill-usage ; though the absence of the slightest marks to bear out such false accusation makes the illusion quickly evident.



Complicated  
Hallucinations  
and Illusions.

A most interesting case is related of a patient in a French asylum who suffered from hallucination and illusion of sight, smell, and taste. For several years he had not spoken a word, and his sole occupation consisted in smelling and licking the walls of his room and the threshold of his door, sometimes for hours together. No one could explain his actions, which in process of time made actual impressions upon the walls. One day the medical superintendent casually asked the attendant what caused the dirty spots and holes in the wall. The patient turned suddenly upon him saying: "Do you call those dirty spots and holes? Do you not see that they are Japan oranges? What delicious fruit, what colours, what odours, what admirable flavour!" Having said this, he set himself to suck and lick with redoubled ardour. There was no doubt he obtained very great enjoyment from these sense deceptions.

One might go on giving instances of the sense deception in the insane and fill many a volume with them; but I have given quite sufficient for the purpose of this book, and for the general inference which I wish you to draw from them. Naturally, it is the portion of the book which I should delight to give much time and space to, but as it would not further the object of the work, and as the number of my pages is limited, I must, though reluctantly, make this a short chapter.



## CHAPTER X.

Hallucination and Illusion caused by either a direct or indirect Poisoned Blood supply circulating through the Brain, as in Delirium of Alcohol, of Narcotics and other Poisons, and in Delirium of various Fevers, Diseases, etc.

*Belladonna—Indian Hemp—Opium.*

WITH regard to examples of this class of sense deception I shall not have much to say. All, I am sure, can well understand the *rationale* of the effect of poisoned blood on our higher mental centres.

Look at the man who, having dined "not wisely but too well," walks with awkward gait towards his house. See him embracing maybe the nearest lamp-post as a dear old friend, and taking off his hat to the pillar post-box as a chance acquaintance. Watch him as he proceeds to place his boots outside the front-door, and fancy him going to sleep on the hall door-mat! His powers of perception are poisoned—his reason and judgment are drunk.

To describe the ghastly scenes witnessed at the bedside of a sufferer from *delirium tremens*, would serve no purpose; suffice it that the hallucinations and illusions seem always to inspire great terror—animals, of all varieties, kinds, and sizes, being the most frequent



form of visual sense deception. Illusions of sound are, as a rule, more an exaggeration of something heard than anything else, and as Dr. Norman Kerr, in his book on *Inebriety*, points out "ordinary tones of the voice sound like the thunder of a giant, the tread of a cat like the tread of an elephant."

The visions which appear before the eyes of the sufferer from fevers of various kinds are well known to all who have had to watch by the bedside of a fever-stricken patient, and need not be especially enlarged upon. The mere fact to be noted is, that a poisoned blood-supply from fever or from other illnesses does give rise to deception of the senses, but more especially of the sense of sight; and that to the person so deceived they seem, for the time being, as real as any true objects before them.

With regard to the poison of definite medicines, history tells us how in ages past the priests, with the knowledge of the peculiar power of certain vegetable productions to give rise to visions, etc., applied that knowledge to impose upon the credulity of the people.

The ancient Egyptians, maintaining that, besides gods, there were many demons which communicated with mortals, often invoked these by the aid of the drugs which they well knew, would so poison the brain that hallucinations would be the certain result, and these they interpreted as they desired.

Belladonna. Dr. Maudsley, from whose writings I have so often quoted, says: "The experimental physiologist has no difficulty in demonstrating the physical causation of hallucinations, since he can easily produce them artificially, by suitable vitiation of the



blood. For example, if anyone has a poisonous dose of *belladonna* administered to him, he falls into a state of unquiet and busy delirium, in which he sees before him unreal persons to whom he chatters, and unreal objects at which he stares and grasps, and is restlessly engaged in unreal transactions. All these juggles of the brain disappearing, and he returning to his right senses, when the poison, which has circulated in it and deranged its functions, has been removed from the body by excretion. He had not the least doubt of the objective reality of the imaginary objects, so long as he was under their influence; he had not the least doubt of their entirely imaginary nature, so soon as he had recovered from its poisonous effects. The tainted thought betrayed the tainted blood."\*

Indian Hemp.

