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PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

BY

W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

PROFESSOR OF EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS IN THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE FOR IRELAND, 1873–1910



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PREFACE

To compress into a small volume such as the present an outline of psychical research has proved a more formidable task than I anticipated when the Editors asked me to undertake this work. The problems are so new and entangled and the results so startling that it is very difficult to present them in a brief yet readable and convincing form. A superficial sketch of the subject might have been given, but that seemed hardly worthy of the aim which the Editors have in view. I have therefore endeavoured to give a brief survey in separate chapters of the principal lines of work and of the results so far achieved by the Society for Psychical Research. One of the most difficult tasks was to compress into a chapter or two an intelligible view of the laborious work of the Society during recent years in the investigation of automatic writing and the evidence this may afford for survival of bodily death: a critical inquiry that extends over several bulky volumes of the Society's *Proceedings*. Happily my friend, Miss Jane Barlow, D.Litt., who has made a careful study of this subject and is one of

the Committee of Reference and Publication of the S.P.R., generously came to my aid. Her literary skill is seen in the two last chapters, wherein she has helped me to outline the salient features of this evidence and the general conclusions to which we have been led. I have also to thank Miss Barlow for much other kind assistance in the preparation of this volume. Mrs. H. Sidgwick, D.Litt., Hon. Secretary and a former President of the S.P.R., has also very kindly read the proof sheets and made some valuable suggestions which I have adopted. It must, however, be understood that neither Mrs. Sidgwick nor the Council of the Society for Psychical Research are in any way responsible for the conclusions stated and the opinions expressed in the following pages.

W. F. Barrett.

Kingstown, Co. Dublin,
August 1911

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PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

CHAPTER I

SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION

THE phenomena we are about to discuss in the present volume are characterized by many sceptics as a "recrudescence of superstition" (see *Nature*, vol. 51, p. 122), and on the other hand by many believers as "evidence of the supernatural." The average busy man, who has no time for critical inquiry, probably thinks that there is a good deal of truth in both these statements, and therefore prefers to give the whole subject a wide berth. But the scornful disdain of the *savant* and the credulous belief of the ignorant are now giving way to a more rational attitude of mind. A widespread desire exists to know something about that debatable borderland between the territory already conquered by science and the dark realms of ignorance and superstition; and to learn what trustworthy evidence exists on behalf of a large class of obscure psychical phenomena, the importance of which it is impossible to exaggerate if the

alleged facts be incontestably established. To satisfy that desire, in some slight and imperfect way, is the object of this little book.

The subjects to be considered cover a wide range, *from unconscious muscular action* to the mysterious operation of our subconscious self; from *telepathy* to apparitions at the moment of death; from *hypnotism* and the therapeutic effects of suggestion to crystal-gazing and the emergence of hidden human faculties; from *clairvoyance*, or the alleged perception of objects without the use of the ordinary channels of sense, to *dowsing*, or the finding of underground water and metallic lodes with the so-called divining rod; from the reputed *hauntings* of certain places to the mischievous pranks of *poltergeists* (or boisterous but harmless ghosts whose asserted freaks may have given rise both to fetishism and fairies); from the *inexplicable sounds* and movement of objects without assignable cause to the thaumaturgy of the spiritualistic séance; from the scribbling of *planchette and automatic writing* generally to the alleged operation of unseen and intelligent agents and the possibility of experimental evidence of human survival after death.

These phenomena, even if only a fraction of what is asserted by credible witnesses be true, open a new and vastly important chapter in the book of human knowledge. If established, they reveal a wide and wonderful extension of human faculty, and give us a glimpse of the abysses of human personality, of depths

that transcend time and sense and outward things, teaching us that "nature is not a soulless interaction of atoms, nor life a paltry misery closed in the grave."

But here we are met, on the one side, with the objection of many religious people, that these phenomena belong to the region of the *supernatural*, and therefore their investigation is a hopeless, if it be not an impious, quest; and on the other side with the complacent contempt of the superior person, who dismisses the whole matter with a shrug as pure superstition. Therefore, before discussing the evidence on behalf of these obscure phenomena, let us ask if there be any valid reason for describing them as either supernatural or superstitious.

In the childhood of the race every rare or inexplicable event, whether in the heavens or on the earth, was regarded as supernatural. Eclipses, comets, meteorites, and other unusual meteorological phenomena, were a supernatural portent or the direct interposition of the Deity. But the progress of knowledge has shown that these and all other phenomena —however mysterious and at present inexplicable they may be—are part of the order of nature, are natural and not supernatural. Even a couple of centuries ago, many of the marvels of modern scientific discovery would have been classed as supernatural. To know what was happening less than an hour ago at the Antipodes, or to listen to the voice of, and interchange conversation with, friends in

different countries—the commonplace of the telegraph and telephone to-day—not to mention the transmission of wireless messages across the Atlantic and the instantaneous photographic record and reproduction of rapidly moving objects, all these would have been thought impossible or miraculous.

The religious mind is ever apt to forget what Bishop Butler pointed out in the first chapter of his *Analogy*, that our notion of what is natural grows with our greater knowledge, so that to beings of more extensive knowledge than ourselves "the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us." Miracles, as most theologians, from St. Augustine onwards, have said, do not happen in *contradiction* to nature, they are not supernatural events, but only transcend what is at present known to us of nature. We cannot pretend to determine the boundary between the natural and the supernatural until the whole of nature is open to our knowledge. If at any point scientific investigation finds a limit, what is beyond is only a part of nature yet unknown. So that, however marvellous and inexplicable certain phenomena may be, we feel assured that sooner or later they will receive their explanation, and be embraced within some part of the wide domain of science.

Nor can we restrict these considerations to the visible universe. The vast procession of phenomena that constitute the order of nature

do not come to an abrupt conclusion when they can no longer be apprehended by our present organs of sense. Science already takes cognizance of the imperceptible, imponderable, and infinitely rare luminiferous ether, an unseen form of matter wholly different from anything known to our senses, the very existence of which indeed is only known inferentially. As an eminent scientific writer has said: "In earlier times the suggestion of such a medium would probably have been looked upon as strong evidence of insanity." The law of continuity leads us to believe that whatever unknown and perplexing phenomena may confront us, in the seen or in the unseen universe, in this world or in any other, we shall never reach the limit of the natural, and never be put to intellectual confusion by the discovery of a *chaos* instead of a *cosmos*. At the centre and throughout every part of this ever expanding and limitless sphere of nature, there remains—enshrouded from the gaze of science—the Ineffable and Supreme Thought which alone can be termed Supernatural. For the very term phenomenon, which is only the Greek word for appearance, means something brought within the cognizance of the senses and of the reason, thereby it ceases to be supernatural and becomes another aspect of the creative thought of God. Hence the supernatural can never be a matter of observation or scientific inquiry; the Divine Being alone can transcend His handiwork.

To talk, therefore, of apparitions and

spiritualistic phenomena, etc., as supernatural is obviously incorrect. Even if established they would not lie beyond nor outside nature, but merely beyond our ordinary normal experience. They are, in fine, *supernormal* phenomena, and that word, first suggested by Mr. F. W. H. Myers, will be used throughout this book to denote the objects of psychical research.

Then arises the question, is it worth while to spend time on subjects which the scientific world has until lately regarded as relics of superstition, and which are still so regarded by many? It is true that there is now a growing and marked change of opinion in this respect among many of the foremost men of science in every civilized country. But official science as a body still looks askance at psychical research and speaks of its adherents as more or less credulous and superstitious. What is meant by superstition? Etymologically it means the standing over an occurrence, in amazement or awe; shutting out the light of inquiry and reason. Where this light enters a mystery is no longer enshrouded by helplessly standing over it, but we begin to understand it. Superstition is, therefore, the antithesis of understanding, and of that faith in the intelligibility of nature which forms the foundation of science and the hope of all intellectual progress.

In a lecture on Science and Superstition which the writer heard the Rev. Charles Kingsley deliver at the Royal Institution in

London in 1866, and which was published in *Fraser's Magazine* for June and July, 1866, superstition was defined as "fear of the unknown." This is the frequent accompaniment of superstition, but the ancient Greek, "who believed that every tree or stream or glen had its nymph, whose kindly office men might secure by paying them certain honours," was a superstitious man, though he did not in this case exhibit fear of the unknown. Superstition may be more accurately defined as a *belief not in accordance with facts, where no connection exists between the cause ascribed and the effect imagined, and issues in superstitious practices when such a belief is regarded as affording help or injury.* Some trivial occurrence may once have been followed by disaster, and forthwith it becomes an omen! Thus a chance coincidence is to the superstitious a law of nature. Not only amid the culture of ancient Greece and Rome, but right down the ages to the present time, we find this irrational habit of mind. Nor is it confined to the credulous and the ignorant. Voltaire went home out of humour when he heard a raven croak on his left. Many gallant officers and clever women dread to sit down thirteen to dinner, just as the peasant dreads to hear the screech owl. Omens and portents are still as rife throughout India as in ancient Rome. Superstition is the arrest of reason and inquiry, an ignoble and groundless belief. But in every case where science comes in at the door superstition flies out of the window. And so

to-day if we wish to rid ourselves of the many silly and mischievous superstitions which abound in our midst, we must bring to bear upon them the "dry and clear light" of science.

How, then, can the scientific investigation of psychical phenomena be regarded as superstitious folly? Difference of opinion may exist as to the interpretation of the phenomena or as to the weight of evidence required to establish a definite conclusion. But no one disputes the need of inquiry, nor that numerous painstaking and competent investigators have been convinced of the genuineness of many of the phenomena we shall describe and the vast importance of the issues they foreshadow. This being so, the charge of superstition rests upon those whose scornful and irrational habit of mind leads them to a belief not in accordance with facts, and to a practice of rejecting the weightiest evidence and accepting the flimsiest—just as it suits their preconceived notions of the possible and the impossible. These are the superstitious.

There remains a more common form of disbelief in psychical phenomena, based upon the fact that they have not been witnessed by the objector and cannot be reproduced at will to convince him. Neither have many of us witnessed the fall of meteoric stones to the earth, yet we believe in their existence in spite of the impossibility of their reproduction at our pleasure. The reason why we believe is, of course, the testimony of many trustworthy

witnesses to whom we have given attention. In fact there are some phenomena in physical science which are as rare, elusive and inexplicable as those in psychical research. That strange phenomenon, to which the name of fire-ball or globe lightning has been given, is an example. "As we have hitherto been unable to reproduce a fire-ball by our most powerful electrical machines, some philosophers have denied that any such thing can exist! But as Arago says: 'Where should we be if we set ourselves to deny everything we do not know how to explain?' The amount of trustworthy and independent evidence which we possess as to the occurrence of this phenomenon is *such as must convince every reasonable man who chooses to pay due attention to the subject.* No doubt there is a great deal of exaggeration, as well as much imperfect and erroneous observation, in almost all these records. But the existence of the main feature (the fire-ball) seems to be proved beyond all doubt." These are the words of that eminent and genuine scientific man, the late Professor Tait, and the words I have italicized are equally true of the principal phenomena of psychical research. There has been, no doubt, much "exaggeration and erroneous observation" in connection with this subject, but this can also be said of the early stages of other new and striking additions to our knowledge.

The fact is, our reason leads us to be instinctively hostile to the reception of any

evidence which cannot be readily fitted into the structure of existing knowledge. We are all apt to overlook the difference between evidence which involves only a wide *extension* of our knowledge and evidence which involves a flat *contradiction* of well-established laws, such as the law of the conservation of energy. If telepathy, clairvoyance or even the existence of discarnate personalities be experimentally established, a vast extension, but surely no contradiction, of our present knowledge would be involved. Moreover, an entirely new discovery, such, for example, as the properties of radium, could never be accepted if, adopting Hume's argument against miracles, we refused to credit it on account of our previous experience having been uniformly opposed to it.

Perhaps, however, the chief obstacle to the general recognition of psychical phenomena is to be found in our disinclination to accept in this region, the experience and testimony of other observers, however eminent and competent they may be. The splendid and startling discoveries made by Sir W. Crookes in physical science were universally received with respect and belief, but his equally careful investigation of psychical phenomena were dismissed by most scientific men as unworthy of serious attention. It is true the former were more, and the latter less, accessible to experimental verification; but one would have thought that at least suspense of judgment, awaiting confirmatory evidence, and not

scornful contempt, would have been a truer scientific attitude.

Certainly the treatment of hypnotism and of its courageous pioneers by the medical profession, down to a comparatively recent period, is a warning of the grotesque follies into which science may fall when it rests its opposition to any new departure not upon evidence, but upon prejudice and negation. Unfortunately, science has been too often the friend of systematic negation. Facts, as the late Professor W. James has remarked, "are denied until a welcome interpretation is offered, then they are admitted readily enough." No one is omniscient, and of late we have had to accept so many things once deemed impossible that we ought by this time to have learnt the axiom of that distinguished philosopher, Sir John Herschel, who tells us "the natural philosopher should believe all things not improbable, hope all things not impossible."

CHAPTER II

UNCONSCIOUS MUSCULAR ACTION
THE PENDULE EXPLORATEUR—AUTOSCOPES

From time to time there comes into vogue, not only in England, but in widely distant countries, an amusing but mysterious game known as the "magic pendulum," or in France as the *pendule explorateur*. It consists of a finger ring or little ball suspended from a thread which is held between the fingers. It is held as steadily as possible, nevertheless the ring soon begins to oscillate, swinging to and fro like a pendulum, in spite of the effort of the holder to control it. If the holder clasps with his free hand a person sitting by his side, the direction of the oscillation may change towards that person. Or, when requested so to do, it may set up a rotatory motion, either in the direction of, or opposed to, the hands of a watch, according as the holder is touched by a lady or a gentleman. If the ring be suspended within a tumbler it will usually strike the hour of the day when so requested. If the letters of the alphabet widely spaced be arranged in a circle and the ring suspended over the centre, it will frequently

spell out answers to questions addressed to it by oscillating towards successive letters. The holder of the ring, in order to keep his hand steady, may rest his elbow on the table, passing the thread from which the ring is suspended over the ball of his thumb; a pendulum about nine inches long is thus formed and not the least motion of the holder's hand is discernible. It will be found that with certain people of either sex the motions of the pendulum are vigorous and respond to any question, but with other persons the pendulum is sluggish or inert. No apparent reason can be assigned for this difference, for sensitives are often found among the most sceptical.

What is the explanation of this mysterious pendulum? Simply this, the person who holds the suspended ring is unintentionally and unconsciously the source of its motion. Through the imperceptible and uncontrollable tremors of his hand or arm the ring or ball begins to vibrate, and the mode of the vibration will correspond to his intention. The curious thing, however, is that the sensitive cannot, by any intentional voluntary act, make the ring carry out his wishes, except in the clumsiest manner and with obvious movements of his hand or arm. But he is able to do involuntarily and unconsciously what he cannot perform voluntarily. That his own muscles are really responsible for the mysterious motions of the *pendule*, is seen by suspending the thread and ring from a rigid support,

such as a gas bracket. However strongly the company may now will the ring to move, it will remain absolutely motionless, except for currents of air, which may be prevented by letting the ring depend inside a glass.

In fact, we have in this present-day pastime a convincing illustration of what has been termed "motor-automatism," that is to say, muscular actions performed without the concurrence of conscious thought and will. We all know that our life depends on the automatic action of the heart, lungs and digestive system, which go on involuntarily and unconsciously. In the oscillation of the *pendule* we have the automatic actions of muscles, usually under the control of our conscious thought and will, unexpectedly responding to the unconscious, or barely conscious, wish of the holder of the thread. An interesting illustration of this was recently given by Professor Hyslop in America, who used a sort of plumb-bob suspended by a chain. Holding the latter between his finger and thumb and resting his wrist on a fixed support, he found the ball promptly oscillated, or rotated in any direction, when he mentally wished it to do so, even when he closed his eyes. Yet he tells us he was absolutely unconscious of giving any motion whatever to the ball and could not detect the least muscular movement of his hand. Even coherent messages may be spelt out by the pendulum without the intention and to the great amazement of the sensitive whom we may now call the *Automatist*. How

these involuntary and intelligent muscular tremors come about we can only surmise. A theory which accords with these and other mysterious automatic phenomena is that our conscious self has a subconscious or subliminal self associated with it, a sleeping partner as it were, that only speaks through these automatic actions.

With that sleeping partner in our personality we are not concerned at present, but only with the mode in which it reveals itself. The *pendule explorateur* is not the only way, but it is perhaps the oldest way of doing this of which we have any historical record. For it goes back to the augurs of ancient Rome, who sometimes used a sort of magnified *pendule*. The augur stood in the centre of a circle, round which were arranged the letters of the alphabet, and holding in his hand a string from which an iron ring depended, he asked the gods for an answer to the question addressed him. Whereupon the ring began to oscillate first to one letter and then to another and the message was spelt out. It is said that one of the later Roman emperors thus obtained from the augurs the name of his probable successor, who was thereupon promptly put to death.

Coming down through the Middle Ages to the present time we find an amusing periodic revival of the magic pendulum. Each period believes it to be a wonderful novelty, just discovered, and that its motions are due to an occult force of surpassing interest and mystery.

The British Museum has a rich collection of continental and English books, going back some centuries, devoted to the investigation and wonders of the *pendule explorateur*. Italian, German, French and English writers, many of them of considerable learning, tell us of its mysterious movements and its scientific value. Even in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of London for 1736, a paper was published on the remarkable orbital motions of a little ball suspended by a thread held in the hand. Mr. Grey, who made these experiments, was a famous man, a pioneer in electrical investigation and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He fully believed that from these experiments would arise a new theory to account for the planetary motions; for he found that the little suspended ball always moved in the same direction as the planets moved round the sun. He acknowledged, however, that "he had not found the experiment succeed if the thread was supported by anything but a human hand." Dr. Mortimer, the then Secretary of the Royal Society, repeated Grey's experiments with success and hoped much from them, but Priestley tells us in his *Electricity* (published in 1775, p. 60) that a contemporary *savant*, Mr. Wheeler, after long-continued trials came to the conclusion that the unconscious desire to produce the motion from west to east was the true explanation, though he was not sensible of giving any motion to his hand.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the German philosopher, Ritter, thought he had discovered a new force—Siderism, he called it. This, however, turned out to be only unconscious muscular tremors given to a suspended ball or other object lightly held. Some years later Mrs. De Morgan in her *Reminiscences* (p. 216) describes how interested Lady Byron and other notable people were in the wonderful gyrations of the little pendulum, believing it to be " the birth of a new science." Even within the last year an able journalist tells the public of a " new invention " whereby the sex of eggs can be discovered by the mode of oscillation of the magic pendulum ! Nor is the widespread illusion of the wonderful gifts of the oscillatory ring confined to the civilized world, as among the Karens a ring suspended by a thread over a metal basin is used to indicate the one dearest to some deceased person.

In some parts of France and America a watch, or a ball, depending from a chain or fine wire, is carried about by certain persons who profess to locate underground ores or springs by its oscillation. The usual method, however, employed by the " diviner " to discover underground ore or water, is by means of a forked twig, the two ends of the fork being grasped one in each hand. Here we have another means of indicating slight involuntary muscular movement, for the twig is held in neutral or sometimes unstable equilibrium, and a very slight muscular tremor will cause

its sudden gyration. Sometimes it will move either upwards or downwards as the holder approaches or recedes from the object of his quest.

In the South of France during the seventeenth century the "forked rod" was employed for an endless variety of purposes. A learned Jesuit, Father le Brun (*Histoire critique des pratiques superstitieuses*, Paris, 1702), tells us it was used to track criminals and the fathers of foundlings, to find lost treasure and lost boundaries, and it was generally appealed to instead of courts of justice; in fact, its use became such a scandal that Cardinal Camus invoked the authority of the Inquisition, and early in the eighteenth century its use in the *moral world* was rightly prohibited. I will return to the history and discuss the value of the so-called divining- or dowsing-rod in the chapter devoted to this subject. The only point that interests us now is the sudden and mysterious motion of the rod, or the *baguette* as it is called in France. We owe the first clear demonstration of the true cause of its motion to a well-known French scientist, M. Chevreul, who in 1854 published a work entitled *La Baguette Divinatoire*, in which he shows how closely related are the movements of the *baguette* to those of the *pendule explorateur*, and that both were due to unconscious muscular action (see also a letter from Chevreul in the *Revue des deux Mondes* in 1833).

Chevreul, however, was not the first to dis-

cover the fact that in some unconscious way the holder of the forked twig really moved it. Two centuries earlier a learned Jesuit, Father A. Kircher, one of the founders of experimental science, proved that the "divining-rod" was inert if balanced on a fixed support and moved only when held by a living person (see Kircher's folio *Magnes sive de Arte Magnetica*, 1640, p. 724, and his later work, *Mundus Subterraneus*, vol. ii., p. 200). Moreover, Chevreul, though he cleared away the follies that had clustered round the *pendule*, was himself mistaken in thinking the holder of the thread pendulum or the *baguette* consciously intended it to move in a certain way. This is not the case. As Professor Pierre Janet points out, these automatic actions take place independently of any conscious volition on the part of the operator ("Sans le vouloir et sans le savoir," *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, by P. Janet, Paris, 1889, p. 373 *et seq.* See also Professor C. Richet's *Des Mouvements inconscientes*, Paris, 1886).

A study of these unconscious movements has recently been made by several experimental psychologists in France, Germany and America. The conclusion was reached that if the attention can be given elsewhere, it is possible to cultivate in many persons automatic movements often of great vigour and complexity, which respond to slight unconsciously-received suggestions. Furthermore, as Professor P. Janet says, in certain cases more knowledge is exhibited in these

automatic manifestations than is possessed by our conscious personality, and the study of the source of this knowledge forms a large part of psychical research.

We may summarize what we have said as follows. Our conscious self always speaks through various voluntary muscular movements, ideas chiefly expressing themselves in articulate language. Behind the conscious self lies the large unperceived background of our personality, which reveals itself through involuntary muscular actions to which ordinarily we give no heed. Either they are internal and concerned with the movements and physiological processes of the organs of the body, or they are external and, generally speaking, too small to be perceptible.

Some instrumental means, as we have seen, is therefore necessary to render visible these minute unconscious external automatic actions. It is desirable to give a generic name to this class of instrument, and I have suggested the term *Autoscope* or " self-viewer." Two autoscopes we have found in (1) the little portable pendulum and (2) in the forked twig, but there are others. (3) A pencil, lightly and passively held so that it can write freely on paper, forms an excellent autoscope with some persons, and (4) a little heart-shaped wooden table mounted with three legs, two furnished with small rollers and the third with a pencil, is a common form of autoscope and goes by the name of planchette. The sitters place their fingers lightly

on planchette, and presently it begins to scrawl out letters and sometimes long coherent messages, or answers questions. (5) The so-called "ouija board" is another autoscope; here the letters of the alphabet are pointed out by a little travelling board on which the sitters' hands are placed. (6) A small table, round which a few persons can sit with their fingers resting lightly around the tip of the table, is a common form of autoscope. The table begins to turn and often to tilt and rap out messages according to a prearranged code. Faraday, with that quick insight and wonderful experimental skill he possessed, long ago showed that the unconscious muscular action of the sitters—when their fingers ever so lightly touched the table—was sufficient to account for its motion. But here, as elsewhere, the muscular hypothesis fails when the table moves without any one touching it, as we shall see is sometimes the case. In the middle of the last century in Guadaloupe, a chair formed a similar autoscope and went by the name of Juanita; prose and poetry were spelt out by the chair, much to the astonishment of those touching it. (7) A simple and efficient autoscope could easily be made out of a poised index or lever, the longer end pointing to the letters of the alphabet and the shorter end having a cross-piece attached to be touched by the sitters. (8) Passive living persons can also act as autoscopes when they are lightly touched by another person. This, as shown in a succeeding chapter, is the

explanation of the "willing game" and of the success of professional "thought-readers" like Bishop and Cumberland a generation ago. There are also other autoscopes which give rise to *sensory* hallucinations, such as the visions seen by gazing at a translucent object like a ball of glass.

Now as language, which need not be speech but any form of *expression*, is necessary for our conscious thought and reason, so autoscopes furnish a means whereby the hidden part of our personality, the dumb partner of our life, can outwardly express itself; a means whereby an intelligence not under our conscious control can reveal itself by some physical or sensory manifestation.

It is just because these manifestations appear to be so novel and detached from ourselves that they are apt to be so misleading to some and so mischievous to others. Interpreted on the one hand as the play of a wonderful occult force, science has refused to have anything to do with phenomena which seem to obey no physical laws, but are capricious and self-determined. Interpreted on the other, truly enough, as the exhibition of a free and intelligent agent, some infernal or discarnate spirit has been fixed upon as the cause, and a fictitious authority is often given to their indications.

Whether these intelligent automatic movements and hallucinations exhibit information outside the memory, either active or latent, of the individual who uses the autoscope;

or a knowledge beyond that which may have been unconsciously derived from the known environment, animate and inanimate,—is a problem which can only be solved so as to gain general acceptance by long and patient inquiry. Of this the investigations already published in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research are an earnest. To the scope and work of that Society we must now turn.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH—HUMAN PERSONALITY

THERE can be little doubt that the widespread and intelligent interest which in recent years has been taken in psychical research is due to the work of the Society founded for its investigation and to the scholarly presentation of that work in the two volumes on *Human Personality* which we owe to the brilliant genius and indefatigable labour of the late Frederic W. H. Myers. It is, moreover, a noteworthy fact that the essential portion, the first four lengthy chapters, of Mr. Myers' *magnum opus* is now included in the examination for the Fellowship in Mental and Moral Philosophy in Trinity College, Dublin, the highest prize in that famous University.

The whirligig of time has indeed brought its revenges more quickly than usual, when we find that a subject which was scorned and ridiculed by the learned world, when the Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882, has now become an integral part of advanced psychological study in at least one great University.