This drug is known to possess the wonderful power of awakening in the mind a train of phenomena of the most extraordinary character, entrancing the senses in delicious reveries, and raising the feelings to joys beyond those of this world. When this medicine first came into notice, the opium-eaters declared that their favourite enjoyment possessed little power in comparison to it. But after all, it has never been able to hold its position as a producer of hallucination with opium, the marvellous effects of which De Quincey has immortalised in his Confessions.

Opium.

No habit has ever grown so fast, has ever flourished for so long, as that of opium-eating and opium-smoking. The dreaming world of opium has made the sensualist drown his ennui, the scholar sharpen his wits, the starving peasant forget his realities

\* *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings.* H. Maudsley.



—but, what a pernicious luxury it is! what a degrading vice!

The regular opium eater seldom lives beyond thirty; all appetite for food is lost, strength is gradually wasted, and as the craving for the vivid excitement of opium increases, the poor victim is hurried to his grave. Let us catch a glimpse of him as in Constantinople: "He comes in the morning to a large coffee-house, a well-known resort for this purpose, close to the superb mosque of Suleimanieh. Having swallowed his pill, he seats himself in the portico in front, which is shaded by trees. He has no wish to change his position, for motion would disturb his happiness, which he will tell you is indescribable. Then the most wild and blissful reveries come crowding on him. His gaze is fixed on the river beneath, covered with the sails of every nation; on the majestic shores of Asia opposite, or vacantly raised where the gilded minarets of Suleimanieh ascend on high; if external objects heighten, as is allowed, the illusions of opium, the Turk is privileged. There, till the sun sets on the scene, the Theriakkee revels in love, in splendour, or pride. He sees the beauties of Circassia striving whose charms shall most delight him; the Ottoman fleet sails beneath his flag as the Captain Pacha; or seated in the divan, turbaned heads are bowed before him, and voices hail the favoured of Alla and the Sultan. But evening comes, and he awakes to a sense of wretchedness and helplessness, and hurries home to suffer till the morning sun calls him 'to be in paradise again.'"

Mr. Madden years ago, when travelling in Turkey,

*\* New Monthly Magazine, 1824.*



determined to experience the effect of this pestilent practice, and his description is very striking, and well worthy of quotation: "I commenced with one grain. In the course of an hour and a-half it produced no perceptible effect, and the coffee-house keeper was very anxious to give me an additional pill of two grains, but I was contented with half a one; and after another half-hour, feeling nothing of the expected reverie, I took half a grain more, making in all two grains in the course of two hours. After two hours and a-half from the first dose, I took two grains more; and shortly after this dose, my spirits became sensibly excited; the pleasure of the sensation seemed to depend on an universal expansion of mind and matter. My faculties appeared enlarged; everything I looked at seemed increased in volume. I had no longer the same pleasure when I closed my eyes which I had when they were open; it appeared to me as if it were only external objects, which were acted on by the imagination, and magnified into images of pleasure; in short, it was the faint exquisite music of a dream in a waking moment. I made my way home as fast as possible, dreading, at every step, that I should commit some extravagance. In walking I was hardly sensible of my feet touching the ground; it seemed as if I slid along the street, impelled by some invisible agent, and that my blood was composed of some ethereal fluid, which rendered my body lighter than air. I got to bed the moment I reached home. The most extraordinary visions of delight filled my brain all night. In the morning I rose, pale and dispirited; my head ached, my body was so debilitated that I was obliged to remain on the sofa



all the day, dearly paying for my first essay at opium eating."

No one, however, has given to literature such a marvellous and graphic account of the effect of this terrible habit as De Quincey, and I must, in concluding this chapter, quote from his immortal work, as bearing especially upon the subject of this book :

"When under the influence of opium, the minutest incidents of my childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them ; for if I had been *told* of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as part of my past experience. But placed as they were before me in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all the evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I recognised them instantly. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as intimate forgetting—traces well impressed upon the memory are indestructible ; a *thousand accidents* may, and will, interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions of the mind, but *accidents* of the same sort will rend away the veil ; for, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever—just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and they are waiting to be revealed whenever the obscuring daylight itself shall have withdrawn."