The success which the Society has achieved

is in no small measure due to the wise counsel and constant supervision of the late Professor H. Sidgwick. It was singularly fortunate that from the outset and for several succeeding years, one so learned, cautious and critical as Professor Sidgwick was President of the Society; a position also held by Mrs. Sidgwick, who has given, and, as Hon. Secretary in recent years, continues to give, the benefit of her wide knowledge and unremitting care to all the details of its work. To these names must be added those of the late Edmund Gurney and Frederic Myers—for many years Hon. Secretaries of the Society — whose indefatigable labours and brilliant genius were devoted to laying the foundations of the Society, upon which the latter, ere his sudden death, had begun to build, and we may fain hope is still aiding to build, an enduring edifice.

Those of us who took part in the foundation of the Society were convinced that amidst much illusion and deception there exists an important body of facts, hitherto unrecognized by science, which, if incontestably established, would be of supreme importance and interest. By applying scientific methods to their investigation these obscure phenomena are being gradually rescued from the disorderly mystery of ignorance: but this is a work not of one, but of many generations. For this reason, it was necessary to form a society, the aim of which should be to bring to bear on these obscure questions the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has

enabled science to solve so many problems once no less obscure nor less hotly debated.

The aversion which so many scientific men have felt for psychical research arises, perhaps, from a disregard of the essential difference between physical and psychical science. The only gateways of knowledge according to the former are the familiar organs of sense, whereas the latter indicates that these gateways can be occasionally transcended. The main object of physical science is to measure and forecast, and from its phenomena life and free-will must be eliminated. Psychical phenomena can neither be measured nor forecast, as in their case the influence of life and volition can neither be eliminated nor foreseen.

In fact, the study of human personality and the extent of human faculty form the main objects of psychical research. Its investigations have already thrown much light on these profound problems. Our Ego is not the simple thing " admitting of no degrees " and manifest only in our normal consciousness, which the older psychologists taught. On the contrary, the results of psychical research have led many to accept the view, so ably advocated by Mr. Myers, that the conscious self, with which we are familiar in our waking life, is but a portion of a " more comprehensive consciousness, a profounder faculty, which for the most part remains potential, so far as regards the life on earth," but which may be liberated in full activity by the change we call death.

Others, like Mr. Gerald Balfour, in his Presidential Address to the S.P.R., suggest a more complex view of human personality. To the solution of this profound problem we are still groping our way, and for the present all theories must be regarded as merely provisional. As a convenient working hypothesis I have adopted Mr. Myers' view, but the reader will please understand that, even in the absence of qualifying words, this view is adopted provisionally and not dogmatically. All, however, will admit the existence of a subconscious life in addition to the primary consciousness with which we are familiar.

Just as experimental physics has shown that each sunbeam embraces a potent invisible radiation, as well as the visible radiation we perceive, so experimental psychology affords evidence that each human personality embraces a potent hidden faculty or self, as well as the familiar conscious self. Mr. Myers, using the psychological conception of a threshold, or *limen*, has termed the former *the subliminal self*. This expresses all the mental activities, thoughts, feelings, etc., which lie beneath the threshold of consciousness. This threshold must be regarded not so much as the entrance to a chamber but rather as the normal margin of the sea in the boundless ocean of life. Above this margin or ocean level rise the separate islands of conscious life, but these visible portions rest on an invisible and larger submerged part. Again, far beneath the ocean surface all the separate islands unite in the

vast submerged ocean bed. In like manner, human personality rears its separate peaks in our waking conscious life, but its foundations rest on the hidden subliminal life, and submerged deeper still lies the Universal ocean bed, uniting all life with the Fount of life. Sleep and waking are the tides of life, which periodically cover and expose the island peaks of consciousness. Death may be regarded as a subsidence of the island below the ocean level; the withdrawal of human life, from our present superficial view, which sees but a fragment of the whole sum of human personality.

Now the subliminal self not only contains the record of unheeded past impressions, a latent memory, but also has activities and faculties far transcending the range of our conscious self. In this it resembles the invisible radiation of the sun, which is the main source of all physical and vital energy in this world. Evidence of these higher subliminal faculties is not wanting; we see them sometimes emerging in hypnotic trance, in works of genius and inspiration and in the arithmetical and musical performances of infant prodigies.

As an illustration of subliminal activity, the following case shows the almost incredible swiftness and ease with which "calculating boys" can work out long arithmetical problems in their head, in far less time than expert adults require, even using pencil and paper. Mr. E. Blyth of Edinburgh (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. viii., p. 352) relates this incident of his brother Benjamin:—

"When almost six years of age, Ben was walking with his father before breakfast, when he said—'Papa, at what hour was I born?' He was told 4 a.m., and he then asked, 'What o'clock is it at present?' He was told 7.50 a.m. The child walked on a few hundred yards, then turned to his father and stated the number of seconds he had lived. My father noted down the figures, made the calculation when he got home, and told Ben he was 172,800 seconds wrong, to which he got a ready reply: 'Oh, papa, you have left out two days for the leap years—1820 and 1824,' which was the case. This latter fact of the extra day in leap year is not known to many children of six, and if any one will try to teach an ordinary child of those years the multiplication table up to 12×12 he will be better able to realize how extraordinary was this calculation for such an infant."

In fact, this arithmetical power was not the result of the child's education but rather an innate faculty, or, as Mr. Myers expresses it, a "subliminal uprush." In such cases, the possessor of the gift cannot explain how he attained it, and usually it disappears after childhood. Thus Professor Safford, when a child of ten, could correctly work in his head in one minute a multiplication sum whose answer consisted of thirty-six figures, but lost this faculty as he grew up, though in adult life he needed it most.

The conception of a subliminal self originated with one of the most eminent

scientific men of the last generation, Sir John Herschel, who tells us he was led to believe, from a curious experience of his own, that "there was evidence of a thought, an intelligence, working within our own organization, distinct from that of our own [conscious] personality." Certainly the everyday processes of the development, nutrition and repair of our body and brain, which go on automatically and unconsciously within us, are far beyond the powers of our conscious personality. All life shares with us this miraculous automatism: no chemist, with all his appliances, can turn bread-stuff into brain-stuff, or hay into milk.

It must be borne in mind that the term *subliminal*, as used by Mr. Myers, and now generally adopted, has a very wide scope. It includes well recognized vital and mental phenomena such as:—(1) Those sense impressions which were either unheeded, or too weak to arouse conscious perception of them when they occurred, but which float into consciousness during stillness, sleep or hypnotic trance, when the stronger sense impressions are removed. In like manner, the faint light of the stars emerges, with the fading of the stronger light of day. (2) The living but unconscious power that controls the physiological and recuperative processes of our own body and which are profoundly affected by "suggestion." (3) The higher mental faculties which emerge in genius, infant prodigies, hypnotic trance, etc. (4) The disintegration

of personality which is seen in dual consciousness, secondary and even multiplex-selves displacing the normal self. All these lie within the scope of orthodox psychology. The term subliminal is also used to denote (5) those submerged and higher faculties of percipience, such as "seeing without eyes," which are alleged to exist in some persons, and also (6) those phenomena which claim an origin *outside* the mind of the percipient; which origin may be sought (*a*) in the minds of other living men, as in telepathy, or (*b*) in—as some believe—disembodied minds, discarnate intelligences, whether human or otherwise. These latter phenomena (*b*), if established, I should prefer to call *supraliminal*, "above the threshold"—but this term Mr. Myers has restricted to, and it is now used to denote, all that relates to our ordinary waking consciousness; this might have been perhaps more appropriately called *cisliminal*—"within the threshold" of consciousness.

Here and there we find certain individuals, through whom the subliminal self, as regards (5) and (6), manifests itself more freely than through others; these have been termed "mediums," a word, it is true, that suggests Browning's Sludge. But, just as scientific investigation has shown that mesmerists and dowsers are not all charlatans, so it has shown that even paid mediums are not always rogues, though the term "psychic" or "automatist" would certainly be preferable. The scepticism which ridicules the necessity of a

"medium" is forgetful of the fact that all physical phenomena which cannot be directly perceived by our senses, require the intervention of a physical medium to make them perceptible.

Thus the invisible radiation of the sun can only be investigated through some medium such as a photographic plate, or a delicate thermoscope, both of which render those invisible rays perceptible to our vision. In like manner the subliminal self, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, requires some agency, mechanical or sensory—some autoscope—to render its operation sensible. There is therefore nothing incomprehensible or unscientific in the necessity for an automatist or medium in those phenomena which transcend our conscious apprehension.

This extension of human faculty, revealing, as it does, more profoundly the mysterious depths of our being, enables us to explain many phenomena that have been attributed to discarnate human beings. Does it explain all the phenomena included in the domain of psychical research? I venture to think it does not, but at present we have to grope our way and clear the ground for the future explorer of these unknown regions.

Here let us pause in order to note that among the many eminent men who have given their adhesion to the Society for Psychical Research, we find a former Prime Minister, the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, was President of the Psychical Research Society in 1893, and a

Vice-President from the outset, while another Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, was a member of the Society and deeply interested in its work. Nor have the foremost representatives of British, Continental and American Science held aloof. That eminent *savant*, Sir W. Crookes, O.M., now Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society of London, has been President of the S.P.R.—as we shall call it for brevity—and the President of the Royal Society itself is, as was his predecessor, a member of the S.P.R., together with such illustrious scientific men as Dr. A. R. Wallace, O.M., Sir J. J. Thomson, Lord Rayleigh, O.M., Sir O. Lodge, and many others. We may name among other distinguished Continental adherents of the S.P.R. its former President, Professor C. Richet, the distinguished physiologist; Mme. Curie, the discoverer of radium; Professors Bergson, Bernheim, Janet, Ribot and the late Professor Hertz; and in America the late Professor W. James, also a former President of the S.P.R., with Professors E. Pickering and Bowditch. Among great names in English literature and art, who were honorary members of the Society, are to be found Lord Tennyson, Mr. Ruskin and Mr. G. F. Watts. The numerical growth and active work of the S.P.R. is no less remarkable; it now numbers upwards of 1,200 members and associates, and has had at various times considerable sums placed at its disposal, towards an endowment for research work.

Certainly the first decade of the twentieth

century will form a memorable epoch in the history of Psychical Research, were it for no other reason than that it has seen the removal of the most eminent investigators of psychical phenomena. Edmund Gurney had gone before, and now Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers, Richard Hodgson, William James, and Frank Podmore—though his outlook was narrower—have successively passed away, leaving empty places that can scarcely be filled and impoverishing us by the withdrawal of so much wisdom, knowledge and zeal, though happily bequeathing to us their fruit in accomplished work of the utmost value.

But it is not by losses only, or even we may trust chiefly, that these years will be commemorated. They have marked a period of exceptionally rapid progress along the lines laid down for the study of the various subjects comprehended under the term of Psychical Research; more especially in one of its main problems. Evidence bearing on the question of the existence of unseen intelligences, apparently in some cases directing the hand in automatic writing, has accumulated with unusual abundance; its increase in quantity being, moreover, accompanied by an improvement in quality, which is a very notable feature. Now, as on any hypothesis of survival, such a result is just what we might expect to follow the passing into another life of persons deeply interested as well as widely experienced in the difficult problems that

confront us, the fact that the result *has* followed seems in some degree to strengthen the hypothesis of their continued activity and co-operation.

The consideration of this evidence must be postponed to the sequel; the extent of human faculty, seen in other phenomena of psychical research, must first engage our attention; to this we must now turn.

CHAPTER IV

THE "WILLING GAME" AND SO-CALLED THOUGHT-READING

Some years ago a parlour pastime called the "Willing Game" was a favourite amusement and gave rise to much public discussion. Certain persons were very expert at what appeared to be "thought-reading," a few became professional performers. The public were greatly mystified, some considering it a trick, others that the remarkable success attained in private circles proved that trickery was out of the question, and afforded evidence of genuine "thought-transference." But the usual method of playing the game showed that a simpler explanation could be given. The blindfolded performer, whom we may call the *percipient*, had to do something that had been concealed from him, such as to find a hidden object, pick out a certain person, or write a figure on a blackboard, etc. Some one of the company who knew the secret, and whom we will call the *agent*, laid his hands lightly on the shoulders or forehead of the percipient, sometimes he grasped the hand of the latter and placed it on his forehead, and then thought intently of the thing to be done,

but made no conscious effort of guidance. If the percipient were a good subject, and allowed his mind to remain passive, he rarely failed to accomplish what was desired; nor could he give the least explanation of how he did it. Both agent and percipient were equally astonished, and it is no wonder that those who took part in the performance at home were convinced that some kind of mental wireless telegraphy occurred, independently of the senses.

Here, for example, are some experiments made when I was staying with my friend, the late Mr. Lawson Tait, the famous surgeon, in the Easter of 1877 : The subject, a medical man, having left the room and placed himself beyond eye and ear shot, we agreed that on his return he should move the fire-screen and double it back. Recalling the subject, my host, the surgeon, put his hands round the subject's waist and silently willed what should be done. After a few moments of indecision he did exactly what was mentally wished. Among other experiments we desired the subject should turn off the gas tap of one out of several gas brackets. This was accurately done, no word being spoken, only the subject was lightly grasped as before. Here it is difficult to understand how the " muscular sense " would lead to the raising of the hands and correct performance of the wish. Information can, however, be conveyed through involuntary gestures or glances from those who know what has to be done, if the subject is not

blindfolded, and blindfolding is often ineffective, because carelessly done.

Thirty years ago, two professional "thought-readers," a Mr. Bishop and a Mr. Cumberland, gained a wide celebrity through their performances in public and before famous personages. A small committee of eminent men, among whom were Mr. (afterwards Sir Francis) Galton, Mr. G. J. Romanes and others, made some careful tests of Mr. Bishop's powers. A report of this committee written by Mr. Romanes was published in the scientific journal *Nature* for June 23, 1881. The following extract from that report is of interest. The experiments took place in a large drawing-room, in the house of Professor Croom Robertson.

"First, Mr. Bishop was taken out of the room by me (G. J. Romanes) to the hall downstairs, where I blindfolded him with a handkerchief; and, in order to do so securely, I thrust pieces of cotton-wool beneath the handkerchief below the eyes. In all the subsequent experiments Mr. Bishop was blindfolded, and in the same manner. While I was doing this, Mr. Alfred Sidgwick was hiding a small object beneath one of the several rugs in the drawing-room; it having been previously arranged that he was to choose any object he liked for this purpose, and to conceal it in any part of the drawing-room which his fancy might select. When he had done this the drawing-room door was opened and the word 'Ready' called. I then led Mr. Bishop up-stairs, and

handed him over to Mr. Sidgwick, who at that moment was standing in the middle line between the two drawing-rooms, with his back to the rug in question, and at a distance from it of about fifteen feet. Mr. Bishop then took the left hand of Mr. Sidgwick, placed it on his (Mr. Bishop's) forehead, and requested him to think continuously of the place where the object was concealed. After standing motionless for about ten seconds Mr. Bishop suddenly faced round, walked briskly with Mr. Sidgwick in a direct line to the rug, raised it, and picked up the object. In doing all this there was not the slightest hesitation, so that to all appearance it seemed as if Mr. Bishop knew as well as Mr. Sidgwick the precise spot where the object was lying." Neither did it make any difference whether the article was placed at a high or a low elevation.

Mr. Romanes then describes experiments in which Mr. Bishop was successful in locating any small spot thought of on the body of any member of the committee, or on any table or chair, etc. In conclusion, it is stated, that as in all these trials Mr. Bishop was effectually blindfolded and had no means of direct information, " his success was unquestionably very striking."

Nevertheless, that success Mr. Romanes suggests was due to : " Mr. Bishop interpreting, whether consciously or unconsciously, the indications involuntarily and unwittingly supplied to him by the muscles of his subjects." Failure results when the subject [*i.e.* the agent]

" is blindfolded and loses his bearings, or when the connection between Mr. Bishop and the subject is not of a rigid nature."

The committee then tested Mr. Bishop to ascertain if he had an exceptional degree of tactile sensibility, or power of distinguishing between small variations of resistance and pressure. But the result showed this was not the case, he had in fact rather less tactile sensibility than some members of the committee; his success was not therefore due to this cause, but ascribed " to his having paid greater attention to the subject "—whatever that may mean. Nor is the successful performer, whoever he may be, always *conscious* of being guided by any muscular sense. In fact, Dr. W. B. Carpenter (the physiologist) in the following number of *Nature* relates how he himself was equally successful in discovering a particular card that had been chosen, yet though he watched carefully for any material guidance, he could not tell how he was led to make the right selection.

It is certainly a very remarkable thing, as Mr. Romanes points out, that Mr. Bishop and other successful " thought-readers " should unconsciously and almost instantaneously interpret imperceptible muscular movements unconsciously made by the agent. Albeit that the muscular sense *is* concerned in most cases is evident from the following experiments which any one can make, and which, as a matter of fact, I tried many years ago with a clever amateur " thought-reader," then a

young man, now an Irish M.P. and K.C. Put a piece of cotton-wool between the fingers of the agent and the shoulder or head of the percipient, and as a rule no success is obtainable unless the cotton-wool be pressed so hard that the compressed wool conveys the variations of pressure. Ask the quasi thought-reader to name aloud the figure thought of, or the place where the object is hidden, and he cannot do so; in fact, he consciously knows nothing of what he has to do, but is unconsciously guided, probably by slight differences in the contact of the agent's hand. Blindfold the agent and not the percipient, and if the former loses his bearings, as Mr. Romanes says, the experiment fails. Let a slack piece of string connect the agent and percipient and the experiment fails, though it may succeed with a wire connection, as this can transmit variations of tension. The passive percipient is in fact the *autoscope* of the agent.

A word or two must be said in conclusion about the public performance of so-called "thought-readers." The exhibitions given by Bishop and by Cumberland some years ago are, as already explained, interesting displays of unconscious muscular guidance, verging, it may be, occasionally into incipient and genuine thought-transference. Other public exhibitions, like those of the Zancigs, cannot be so explained, as the performers are far apart. Here only two explanations are possible—telepathy or trickery. Now the characteristic of all genuine telepathic

phenomena, as now known, is their elusiveness. Sometimes, why we do not know, great success is attainable in telepathic experiments; at other times, with the same persons, and under, apparently, the same conditions, dismal failure results. Obviously a public performer cannot depend upon so fitful and uncertain a faculty. The audience come to see an exhibition and they must not be disappointed. It is therefore highly improbable that any regular public performance of so-called thought-reading is a genuine exhibition of telepathy. But a cleverly arranged code of signals has not this uncertainty, and when the performer and his subject are proficient in such a code they may bamboozle the most inquisitive among the audience. The code may consist in variations of the question, "Can you see this?" "Now can you see?" "What is this?" etc., or in various slight sounds or movements made by the performer, and so on. One of these public performers, whose subject was a young girl, apparently hypnotized, startled the public some years ago. He gave me a private exhibition, for which I had secured the help of a shorthand writer, who was not seen by the performers. After an interesting display, an examination of the shorthand notes showed the existence of some kind of verbal code though it could not be fully unravelled.

The performance of the Zancigs and of one or two others is far more remarkable and puzzling; whatever method they employ is not generally known. I had the opportunity

of testing the Zancigs at a private performance in Dublin, and they courteously submitted themselves to a committee of S.P.R. members in London, giving an exhibition in rooms selected by the committee. Though I was unable to be present on that occasion, my place was better filled by a member of the Council who is an expert conjurer. The committee arrived at no conclusion, some of the experiments looked like genuine telepathy, and possibly this exists to some extent between the two performers. But the fact that M. Zancig requires to be the transmitting agent, and the almost unfailing success of the trials, differentiates them from the experiments on genuine thought-transference which will be described in the next chapter. Moreover, no scientific results of any value can be expected from those who are engaged in paid public exhibitions. Nevertheless, every one gives so much more credence to what he has seen than to what he has read, that a critical and scientific friend, who had scoffed at the evidence for telepathy laboriously obtained by the S.P.R., informed me some time ago that he had been converted to a belief in its reality. On inquiring how this came about, he told me he had witnessed and tested a public performance of thought-reading, which turned out to be much inferior to that given by the Zancigs!

CHAPTER V

THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE IN THE NORMAL STATE OF THE PERCIPIENT

Those who have made numerous experiments with good subjects in the so-called "willing game" have, as already stated, found it extremely difficult to account for some of the successful results by the hypothesis of involuntary muscular guidance—an hypothesis often stretched to illegitimate lengths. Thirty years ago, in a communication published in the scientific journal *Nature* for July 7, 1881, I wrote—

"After making the most extravagant allowance for the existence in some persons of a muscular sense of preternatural acuteness, there still remained a large residuum of facts wholly unaccounted for on any received hypothesis. These facts pointed in the direction of the existence either of a hitherto unrecognized sensory organ, or of the direct action of mind on mind without the intervention of any sense impressions. Such startling conclusions could not be accepted without prolonged and severe examination, and it was in the hope of stimulating inquiry, among those who had more leisure and fitness

for the pursuit than myself, that led me to publish a few years ago a brief record of my experiments, which, however, only brought derision and denunciation upon me. As no physiologist came forward to give the subject the wide and patient inquiry it demanded, I went on with the investigation, and for five years have never let an opportunity slip which would add to the information I possessed. A letter addressed to the *Times*, in September 1876, asking for communications from those who had witnessed good illustrations of the 'willing game,' brought me in a flood of replies from all parts of England. Each case that seemed worthy of inquiry was, if possible, visited and investigated by myself during the vacation."

One of these cases which seemed quite inexplicable on any theory of muscle-reading, and which was personally investigated during Easter 1881, was that of the children of the late Rev. A. M. Creery, a respected clergyman in Buxton. This case is historically of importance, for it led to the first clear evidence of thought-transference in the normal state of the percipient. Stringent precautions were taken to avoid any information being conveyed to the subject through the ordinary channels of sense. For example, one of the percipients, Maud, then a child of twelve years old, was taken to an empty adjoining room and both doors closed. I then wrote down some object likely to be in the house, which we (the family together with myself) silently thought of.

No one was allowed to leave their place or to speak a word. The percipient had previously been told to fetch the object as soon as she "guessed" what it was, and then return with it to the drawing-room where we were seated. Quoting again from my communication to *Nature*—

"Having fastened the doors I wrote down the following articles, one by one, with the results stated—*hair-brush*, correctly brought; *wine-glass*, correctly brought; *orange*, correctly brought; *toasting-fork*, wrong on the first attempt, right on the second; *apple*, correctly brought; *knife*, correctly brought; *smoothing-iron*, correctly brought; *tumbler*, correctly brought; *cup*, correctly brought; *saucer*, failure. Then names of towns were fixed on, the name to be called out by the child outside the closed door of the drawing-room, but guessed when fastened into the adjoining room. In this way, Liverpool, Stockport, Lancaster, York, Manchester, Macclesfield were all correctly given; Leicester was said to be Chester; Windsor, Birmingham and Canterbury were failures."

The success obtained in these and other experiments could not be explained by mere lucky guesses nor by any involuntary guidance from those who knew, for there was no contact, and in some trials (as in the foregoing) the percipient was out of sight and hearing. Under such circumstances any secret code of signals between children would have been practically impossible to carry out; moreover, in several

successful experiments no one but myself knew what was to be done.

A new and promising field of scientific inquiry was thus opened up, and it was necessary that other investigators should either verify or disprove the evidence so far obtained on behalf of a faculty hitherto unrecognized by science. But such an investigation lay outside the scope of any existing scientific society; it therefore seemed essential to form a new Society to carry on the inquiry and publish the results obtained. Accordingly, after consultation with Mr. Myers, Mr. Romanes and others, a conference was called by the present writer, at which an account was given of the evidence so far obtained on behalf of thought-transference and other psychical phenomena. This resulted in the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in January 1882, an investigation of the evidence on behalf of thought-transference being the first work undertaken by the Society. The special committee appointed for this purpose consisted of Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Mr. E. Gurney and the present writer.

A preliminary account of the results obtained at Buxton with the Misses Creery was published as a joint article by Gurney, Myers and myself, in the *Nineteenth Century* for June 1882; this therefore marks a not unimportant date in the history of psychical research; the full details of our research appeared in the first volume of the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. Precautions were of course

taken to avoid any indication reaching the percipient through the ordinary channels of sense. The exceptional nature of the inquiry made it necessary for the committee to put on one side any argument based on moral character and demeanour, therefore they formed their conclusions only on those experiments where the investigating committee *alone* knew the selected word or thing. This is expressly emphasized and reiterated in their Reports, and yet disregarded by critics. Even as regards the committee the same scrupulous care was taken, sometimes one member and sometimes another being excluded from the trials.

Here, for instance, are some experiments, quoted in the first Report (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. i., p. 22), where I was not present, nor did any of the family know the object selected, so that neither I nor they can be accused of being "in the trick." The experiments were recorded by Mr. Myers and copied from the MS. notes which he made at the time, still in my possession :—

"The second series of experiments, which we venture to think are unexceptionable, were made by Mr. Myers and Mr. Gurney, together with two ladies who were entire strangers to the family. None of the family knew what we had selected, the *type* of thing [a card or a number, etc.] only being told to the child chosen to guess. The experimenters took every precaution in order that no indication, however slight, should reach the child. She

was recalled by one of the experimenters and stood near the door with downcast eyes. In this way the following results were obtained. The thing selected is printed in italics, and the only words spoken during the experiment are put in parentheses—

"Experiments made on April 13, 1882—

[Omitting some successful experiments with numbers and names, the following were noted as specially evidential by Gurney and Myers.]

"Cards to be named. [A full pack was used, from which one was drawn at random.]

Two of clubs.—Right first time.
Queen of diamonds.—Right first time.
Four of spades.—Failed.
Four of hearts.—Right first time.
King of hearts.—Right first time.
Two of diamonds.—Right first time
Ace of hearts.—Right first time.
Nine of spades.—Right first time.
Five of diamonds.—Four of diamonds (No). Four of hearts (No). Five of diamonds (Right).
Two of spades.—Right first time.
Eight of diamonds.—Ace of diamonds said; no second trial given.
Three of hearts.—Right first time.
Five of clubs.—Failed.
Ace of spades.—Failed.