## CHAPTER XI.

## Conclusion.

A RECAPITULATION of the reasonings which I have brought forward to prove that to natural causes must we rightly look for all supernatural seemings, may be useful, though I hope all who have read what has been written, will have been able to clearly follow out the arguments which I have used to prove my point.

We have seen how ideas are formed and built up in our mind through our organs of sense; we have seen how they are stored up, and duly tabulated in our memory; and how from certain causes the recollection of these ideas may be so vivid as to cause a re-presentation, which for the moment may, to the soundest mind, appear as an objective reality. (*Hallucination.*)

We have again seen that our senses may, by false perception, be deceived into believing some real object to be something quite different to what it really is. (*Illusion.*)

Mr. Maskelyne has explained how deception, fraud, and trickery will so illude our senses that even the most intellectual men have been led to believe in the reality of what has been only a very ordinary conjuring trick, and have been so convinced that what they saw was so wonderful, so unexplainable by natural reasoning, that they have taken up their cudgels in defence of



such *frauds* as spiritualistic séances and Mahatma miracles.

We have traced out the causes of dreams, and as far as possible explained their origin, and have given the reasons against believing in their divine inspiration or their prophetic significance.

We have seen how the belief in ghosts originated, and have tried to follow out the reasons against the truth of their objective existence.

We have looked at the telepathic theory of thought transference being the cause of many phantasms of the living, as being too far-fetched, too fanciful, to be seriously thought of, as an explanation of many seemingly supernatural appearances; and we have felt compelled to take the far more rational and probable cause of coincidental association of ideas resulting in hallucination.

Lastly, but surely far more important of all, we have noted how the deceptions of the senses which affect the minds of those whose mental state is admittedly unsound, are so real to them that their very conduct is often wholly and solely guided by their influence. We have even gone further than this, and have had our attention drawn to the well-known fact that a poisoned blood-supply circulating through the brain will produce the most extraordinary visions and scenes.

With all this knowledge clearly before us, let us, then, ask ourselves the simple question :

Why should we fly to the spirit world, why should we hug mysticism to our bosom, and, revelling in its degrading influence, ascribe to something supernatural what can so well be explained as the result of natural causation ?



To no ghost-seer, to no lover of Spiritualism, to no Swendenborgian, and, lastly, to no Mahatma-believing Theosophist were ever voices and visions more real, more capable of affecting the emotions, and of causing real grief or abject terror, than those produced by a poisoned or an unsound brain. Yet we admit that all such visions are purely subjective, that they have no objective basis whatever.

Why, then, is it that in all ages there have been large numbers of persons who are apparently so oblivious of these facts, and who feel compelled to beliefs which do much to minimise that very necessary knowledge of the stern realities of life ?

Maudsley very wisely ascribes the reasons of this leaning to the supernatural to two great causes: 1stly, natural defects and errors of observation and reasoning ; 2ndly, the activity of our imagination.

With regard to the first, there can be no doubt that the erroneous reasoning of any ultra-religious enthusiast must prevent a true conception of natural causes. Such a mind would welcome the slightest out of the common experience as the result of something far above the power of Nature, something which must have some distinctly mysterious significance.

The faulty and weak reasoning of the ignorant, uneducated, and superstitious folk must, of course, be answerable for their implicit belief in ghosts, vampires, dream prophecy, and all kinds of evil omens.

Bacon, in all his philosophy, never said anything so true as that " we love better to believe, than to examine." It is this want of thinking out causation that leads so many of us astray. It is also our faulty observation



that prevents the accumulation of those facts which would help our reason and our judgment to unravel what to the unthinking mind seems at once supernatural.

Add to this faulty observation, a bias towards, if not an actual love of, all that is marvellous; add again, the wonderful activity of our imagination, and we still further see proofs of the statement that, as in ages past, so now in this our present day must there be found persons, judged to be in their right minds, who delight in mysticism, and are only too ready to believe in the reality of ghosts, in the power of the spiritualistic medium and the crystal mirror, or in the marvellous influence of mind over matter possessed by the Mahatma in far Thibet.