"Special precautions were taken to avoid errors of experiment . . . and the results show

that, in the case of cards, out of *fourteen* successive trials *nine* were guessed rightly the first time, and only three trials can be said to have been complete failures. On none of these occasions was it even remotely possible for the child to obtain by any ordinary means a knowledge of the card selected. Our own facial expression was the only index open to her; and even if we had not purposely looked as neutral as possible, it is difficult to imagine how we could have unconsciously carried, say, the two of diamonds written on our foreheads."

There remains only the hypothesis of a lucky series of guesses. But the probability of this can be estimated, and that is the main reason why cards or some definite series of numbers were selected. In the case of playing cards, the odds against guessing any particular card rightly were of course 51 to 1; but when, as in this case, five cards in succession are named rightly on the first response, the odds against this happening by pure chance are considerably over a million to one. These, and many other experiments made later on, were submitted to one of the highest authorities on the Calculus of Probabilities, Professor Edgeworth. Only those experiments were selected in which knowledge of the object thought of was confined exclusively to the investigating committee. Altogether under these conditions there were some 450 trials with cards and numbers: of these 260 trials were made with playing cards, the first response giving on an average one quite

right in nine times, instead of one in fifty-two, as would result from pure guesswork. Similar results were obtained with numbers of two figures. Mr. Edgeworth, as the result of his calculations, stated that chance coincidence is certainly ruled out, and "the recorded observations must have resulted either from collusion on the part of those concerned or from thought-transference."

It is necessary to examine this alternative of collusion a little more closely, as doubt has been thrown on this wonderful series of experiments because signalling was discovered between the children some time afterwards, when they had practically lost their psychic gift. But however clever a signaller may be, his ingenuity only comes into play when he knows what to signal. In the experiments just referred to the committee alone knew, and therefore if collusion occurred, one or other of the committee must have been participators. Now the credit of any one witness is not likely to suffice for the demand here made upon it, but every additional witness who, as De Morgan said, "has a fair stock of credit to draw upon," is an important gain. Hence, to the great advantage of this investigation, Professor and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick early in the inquiry went to Buxton and made a series of experiments, in some of which I took part, with the result that they were convinced a *prima facie* case existed on behalf of the genuineness of the phenomena; and later on, more conclusive experiments with

other subjects, converted them to a belief in thought-transference.

To the witnesses already named may also be added, at this early period, the late Professor Balfour Stewart, F.R.S., who kindly acceded to my request to make independent trials with the same percipients. Professor (now Sir Alfred) Hopkinson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester, accompanied Professor B. Stewart, and though their tests were fewer and less stringent, they corroborated the conclusions of the committee. Furthermore, in 1882 some of the children came over to my house at Kingstown and also went to Mr. Myers' house in Cambridge, and at both places numerous successful experiments were made under the strictest conditions. Take, for instance, the experiments at Cambridge in August 1882 (see *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. i.), where the percipient, Miss M. Creery, was placed "outside a closed and locked door, a yard or two from it, in charge of one of the committee, who observed her attentively." Within the room one of the committee silently drew a card from a pack and held it in view of the sitters: in this way out of ten trials two cards were named rightly on the first answer, besides several close approximations. On another day Mrs. Myers and I alone knew the card selected, and out of eight trials, three were guessed rightly—one, it is true, on a second attempt. A comparative experiment was also made by allowing two of the sisters of the percipient to know

the card chosen, and the same degree of success was obtained. The original note-books of these long and wearisome experiments, only a portion of which were published, are still in my possession, and conclusively establish the fact that collusion except on the part of one or other of the committee was entirely out of the question.

But freshness of interest on the part of the percipient appears essential to success; we all noted that the best results were obtained on those days when there was no weariness or anxiety for success. At the close of the third Report, the committee state that the power of the percipients gradually diminished during the months over which the experiments extended, so that at the end they failed under the easiest and most lax conditions, where at the beginning they succeeded under the most stringent tests. This gradual decline of power, they remark, "resembled the disappearance of a transitory pathological condition, being the very opposite of what might be expected from a growing proficiency in code communication." It is therefore less surprising to find that when the Misses Creery, anxious to appear successful, were tested again some time later at Cambridge, it was discovered that they were using a code of signals. Here one of the sisters was allowed to know the thing selected, and she tried to help her sister to "guess" it by this improper means.

Whether this had occurred in the earlier

trials or not, it obviously discredits all experiments where such a thing is at all possible. Hence the necessity, emphasized in the preceding pages, of confining our attention in all cases to, and drawing our conclusions from, those trials where the investigators themselves could alone be charged with the possibility of collusion.

Professor Sidgwick, in a Presidential address to the S.P.R., before these later trials (*Proc.*, vol. ii., p. 154), has given the best answer to those who would reject the evidence afforded by the early experiments. He remarks—

"None of our critics appear to me to appreciate the kind and degree of evidence that we have already obtained. They often imply that the experiments on thought-transference are such as could be performed by 'cheating mediums or mesmerists,' by the simple means of a code of signals, which the investigating committee cannot find out; quite ignoring such cases as that given in *Proc. S.P.R.*, Part I., where the cards guessed by one of the Miss Creerys were unknown to any one but the four strangers who went to witness the experiments; and where, therefore, as I have before said, the investigators must either have been idiots, or one or other of them in the trick. Similar remarks may be made about the experiments reported in the last *Proceedings*, where four or five different persons must either have been guilty of unveracity or collusion, or of most abnormal

stupidity if the phenomena were not genuine."

It is right to say that, although I differed from them, Professor Sidgwick, together with Mr. Myers and Mr. Gurney, subsequently decided against further publishing any of these experiments. They no doubt considered that at such an elementary stage of the investigation, with as yet so small a quantity of evidence to lay before so many hostile critics, it was absolutely necessary to shun even the appearance of the slightest contact with detected fraud. Under the changed conditions of the present day, however, there is no longer any reason for setting aside the, as I believe, unimpeachable experiments in the earlier series.

In fact, numerous investigators, both at home and abroad, have since obtained additional and irrefragable evidence on behalf of thought-transference. The first of these contributions was made in 1883 in a paper read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool—the authors being Mr. Malcolm Guthrie and Mr. Birchall, the Hon. Secretary of that Society. A fuller report of these and subsequent experiments by the same investigators was contributed to the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., 1883–85. The subjects, or percipients, in these experiments were two young ladies, well known to Mr. Guthrie, and every care was taken to prevent any information being conveyed through the organs of sense. Mr. Gurney and Mr. Myers

and myself were present at some of the trials, which were specially interesting as showing that the mental transfer of tastes and pains took place in the normal as well as in the hypnotic state. Thus a collection was made of some twenty strongly tasting substances; these were put into small bottles or parcels and kept out of sight of the subject; every care was taken to prevent any odour of the substance reaching the percipient, moreover no strongly odorous substance was used in these trials. The percipient being seated with her back to the agent and blindfolded, the taster, usually outside the room, then silently took a small quantity of one of the substances, put it in his mouth, and returning placed his hand on the shoulder of the percipient, who called out what she apparently tasted; no one else was allowed to speak. Thus the agent having tasted vinegar, the percipient said she felt "a sharp and nasty taste." The agent then tasted mustard, and the percipient at once said, "I now taste mustard." But this seemed to spoil the next couple of trials, as the percipient said, "I still feel the hot taste of mustard." Another evening, Worcester sauce, bitter aloes, alum, nutmeg, cloves and cayenne pepper were correctly named by the percipient. There were, it is true, several failures, but the successes were quite beyond pure guesswork, though more complete protection (which was made subsequently) against the possibility of the percipient obtaining indications through the

sense of smell would have been desirable; nevertheless alum, bitter aloes and an acid lozenge, all correctly named, give off no sensible odour.

This possible objection of odour does not apply to the transference of pains. Here Dr. Herdman, F.R.S., the distinguished Professor of Natural History in the University of Liverpool, was present with other investigators, and corroborated the results obtained in his presence. The percipient, Miss Ralph, one of the two ladies referred to, was seated as before, blindfolded with her back to the investigators, who all agreed noiselessly to inflict upon themselves some similar trivial pain. There was no contact with the percipient. In all twenty trials were made; in ten of these the percipient localized the pain with great precision; in six the localization was nearly exact, and in four nothing was felt or the localization was wrong. These experiments show that in certain subjects in a passive waking state, a "community of sensation" occurs between the agent and percipient, such as was long before observed when the subject was in the mesmeric trance.

We are also indebted to Mr. Guthrie for a lengthy and carefully conducted series of experiments on the mental transference of colours, rough diagrams of pictures and imaginary scenes. Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., was present at many of these trials. The drawing or object to be thought of was placed out of sight of the percipient, whose eyes were

also bandaged. It would take too long to give even a summary of these experiments; one or two may be quoted which were made in Dr. Herdman's rooms—

Object: a pair of scissors partly open, points downwards. Percipient says, "It is a pair of scissors standing up, a little open." Object: A key. Percipient: "It's bright, it looks like a key." Told to draw it, the percipient drew it inverted. Object: Outline drawing of a little flag. Percipient: "It's a little flag." Told to draw it, she drew it as it was, upright, but laterally inverted. The frequent lateral inversion of objects by other percipients I have also noticed. A different drawing was next made, but put aside and purposely the drawing of the flag again put up. Percipient: "I still see that flag." Object: An oval locket hung up. Percipient: "I see something gold, something hanging, like a gold locket." Asked what shape, "It's oval."

An interesting experiment was made with success to try the effect of two agents looking at different objects and to note if the percipient saw the *combined* result. This experiment, made by Sir O. Lodge, was described by him in a letter to *Nature* of June 12, 1884. This simultaneous effect of two minds on one percipient is significant, as it affords a proof of the joint agency, occasionally found to occur in connection with spontaneous cases of telepathy that will be considered later.

The transference of colours and scenes was also more or less successful, and these all

point to a visual impression made on the percipient. More striking were the reproduction of rough drawings, obtained by Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Gurney and other experimenters; these cannot be reproduced here, and our readers are referred to the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., vols. ii. and iii., or to Mr. Myers' *Human Personality*, vol. i., where illustrations of the original drawing and its reproduction by the percipient are given side by side. To avoid the possibility of muscular guidance, no contact can ever be allowed between the agent and percipient in such experiments. The drawings were made for the most part in another room, and consisted of any simple random figure that occurred to the investigator, such, for example, as a tuning-fork, a scroll, dumb-bells, the outline of a head, a horse, a fish, etc. The percipient was blindfolded, the drawing placed on a wooden stand between the agent and percipient and in silence gazed at by the former. When the percipient received an impression, which usually occurred after half-a-minute to two or three minutes, she was allowed to remove the bandage and draw what she had mentally perceived. Her position rendered it absolutely impossible for her to obtain a glimpse of the original drawing, and she was kept under the closest observation the whole time and complete silence preserved. Under these stringent conditions many of the reproductions closely resembled the original drawing, and by no possibility could be ascribed to lucky guesses.

Summing up the result of the numerous Liverpool experiments, Mr. Guthrie states that 437 trials were made with objects, colours, drawings, numbers, pains, tastes, etc.; of these 237 were correctly transferred and a few others partly correct. Entire corroboration of these results have been obtained by many other independent and competent observers, both at home and abroad. Hence though not yet officially recognized by science, no doubt of the reality of thought-transference can be left on the mind of any diligent and thoughtful student, however critical he may be. This conviction is greatly strengthened by the additional evidence to be found (1) in experiments during the hypnotic state, to which we must turn in the next chapter, and (2) by the transmission of mental impressions and hallucinations over great distances. It was the recognition of this latter fact that led Mr. Myers to suggest the general term *Telepathy*, "feeling at a distance," to cover, as he remarks, "all cases of the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another independently of the recognized channels of sense. Telepathy may thus exist between two men in the same room as truly as between one man in England and another in Australia, or between one still living on earth and another long since deceased."

The tremendous and far-reaching implications involved in the fact of telepathy renders its discovery of the utmost importance to philosophical and religious thought, as well

as to psychology. These implications cannot be discussed here; obviously telepathy renders a purely materialistic philosophy untenable, and furnishes the prospect of a far more perfect interchange of thought than by the clumsy mechanism of speech. It affords a rational basis for prayer and inspiration, and gives us a distant glimpse of the possibility of communion without language not only between men of various races and tongues, but between every sentient creature, which if not attainable here may await us all in that future state when we shall "know even as we are known."[2]

CHAPTER VI

THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE IN THE HYPNOTIC STATE

The older mesmerists had noticed sixty or seventy years ago that there sometimes occurred a "community of sensation" between the operator and the entranced subject; the latter indicating correctly the taste of various articles such as salt, sugar, cinnamon, etc., which the operator placed in his own mouth, unseen by the percipient. A former distinguished Professor of Physiology, both in King's College and in the Royal College of Surgeons, London, Dr. Mayo, F.R.S., whose enlightened views were far ahead of his scientific friends, writing in 1850, confirms this. He tells us—

"The entranced person, who has no feeling or taste or smell of his own, feels, tastes, and smells everything that is made to tell on the sense of the operator. If mustard or sugar be put in his [the subject's] own mouth he seems not to know they are there; if mustard is placed on the tongue of the operator the entranced person expresses great disgust and tries to spit it out. The same with bodily pain. If you pluck a hair from the operator's

head, the other complains of the pain you have given him."

These results were confirmed by other observers both in England and abroad, but, strangely enough, the significance of these observations was long overlooked. The attention of the pioneers in hypnotic investigation was, in fact, largely confined to the therapeutic and anæsthetic effect of hypnotism, and to combating the prejudices and unscrupulous attacks with which they were assailed in the medical press of that period.

My own attention was directed to the subject by witnessing some hypnotic experiments made by a friend whilst staying at his country house in Westmeath, about the year 1870. Fresh from the Royal Institution in London, conversant with and fully sharing the scepticism of the scientific world of that time, as to the genuineness of these alleged marvels, I was interested but unconvinced by the experiments which I witnessed. It was not until my host allowed me to repeat the experiments and to choose the subjects myself that my scepticism gave way. Selecting two or three of the village children, they were placed in a quiet room, a scrap of paper was put in the palms of their hands, and they were told to gaze at it steadily. One of their number soon passed into a sleep-waking state, and became susceptible to any suggestion, however absurd, which I might make. The others were dismissed, and the sensitive subject put into a deeper sleep by a few passes of my hand

down her face and body. Lifting the eyelid of the subject and touching the eye with my finger, no reflex action, or instinctive contraction, occurred. The eyeball was turned upwards and the subject apparently was in profound slumber. Pricking her hand with a needle, no sign of feeling was evoked. My host had a medical induction coil by which powerful shocks could be administered; the terminals were placed in the hands and on the cheeks of the subject, and the current applied; no notice was taken of shocks that in the normal state it would have been impossible to bear with equanimity. When her name was called loudly by others than myself no reply was given, but when I whispered her name, however faintly, or even inaudibly and outside the room, an instant response was given. Collecting a number of things from the pantry on to a table near me, and standing behind the girl, whose eyes I had securely bandaged, I took up some salt and put it in my mouth; instantly she sputtered and exclaimed, "What for are you putting salt in my mouth?" Then I tried sugar; she said, "That's better"; asked what it was like, she said, "Sweet." Then mustard, pepper, ginger, etc., were tried; each was named, and apparently tasted by the girl when I put them in my own mouth, but when placed in her mouth she seemed to disregard them. Putting my hand over a lighted candle and slightly burning it, the subject, who was still blindfolded and had her back to me, instantly

called out her hand was burnt, and showed evident pain. Nor did it make any difference when I repeated these experiments in an adjoining room, nor when every one was excluded from the room but myself and the subject.

On another occasion, after hypnotizing the girl as before, I took a card at random from a pack in another room, noted what it was, placed it within a book, and giving the closed book to the subject asked her if she could see what was inside. She made no attempt to open the book, but held it to the side of her head and said there was something "with red spots on it." I told her to count the spots, and she said there were "five." The card was, in fact, the five of diamonds. Other cards chosen by me and concealed in a similar way were, for the most part, correctly described, though sometimes she failed, saying the things were dim. One of the most interesting experiments was made when in answer to my request that she would mentally visit London and go to Regent Street, she correctly described the optician's shop of which I was thinking. As a matter of fact, I found, upon subsequent inquiry, that the girl had never gone fifty miles away from her remote Irish village. Nevertheless, not only did she correctly describe the position of this shop, but told me of some large crystals of Iceland spar ("that made things look double") which I knew were in the shop, and that a big clock hung outside over the entrance, as was

the case. It was impossible for the subject to gain any information of these facts through the ordinary channels of sense, as there was no conversation about the matter. My friend, the late Mr. W. E. Wilson, F.R.S., was present when these experiments were made in his father's house, and in answer to my request he subsequently wrote to me confirming them, saying, "We proved beyond all doubt that the subject was able to read the thoughts of the mesmerizer."

The evidence, in fact, appeared so incontestable and of such vast importance if established, that I ventured to bring these and other psychical phenomena that had come under my own observation before the British Association in 1876, with a view to the appointment of experts to investigate and report on the whole subject, but the idea was scorned at the time. The following sentence from that paper of thirty-five years ago may here be quoted—

"In many other ways I convinced myself that the existence of a distinct idea in my own mind gave rise to an image of the idea in the subject's mind; not always a clear image, but one that could not fail to be recognized as a more or less distorted reflection of my own thought. The important point is that every care was taken to prevent any unconscious movement of the lips, or otherwise giving any indication to the subject, although one could hardly reveal the contents of an optician's shop by facial indications" (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. i., p. 243).

In these early experiments I noticed that the hypnotized subject responded to thought-transference even when a considerable distance and opaque objects intervened. Later on, in 1882, some careful experiments on this point were made by me in my own house at Kingstown, Co. Dublin. Here the subject was a lad named Fearnley, and the hypnotizer, a complete stranger to him, was a friend, Mr. G. A. Smith. On one of two precisely similar cards I wrote the word "Yes," and on the other "No." Placing the hypnotized subject or percipient so that he could not see the cards I held, a request was made that he would open his hand if the card "Yes" was shown to the agent, Mr. Smith, or not open it if "No" was pointed to. In this way Mr. Smith, who was not in contact with the percipient, silently willed in accordance with the card shown to him. Twenty experiments were made, under the strictest conditions to avoid any possibility of information being gained by the ordinary channels of sense, and only three failures resulted. Then the subject was requested to answer aloud whether he heard me or not. When "Yes" was handed to Mr. Smith he silently willed the subject should hear, when "No" that he should not hear. The object was to reduce the experiment to the simplest form to try the effect of increasing distance. In all except the first few experiments, the cards were shuffled by me with their face downwards, and then the unknown card handed by me to Mr. Smith, who looked

at it and willed accordingly. This precaution was taken to avoid any possible indication being gained by the percipient from the tone in which I asked the question. After I had noted the reply, and not till then, was the card looked at by me. The percipient remained throughout motionless, with eyes closed and apparently asleep in an arm-chair in one corner of my study; it is needless to repeat that even had he been wide awake he had no means whatever of seeing which card was selected by me. Here are the results, with varying distances between the agent, Mr. Smith, and the percipient, Fearnley. It must be borne in mind that not a single word was spoken, nor any sound made by Mr. Smith.

"At 3 feet apart, twenty-five trials were successively made, and in *every case* the subject responded, or did not respond, in exact accordance with the silent will of Mr. Smith, as directed by the card selected. At 6 feet apart six similar trials were made without a single failure. At 12 feet apart six more trials were made without a single failure. At 17 feet apart six more trials were made without a single failure. In this last case Mr. Smith had to be placed outside the study door, which was then closed with the exception of a narrow chink just wide enough to admit of passing a card in or out, whilst I remained in the study observing the subject.

"A final experiment was made when Mr. Smith was taken across the hall and placed in

the dining-room, at a distance of about 30 feet from the subject, two doors, both quite closed, intervening. Under these conditions three trials were made with success, the 'Yes' response being, however, very faint and hardly audible to me when I returned to the study to ask the usual question after handing the card to the distant operator. At this point, the subject fell into a deep sleep and made no further replies to the questions addressed to him" (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. ii., p. 14).

Subsequently other trials were made under different conditions with the percipient in total darkness, with successful results. Altogether about one hundred trials were made, during which there were only four wrong answers and one doubtful one, and for these Mr. Smith blamed himself rather than the percipient. Pure chance would have given about one-half right instead of the ninety-five right actually obtained.

When the subject was awakened he said he had heard the question each time, but when he gave no answer he felt unable to control his muscles so as to frame the word.

In 1883 Mr. Ed. Gurney made a number of excellent experiments on the mental transference of *pains*, between the hypnotizer, Mr. Smith, and the subject, in this case a lad named Wells. I was present at many of these experiments, and can testify that it was quite impossible for the subject to have obtained any information through the ordinary

channels of sense. Wells was blindfolded and Mr. Smith stood behind his chair. Mr. Gurney, or one of us, then silently pricked or pinched Mr. Smith in different parts of his body. The only words spoken were "Do you feel anything?" addressed to Wells. Out of twenty-four experiments made in this way, the exact spot was correctly indicated by the subject twenty times. With another subject also in a light hypnotic trance similar results were obtained, together with the transference of *tastes*. Whenever Mr. Smith was given a substance to put in his mouth, the subject, in nearly all cases, correctly indicated the taste. These and other experiments abundantly confirmed the results already described.

In France Professor Pierre Janet obtained similar results with a hypnotized subject in 1885 and 1886. Professor Janet and Dr. Gibert also made a series of experiments with a sensitive subject at distances varying from a quarter of a mile to a mile. Here the test was the production of hypnotic trance in the subject whenever the distant operator willed it to occur, at some unexpected time. Out of twenty-five trials eighteen were completely successful, and the remainder partially so. It is needless to refer to the numerous other experiments of a similar kind made by able and critical observers abroad.

Perhaps the most carefully conducted and extensive series of experiments upon thought-transference with a subject in the hypnotic state were those made at Brighton in 1889

by Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick. As usual, the most provoking and inexplicable variations of success occurred on different days, when the conditions appeared to be exactly alike; thus on August 16 and 17 the experiments were a brilliant success, whereas on August 19, 20 and 21 they were total failures. These differences could not be accounted for on grounds of health, etc., for sometimes a run of success would begin and then abruptly cease.

The percipient was a clerk, about nineteen years old, designated as P. To avoid any bias in the selection of the numbers to be guessed, the wooden counters of the game of Lotto, which had the numbers from 10 to 90 stamped on them, were put into a bag and one drawn out; as there were thus eighty-one different numbers, mere chance guessing would give only one right in eighty-one trials. After the first few trials, Professor Sidgwick drew the number from the bag, placed it in a little box, and handed it, unseen by the percipient, to Mr. Smith, who kept strict silence; Mrs. Sidgwick recorded the answer in entire ignorance of the number drawn. It made no difference whether the percipient P. was blindfolded or not, as in the hypnotic state, during these experiments, his eyeballs were turned upward, his eyelids closed, and normal vision was impossible; even so, every precaution was taken to prevent any information being derived through the ordinary channels of sense. The percipient speaks of "seeing" the numbers,

but this is purely a mental visualization. Here is a summary of one set of experiments so made, giving the number drawn in ordinary type, the number guessed in italics:—

87, almost immediately P. said *87*; 19, P. *18*; 24, P. I see an *8* and a *4*—*84*; 35, P. a *3* and a *5*—*35*; 28, P. *88*; 20, P. *23* ("not so plain, I saw the 2 best"); 27, P. I see a *7* and I think a *3* in front of it, I can see the 7; 48, P. I see an *8*. Told to look again, P. said he saw a *4*—the 4 to the left, *48*; 20, P. *2* and *0*; 71, P. *71*; 38, P. *3* . . . *38*; 75, P. I see a *7* and a *5*—*75*; 17, P. after seeing a *4*, said, I see a *1* first and *7* second; 52, P. *52*, I saw that at once; 76, P. *76*.

This is a record of a continuous set of experiments; the total number of trials made when the agent and percipient were in the same room was 644, of which 131 were complete successes, both digits being given correctly, and in fourteen trials the digits were given in the reverse order. Pure guesswork would have given about eight right, so that mere chance coincidence cannot account for the success obtained. In a later series of experiments, carried on from 1890 to 1892, by Mrs. Sidgwick and Miss Johnson, the agent and percipient were in different rooms and strict silence was preserved. I was invited to be present at some of these trials, and can therefore say from personal observation that the possibility of any information being gained by the percipient, through unconscious whispering of the number, seemed to me to be quite

excluded, however acute his sense of hearing. The transference of mental pictures, also with more or less success, was subsequently tried under the same conditions, and by the same experimenters with different percipients.

CHAPTER VII

MESMERISM—HYPNOTISM—SUGGESTION

To most people, any acquaintance with mesmerism they possess is confined to those public exhibitions—common enough a generation ago, and usually called by the barbarous word "electro-biology"—where some of the audience are invited to the platform and made to look at a small object placed in their hands, whilst passes are repeatedly made by the operator down the body of the subject. Presently two or three fall into a sleep and readily obey any suggestions, however ridiculous, made by the operator. In this way the subject can be made to believe he is another person, or any bird or animal suggested, often exhibiting a wonderful dramatic power in carrying out the suggestion. Other curious phenomena were occasionally shown by the subject when in a deeper entranced state, such as complete insensibility to pain in any part of or over the whole body, while, on the other hand, he would sometimes exhibit an amazing exaltation of any special sense; feeling or detecting things impossible for him to perceive in his ordinary waking state. On returning to his normal state, to

which he was restored by upward passes and a command from the operator to "wake up," he was utterly oblivious of everything that had occurred during his entranced condition and was incredulous when informed of what he had said or done. To the general public such performances only excited speculation as to their genuineness, and little regard was paid to the far-reaching psychological problems involved. Let us briefly recall the history of the subject.