Let me ask such an one to carefully weigh the facts which have been brought forward in this little book, to calmly work out the way in which all our senses may be deceived, and to attempt to realise the effect these deceptions have on the insane mind, with its faulty, unsound reasoning and inability rightly to judge; and then to ask himself this very serious question:

Why should I then, metaphorically speaking, allow my common sense to rush headlong into inevitable bankruptcy by drawing bills on the *Supernatural*, when I can obtain ready cash wherewith to fight the battle of life from the accommodating bank of *Natural Causation*?



*AN ADDENDUM  
TO THE CHAPTER ON THEOSOPHY.*

SINCE penning the chapter on Theosophy, with which presumably the reader has already made himself acquainted, and, indeed, since the whole has been given into the printer's hands, certain circumstances have arisen which render it necessary on my part to accord a slight explanation of what might otherwise—in the eyes at least of one person, if not more—appear to be the violation of a promise which I have distinctly made. In all my dealings I have consistently endeavoured to act in a manner which shall at once be straightforward and beyond cavil; therefore I feel bound, in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, to put into the hands of such as may happen to read this work—be they Theosophists or otherwise—the following outlines of a correspondence in which I have taken part, and the matters which gave rise to it.

Recently I had occasion to allude publicly to the doings of the late Madame Blavatsky; and of course, holding opinions concerning her such as I have expressed in the chapter above mentioned, it is obvious that my remarks could not possibly assume a very complimentary form.

This drew from a gentleman holding a high position



in the Theosophical Society a letter, couched in extremely courteous and complimentary terms, protesting against my remarks as unfair, on the ground that, Madame Blavatsky being dead, the talking consequently must be all on my side. He also urged that she was his friend in a very real sense; thus her memory was dear to him, and anything spoken to her disadvantage was calculated to give him, and others also, unnecessary pain. Further, he expressed the opinion that such remarks were derogatory to the position I had maintained throughout my career, and begged me to avoid in future all reference to the lady in question.

To this I replied that I regretted that my remarks should have given him pain; but pointed out the fact that, in speaking as I did, I was only pursuing the policy I had always adopted, and of which apparently he approved. I also said that the fact of Madame Blavatsky being dead was beside the issue. He opined that she was his friend, so he was right to uphold her. I conceived her to have been a public enemy, and thus, dead or alive, her works must be combated. I pointed out that in battling with these occult propaganda, it had always been my misfortune to be compelled to run counter to the opinions of some estimable people; still, past experience had fully justified the attitude I had ever maintained.

In answer to this, I received a communication thanking me for my letter; and whilst admitting that I have a perfect right to put any interpretation upon the life and works of Madame B. I may believe to be true, still maintaining that, until I had interviewed eye-



witnesses of the phenomena, my presentation of the facts could not be considered as impartial. It complained that my opinions were based upon the "one-man report" of the P.R.S., and offered me the opportunity of interviewing witnesses of the phenomena and of perusing the published reports. The writer declared that Madame B. had never claimed occult powers, and in all her works was never actuated by the desire for either wealth, fame, or power. He also touched upon Mrs. Besant's well-known integrity, and the sincerity of her belief in Madame B. and her works; and said that the success attending the Theosophical Society had been due to its teaching of pure Ethics and Philosophy. It was the outside world, not the Theosophists, who thought so much about miracles.

In reply to this, I wrote that, had I the necessary leisure, nothing would interest me more than to interview witnesses as he suggested; but still I failed to see how any such evidence could prove conclusive. Being so well acquainted with the possibilities of deception in a case of this kind, the evidence of those who *have* discovered trickery is to me a million times more conclusive than the evidence of those who have not. I suggested a far more simple and satisfactory method of investigation; viz., to provide a little test, simplicity itself judged by the supposed powers of the Mahatmas, yet something which would prove to the world their existence, their powers, and, above all, the honesty of the late Madame Blavatsky. I further promised that, were my test carried out successfully, I would, as far as possible, devote my future to the task of clearing the memory of Madame B., and of repairing the injury I