The remarkable phenomena of mesmerism originated with a Viennese doctor, Friedrich Mesmer, a Swiss, born in 1733. Mesmer claimed to have discovered a new vital fluid or effluence, which could be transmitted from one person to another and which, he asserted, had wonderful curative power. At that time the physical forces of electricity, magnetism, heat, etc., were attributed to various impalpable fluids, and Mesmer believed he had found a new fluid or force associated with life, resembling magnetism: hence he called it "animal magnetism." Whether such an effluence exists or not, it certainly has nothing to do with magnetism as the latter is known to physical science; nevertheless, the misnomer still widely exists.

In 1778 Mesmer came to Paris to demonstrate his new system of therapeutics. The use of drugs and other prevalent medical remedies were abandoned and the patients submitted to a treatment which looked very like quackery. Seated round a mysterious

tub of water, in which were rows of bottles, the patients, rich and poor, were linked together by a rope from the tub, and iron rods proceeding therefrom were brought into contact with the diseased part, whilst Mesmer and his assistants stroked or massaged the patient. Partial darkness and the subdued strains of music added to the mystery. But the results were extraordinary, numerous amazing cures were effected, and Paris rang with the fame of Mesmer. The patients were mostly of high standing and included some physicians of note, one of whom, a "doctor regent," became Mesmer's enthusiastic advocate and helper. In one year it is said that 8,000 persons were so treated, and the record of the cures wrought could neither be explained, nor explained away, by the medical profession. A medical commission was appointed in 1784 to report on the whole subject. This commission, which included some famous members of the Paris Academy of Sciences, was unfavourable to Mesmer and his fluid theory, attributing the cures to imagination. But the commission was much prejudiced against Mesmer, owing to the secrecy and charlatanism with which he had surrounded his system. Mesmer thereupon left Paris, followed by numerous patients, and subsequently died in obscurity in Switzerland.

Among Mesmer's disciples was the Marquis de Puységur, who brought a more critical and scientific spirit to bear upon the subject. Puységur ultimately believed the secret of the

cures—which could not be gainsaid, though they were practically ignored by the medical commission—to be, as he states, in "belief and will" or "the action of thought upon the vital principle of the body." This, in fact, is generally recognized, and lies at the foundation of Faith Cures, Christian Science, and the cures wrought in ancient Greece and Rome by what is now termed Suggestive treatment. Puységur also discovered the state of somnambulism induced in susceptible patients by Mesmer's system. Such patients were thrown into a state of trance wherein another personality with clearer vision and higher faculties appeared to emerge, able to diagnose their own illness, even prescribe for its treatment, and foresee the date of cure. On returning to their normal state, not the slightest memory of what had passed in the trance state remained. Though unquestionable evidence exists of this "lucidity" of the entranced patient, it is impossible to say how far the results were merely due to a heightened but normal sensitiveness, *i. e.* hyperæsthesia, or to so-called clairvoyance, which we shall discuss in another chapter.

A later French Medical Commission, appointed in 1826, reported in favour of this clairvoyant faculty and of the remarkable cures effected by mesmerism. This report was, however, suppressed by the medical faculty and issued informally. Meanwhile the subject had been lifted into a different and modern line of thought by the investigations of an

able French physician, Dr. A. Bertrand, who in 1820 published a treatise on artificial somnambulism, in which he sweeps away the idea of animal magnetism and a vital fluid, and attributes the extraordinary mesmeric cures to the influence of *suggestion* on the patient, who, by the treatment, is made preternaturally alive to the faintest suggestion expressed, or even unexpressed, by the operator. Bertrand, however, records that in the trance state the subjects have unquestionably a marked exaltation of their intellectual powers, apparently enabling them to gain a knowledge and prevision of their malady, often a marvellous appreciation of time, and a community of sensation between operator and subject. It is also alleged that a state of clairvoyance, or seeing without eyes, was sometimes exhibited. Moreover, and this had been largely overlooked before, complete anæsthesia, or absence of sensation, was induced in the entranced subject.

These were marvels enough and testified to by weighty authority, albeit they were in general discredited by the medical profession. Up to this time England had held aloof from the subject, regarding it with extreme disfavour. But, in 1838, an eminent London medical man, Dr. Elliotson—then professor at, and senior physician to, University College Hospital—having been convinced by some mesmeric experiments he had witnessed, took up the subject with characteristic energy and enthusiasm. He founded a mesmeric hospital

in London, and also a journal called the *Zoist*, which for thirteen years was the organ of the medical mesmerists—its pages recording not only the extraordinary cures wrought by mesmerism, but also many of the more startling phenomena, such as the community of sensation between the operator and his subject, and the clairvoyance noticed by the early French investigators. In spite of his high standing, Elliotson's advocacy of mesmerism caused him to be ostracized by the medical profession, led to the loss of his practice, and compelled him to resign the high official positions he held. The same fate followed Dr. Esdaile, an able surgeon in India, appointed, by the Governor-General, Presidency Surgeon at Calcutta. In his six years' practice in India, and in the mesmeric hospital he opened in Calcutta, Esdaile performed no less than 261 serious operations on patients when under the mesmeric trance, some 200 tumours were removed, varying from 10 to 103 pounds in weight! Not the slightest pain was felt in any case, and nearly all made a good recovery, the mortality under such operations being reduced from 50 to 8 per cent. The discovery of chloroform was made about this period; the ease of administering and the certainty of the operation of this anæsthetic, compared with the tedious and often uncertain induction of the mesmeric trance, led to its general adoption, though cases undoubtedly arise where it would be far safer to employ the mesmeric trance. The profession, however, would have

nothing to do with mesmerism, and hounded out of its ranks any practitioner, however eminent, who ventured to use what the *Lancet*, in 1848, called "this odious fraud."

Hitherto the mesmerists were possessed by the idea of a peculiar fluid, communicated to the patient by the passes they employed. Dr. Braid, a Manchester physician, in 1843 showed that a patient could be entranced simply by gazing at a bright object. Braid called this process *hypnotism*, from the Greek word for sleep, and this term has now replaced the word mesmerism, which connotes a special theory. As was the case with the older mesmerists, Braid found at first surprising support for the doctrine of phrenology, when his patients were entranced; slight pressure on different parts of the head giving rise to the exhibition of mental characteristics in the subject, corresponding with the location of the so-called organs of language, laughter, etc., with which phrenologists had mapped out the skull! Though the results, which I myself have repeated, are very curious, the cause is obscure and may arise from telepathy or some unconscious suggestion (as Braid subsequently believed) conveyed to the subject by the operator.

On the Continent, somewhat later, distinguished physiologists, like Professor C. Richet, and physicians of note, such as Dr. Charcot, Liebault, Bernheim and others, took up the investigation, added largely to our knowledge, and founded schools for the

study and practice of hypnotism. At Nancy and elsewhere hypnotic treatment is used in the hospitals, and the value of this remedial agent is now generally recognized. In England, we owe to Dr. Milne Bramwell and Dr. Lloyd Tuckey the publication of standard medical works on hypnotism, or treatment by suggestion. This is not the place to pursue the medical side of the question any further; it will be sufficient to say that the popular aversion to hypnotism as a dangerous process is entirely baseless. Its practice as a remedial agent should, however, be restricted wholly to qualified medical men, just as is the use of chloroform or other powerful narcotics.

Moreover, the incontestable cures effected by hypnotism, often when other means had failed, do not always require the subject to be entranced; monotonous and repeated suggestion can produce the effect even when the patient remains fully conscious.

In fact, an American practitioner (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xii.) treats his patients by silent suggestion, and has published a record of remarkable cures effected in this way, which closely resembles the Christian Science "treatment at a distance," by their healers.

History is full of the miracles of healing wrought by suggestion. Greatrakes in the seventeenth century, Gasner in the eighteenth, Prince Hohenlohe, and other notable faith-healers, in the nineteenth, all accomplished wonderful cures without medical skill. To

say they were due to " suggestion " is merely to conceal our ignorance of the processes involved. Suggestion no more explains the results than the crack of the starting pistol explains a race. Both are simply signals for a new departure. The suggestion given by the operator liberates the subconscious, recuperative, and formative forces within the organism of the patient. Success consists in overcoming the difficulty of setting these forces at work, and often the most effective way is, as it were, by a flank movement, an indirect suggestion, and not a direct assault. That there *is* a hidden self below the threshold of consciousness, the subliminal self, has, we think, been abundantly proved: medical and psychological research in the future will doubtless throw more light on this strange and silent partner of our life.

Some of the most remarkable cures effected by hypnotic treatment have been in the region of habits and morals. The drunkard has been made sober, the idle industrious, and insidious drug habits overcome. In the dissolution of self-respect, peculiar to the victims of such habits, there seems to be, as Mr. Myers remarks, " nothing on which sage or evangelist can lay hold. Yet we have seen hypnotic suggestion effect the magical change and restore the degraded outcast to a safe and honourable position among his fellow men."

The investigation of hypnotism from the point of view of psychical research was begun

by Mr. Gurney soon after the foundation of the S.P.R., and his brilliant work in this direction is of enduring value. Gurney distinguished three stages in hypnosis—first, the *alert* stage, when the subject will, when requested, open his eyes, answer questions but cannot originate remarks, is generally sensitive to pain and will respond to any suggestion, even when he is half conscious he is making a fool of himself; next, the *deep* stage, into which he will pass with eyeballs rolled upwards, insensitive to pain, but mentally active; this stage quickly lapses into a profound sleep and irresponsiveness.

One of the most curious phenomena—the *appreciation of time* by the hypnotized subject—was tested by Gurney, and also by myself, nearly thirty years ago. A subject was hypnotized and told to wake up in a certain number of minutes and then write his name. There was no timepiece in the room and the subject had no watch. At the precise minute he woke and mechanically wrote his name, wholly ignorant why he did so, nothing being remembered of the command when the subject was awake. Again and again we tried, with periods of longer duration, such as thirty-two, fifty-five, and ninety-six minutes; there was not the least mistake and no means of his gaining any knowledge of the time by ordinary perception. Dr. Milne Bramwell has, in recent years, carried this experiment much further. It is simply necessary to give the command when the patient is in the

trance, tell him to write his name, or do any simple thing, at a given time, and then wake him up. When questioned he knows nothing of what he has been ordered to do, but nevertheless fulfils it exactly at the required time. Thus Dr. Bramwell told a female patient when entranced to make a cross on a piece of paper at the end of 7,200 minutes, and mark down the time she then thought it was without looking at the timepiece. The time fell due when the patient was teaching a Sunday-school class. She suddenly felt an impulse to make a cross and mark the time. It was only on looking round at a clock behind her that she found the time was right; the number of minutes had also been estimated with perfect correctness. Another time she was told, when entranced, to make a cross in 10,070 minutes. This suggestion fell due when she was subsequently hypnotized by Dr. Bramwell and had no means of seeing the time. Nevertheless, exactly at the assigned moment she made a cross and wrote down the correct time. Out of fifty-five similar experiments, forty-five were perfectly successful and only two not fulfilled. Dr. Mitchell, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, and a member of the Council of the S.P.R., has since corroborated these results by a large number of well-conducted experiments which were uniformly successful, though the time interval was sometimes over 200,000 minutes, and sometimes given in many thousand seconds.

How are these results to be explained?

There is no question of fraud, continental observers having obtained the same remarkable results under test conditions. If hypnotized before the command is fulfilled, the subject will remember the order given and tell the precise number of days, hours and minutes required to fulfil it. Thus, during hypnosis, being told to make a cross in 4,580 minutes and asked how long this was, a subject replied immediately, three days four hours and twenty minutes, which is correct, but could not say how she made the calculation; the order was accurately fulfilled at the stated time. The whole process goes on through the operation of a subconscious intelligence. Possibly the stated time is reckoned, and the time as it passes is noted, unconsciously. On the other hand, the time of fulfilment sometimes falls due when the patient is asleep, nevertheless, she awakes at the correct moment and carries out the command. In the few experiments I made long ago, the hypnotized subject, when entranced, told me he watched the time by a large clock he saw. There was no clock in the room, nor any clock visible from the window; on asking which clock, he said that on the tower of the Houses of Parliament—about a quarter of a mile away and impossible to see from the rooms we were in. This suggests that some clairvoyant faculty is unconsciously exercised by the subject, and this may possibly be the case. Mr Myers quotes a case where a person, in his ordinary waking state, occasionally had a similar vision

of an invisible clock face and saw the exact time thereon.

Some people have the faculty of awaking exactly at the definite time they have agreed upon overnight; here the time-sense, when not due to a habit, must be a subconscious estimate of the efflux of time.