had done her by what I had said and written. I said it was useless for Theosophists to profess that no importance was to be attached to the miracles. They were the life-blood and backbone of modern Theosophy; indeed, they had been its very foundation. They were either true or false. If true, the fact could be easily established. If they could not be proven, I advised that they should be dropped entirely, and then the Theosophical Ethics and Philosophy would receive nothing but respect from all right-minded persons. I assured my correspondent that he was in error in supposing that my opinion was based solely upon Mr. Hodgson's report; it was the result of many considerations. With regard to Mrs. Besant, I said that I feared, when she declared Madame B. had the power to create diamond rings, that dabbling in this occultism had weakened her understanding, and warned her to remember the fate of Robert Dale Owen and others. I expressed the belief that some of Madame B.'s original accomplices were still working the miracle swindle. In conclusion, I promised that, in consideration for what I believed to be Theosophists' blind sincerity and love for Madame B., I would endeavour to avoid all mention of her name.

Following this, I received a third communication, thanking me for the consideration I had expressed for the feelings of others; and though admitting that the evidence of witnesses of the phenomena could not be so conclusive as experimental proof, the writer held it to be quite as valuable as that contained in Mr. Hodgson's report. He declared his inability to constrain the attention of the Mahatmas to my demand for



a test, and stated that no one of them would go "half-an-inch out of his way to convince the greatest man in the world either of his existence or powers." He emphatically denied that anyone was concerned in deceiving Mrs. Besant; the conditions under which the phenomena had occurred precluding any such possibility. Concluding, he said that it was upon the teachings of the Society that they took their stand, and "no amount of occult phenomena could add to or detract from their ethical and philosophical value."

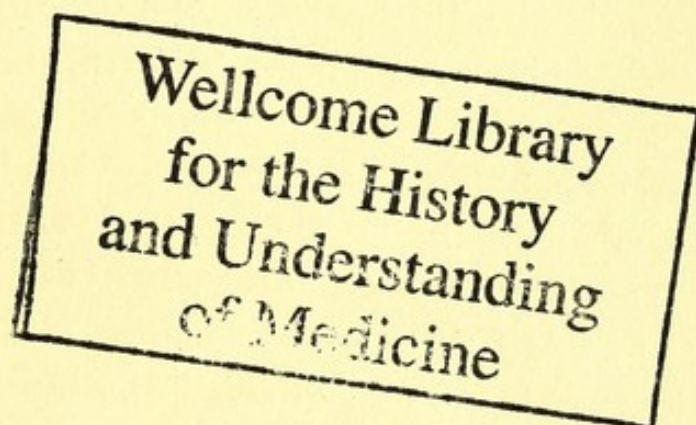
In my letter replying to this, I said that I regretted, for his sake, that the Mahatmas refused to stir a finger to help him in his task of clearing the memory of Madame B., and asked if he did not think it unfair that, a few years ago, they did not object to precipitating a cigarette or repairing a china saucer in order to make wealthy converts, and now, when the trustworthiness of their own emissary is at stake, and when they have so ample an opportunity of proving their superior attainments and of bringing the world to their feet, they refuse to submit to a simple test which would be mere child's play to them. I averred that I was not so presumptuous as to desire a little miracle all to myself; but would so arrange the test that a number of the most eminent men living should be convinced. This would do more for the cause than thousands of lectures, tons of literature, and years of labour. Therefore I urged him to try and get the Mahatmas to reconsider their decision. Finally, I pointed out that during the palmy days of Spiritualism I frequently endeavoured to persuade the spirits to submit to similar tests, but they were always offended the moment a test was pre-



pared which rendered trickery impossible. Thus, if the Mahatmas followed this unwise course, I must be excused for remaining a hard-headed unbeliever.

This was the close of the correspondence, the above *resumé* of which will serve to show my present position with regard to Theosophy, and the need I have to offer an explanation with regard to my chapter dealing with it; at the same time assuring my Theosophical friends that, although I cannot recall what I had written previously, I am not unmindful of the undertaking I have given. It will also show the general public, who might otherwise wonder at my sudden reticence, the reasons I have for avoiding, as far as possible, all future reference to Madame Blavatsky and her works; unless, indeed, it should ever happen that I find myself conscientiously able to speak on her behalf.

J. N. MASKELYNE.





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