The singular exaltation of the intellectual powers in particular directions is characteristic of many subjects when hypnotized. Thus a rather dull lad, during hypnosis, was asked, in my presence, how many times the letter c occurred on a page of print suddenly placed before him, and answered correctly after a shorter interval than one could count the number of times that that letter occurred in a couple of lines. Other experiments were long sums in arithmetic, correctly and swiftly done, during hypnosis, which the subject had failed to do in a longer time in the normal state. Again (and these were all private experiments, no question of trickery coming in), another subject was asked by me to add up a long row of figures I had jotted down at random and, *at the same time*, to count aloud the odd numbers up to 100. Both acts were correctly, quickly, and simultaneously performed; many other similar experiments were made, illustrating the wonderful exaltation and even dual activity of the mind in the hypnotized subject. These experiments remind us of the case of the calculating boys, to which reference has been made in a previous chapter.

Another remarkable feature in the hypnotic trance is that hallucinations can be provoked either during the trance, or subsequently to it, by a command from the operator. Thus an entranced subject, on being told he would see his friend B—— at a certain time after he woke up, when the time came actually believed he had met and clearly seen the person named, and related the fact to others, though fully aware B—— was at that time in America or elsewhere. These "post-hypnotic" hallucinations are of great theoretical interest in psychical research, as showing that lifelike phantasms can be created by pure suggestion.

CHAPTER VIII

EXPERIMENTAL AND SPONTANEOUS TELEPATHY OVER LONG DISTANCES

THE next question that presents itself is, *how far* can telepathic impressions be conveyed? We have already referred to numerous successful trials in the hypnotic state when considerable distances separated the operator and the subject. In the waking state, experiments have been quoted showing that success has attended trials when the agent and percipient have been separated by closed doors and were some yards apart.

A few successful experiments were made in 1892 between two ladies, Miss Despard and Miss Campbell, when the distance was much greater. The trials were made not only a mile or two apart in London, but also when the former was at Surbiton and the latter in London: the experiments were published by the S.P.R., but must be omitted here from want of space. The Rev. A. Glardon in Switzerland also made similar experiments between himself in the Canton Vaud and a friend in Florence. These are described in vol. i. of *Human Personality*, with illustrations of some of the diagrams thus mentally transferred, many of

the correspondences being singularly good. But the most systematic and carefully conducted series of experiments, when the agent and percipient are widely separated, have been made by my friends, Miss H. Ramsden and Miss C. Miles. Full details of these experiments were published in the *Journal* and in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. for 1906, 1907 and 1908. Miss Miles consulted me about the best method of conducting the experiments when they began, and both she and Miss Ramsden have been scrupulously careful throughout in following out the suggestions made. Both ladies are members or associates of the S.P.R., and are energetic and excellent investigators. The following is from the introduction to the first of their joint papers—

"Miss Ramsden, having met with a certain amount of success in experiments in thought-transference with two other friends of hers, asked Miss Miles to try a systematic series with her. It was then arranged that Miss Miles, living at Egerton Gardens, London, S.W., should play the part of 'agent,' while Miss Ramsden, at her home, Bulstrode, Gerard's Cross, Buckinghamshire (about twenty miles from London), acted as 'percipient,' the times of the experiments being fixed by pre-arrangement.

"Miss Miles, at the time of each experiment, noted in a book kept for the purpose the idea or image which she wished to convey, while Miss Ramsden wrote down each day

the impressions that had come into her mind, and sent the record to Miss Miles before knowing what she (Miss M.) had attempted on her side. Miss Miles then pasted this record into her book opposite her own notes, and in some cases added a further note explanatory of her circumstances at the time, to which it will be seen that Miss Ramsden's impressions often corresponded. Whenever it was possible, Miss Miles obtained confirmatory evidence from other persons as to the circumstances that had not been noted at the time, and the corroboration of these persons was written in her book and is published."

Having examined the documents, I can vouch for the conclusive evidence they afford of the frequent and often surprising transmission of telepathic impressions across the wide distances that separated the agent and percipient. The best results appeared to be obtained when there was *no special effort* made by the transmitter—confirming our previous inference, that it is the subconscious, the subliminal activities, and not the conscious intelligence, which is operative in these and other supernormal psychical phenomena. In fact, Miss Miles writes that she found it was much easier to impress an idea without specially concentrating her mind on it at a fixed time.

Here, for example, is a singularly successful experiment of this kind. Miss Miles was attending a meeting of the S.P.R. on the afternoon of October 27, 1905, and noticed

the curious pair of spectacles worn by a gentleman near her. This, she thought, would be a good subject for her experiment with Miss Ramsden, and so, on returning home, she wrote down the word, but did not attempt to visualize it: "*October* 27. *Spectacles.*—*C. M.*" Miss Ramsden, in Buckinghamshire, that evening wrote: "*October* 27. 7 *p.m. Spectacles.* This was the only idea that came to me, after waiting a long time. — H. R." It is difficult to imagine this to have been a lucky guess, for Miss Miles does not wear spectacles. If telepathy be denied, the objector can only explain the results by collusion.

Here is another experiment. Miss Miles noted in her book as the idea she wished to transmit: "*November* 2. *Hands.—C. M.*" Miss Ramsden, twenty miles away at her own home, wrote: "*November* 2. 7 *p.m. I began to visualize a little black hand, well formed.*" (Some other impressions were also noted, but Miss Ramsden adds), "*the hand was the most vivid.*" Miss Miles is an artist and was drawing in charcoal that afternoon the hands of a portrait; Lady Guendolen Ramsden was staying with her at the time and confirms this as follows: "Miss Miles was drawing the hands of the model in the afternoon.—Guendolen Ramsden." Two other witnesses also confirm this statement.

Many other experiments were more or less successful, others, however, were failures; and a series tried early in 1906, when Miss Ramsden

was in Norway and Miss Miles in London, were almost all failures. But here there were disturbing circumstances, which might possibly have accounted for the disappointing results.

Another series of experiments was tried later the same year. Throughout this second series, which lasted for about a month, from October 19 to November 14, 1906, inclusive, Miss Miles was again agent and Miss Ramsden percipient. Miss Miles was staying first near Bristol and afterwards near Malmesbury, Wiltshire. Miss Ramsden was living all the time near Kingussie, Inverness-shire, a distance of about four hundred miles, as the crow flies, from Bristol.

The general plan of action was that Miss Ramsden should keep her mind free from distraction about 7 p.m. each day the experiment was tried and think of Miss Miles, then write down on a postcard any impression that she received, and post the card to Miss Miles the next morning. Miss Miles, on her side, noted briefly on a postcard the principal impressions made on her during the day and posted it to Miss Ramsden. In this series copies of many of the postcards were also posted simultaneously to me. The postcards were afterwards pasted together in a book with notes, the postmarks showing the date of posting. It should be added that, beyond knowing that her friend was staying at a country house near Bristol, Miss Ramsden was quite ignorant of Miss Miles' doings and

surroundings, never having been in that part of England. The results are thus summed up by the S.P.R. research officer—

"Out of a total of fifteen days' experiments, the idea that Miss Miles was attempting to convey, as recorded on her postcards, appeared on six occasions in a complete or partial form among Miss Ramsden's impressions on the same date. But it also happened that almost every day some of Miss Ramsden's impressions represented pretty closely something that Miss Miles had been seeing or talking about on the same day. In other words, while the agent only succeeded occasionally in transferring the ideas deliberately chosen by her for the purpose, the percipient seemed often to have some sort of supernormal knowledge of her friend's surroundings, irrespective of what that friend had specially wished her to see. . . .

"It has to be considered how many of the successes might be mere guesses, whose correctness was due to chance and not to telepathy. After studying all the records, however, it appears to us that while some of the coincidences of thought between the two experimenters are probably accidental, the total amount of correspondence is more than can be thus accounted for and points distinctly to the action of telepathy between them."

This is the opinion of a skilled and severe critic, and it is fully borne out by a careful perusal of the published records. The reader should note that all the experiments were given in full, not a favourable selection, and

that Miss Miles' record was always made *before* she heard what Miss Ramsden's impressions were. When one thinks of the thousands of things that might be selected for the purpose of the experiment, the fact of *any* agreement between the two records is suggestive, but when we find frequent remarkable agreements, the only inference is that one mind must in some way have communicated its impression to the other, four hundred miles away.

Further, and occasionally, very striking evidence of long-distance telepathy is given in a series of experiments between the same two ladies during the summer of 1907. Miss Miles was then on a sketching tour with Lady Ramsden in the Ardennes, and Miss Ramsden was staying at her father's country house in the Highlands of Scotland.

On returning to England Miss Miles went to Newbury in Berkshire for some painting lessons, and stayed in lodgings, her landlady having a delicate little girl in whom Miss Miles was much interested. Unaware of the existence of this child, Miss Ramsden writes from the Highlands on a postcard to Miss Miles—

"October 31, 1907. I think you wish me to see a little girl with brown hair down her back, tied with a ribbon in the usual way. She is sitting at a table with her back turned and seems busy . . . cutting out scraps with a pair of scissors. She has on a white pinafore, and I should guess her age to be between eight and twelve.—H. R."

Here is the description of the child written by Miss Miles' landlady, Mrs. Lovegrove: "I have a little girl, aged eleven, with brown hair tied with a ribbon; she wears a pinafore and, being ill, amuses herself by cutting out scraps. I had a long talk [about her ?] with Miss Miles on October 31.—L. Lovegrove."

During the latter part of 1908, Miss Ramsden made numerous similar experiments on telepathy at a distance between herself, who now acted as "agent," and another lady who acted as "percipient." These experiments are described in the *Journal* of the S.P.R. for December 1910, and contain additional evidence of the telepathic transmission of ideas and mental impressions over considerable distances. We may, therefore, take it as experimentally proved, beyond reasonable doubt, that telepathy can bridge great distances of space. Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets, anticipated this—

> "If the dull substance of my flesh was thought,
> Injurious distance would not stop the way."

This is a delightful anticipation for parted friends if telepathy became more widespread.

Now let us pass from these direct experiments to spontaneous cases: that is to say, to the evidence afforded by numerous trustworthy witnesses of the occurrence of some event, painful or otherwise, to one person, and the simultaneous perception of it by another person some distance away. Here, for instance,

is a case of a trivial occurrence, but interesting as illustrating how a passive state in the percipient, especially the transition between sleeping and waking, favours the reception and emergence into consciousness of a telepathic impact, as this appears to be. Note also that the incident is well attested, that the coincidence in time was evidently very close, and the account itself was sent to the S.P.R. on the very day that the incident occurred, accompanied by a letter from Mr. Harrison stating that "Everything happened exactly as stated."

"*February* 7, 1891.

"I reside with my husband at 15 Lupton Street, N.W. This afternoon I was lying on the sofa, sound asleep, when I suddenly awoke, thinking I heard my husband sigh as if in pain. I arose immediately, expecting to find him in the room. He was not there, and, looking at my watch, I found it was half-past three. At six o'clock my husband came in. He called my attention to a bruise on his forehead, which was caused by his having knocked it against the stone steps in a Turkish bath. I said to him, 'I know when it happened—it was at half-past three, for I heard you sigh as if in pain at the time.' He replied, 'Yes, that was the exact time, for I remember noticing the clock directly after.'

"The gentleman who appends his name as

witness was present when this conversation took place.

"LOUISA E. HARRISON.

"*Witness:* Henry Hooton, 23 Bunhill Row, E.C."

A very similar case was sent to the S.P.R. by Mr. Ruskin. The percipient was Mrs. Arthur Severn, the wife of the well-known landscape painter, who, writing from Brantwood, Coniston, states that one morning she woke up with a start, feeling that she had had a hard blow on her mouth, and with a distinct sense that she had been cut and her upper lip bleeding. She held her pocket handkerchief to the place, and was surprised when she removed it not to see any blood. Then she realized that nothing could have struck her as she lay asleep in bed and that it must have been a dream. Looking at her watch, she found it was seven o'clock, and hence, as her husband was not in the room, concluded he must have gone for an early sail on the lake.

At breakfast-time, about 9.30, Mr. Severn came in, holding his handkerchief to his lip, and on being questioned told his wife that a sudden squall came on whilst he was in the boat, causing the tiller to swing round and hit him a severe blow on the upper lip, which was cut rather badly and would not stop bleeding. When asked when this occurred, he replied it must have been about seven o'clock. Mr. Severn corroborates this account, the fuller

details of which are given in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 188.

Many other similar cases resting on first-hand evidence might be quoted. Even more common than the telepathic transmission of pain are the numerous well-attested records where some auditory or visual impression has been transferred to great distances. Here is one such case, quoted not only for its brevity, but also because a written record of the incident was made and sent off by the percipient before anything was known of what had really occurred.

Miss King, at Exeter, one Sunday morning at four o'clock, was awakened by hearing the words, "Come to me, Trix; I'm so ill." She stated to the S.P.R. research officer, Miss Johnson, who investigated the case, that it was just like a real person speaking, and she recognized the voice as that of her friend Miss Ridd, who was the only person that called her "Trix," and she felt it could be no one else. She was so much impressed that the same day she wrote to Miss Ridd—who was then in London, two hundred miles away—and related the incident. Miss Ridd, by return of post, replied as follows, in a letter which had been kept and was shown: "I didn't mean to tell you about it, but the coincidence is so strange I must. Sunday morning about four o'clock I had an awfully bad pain, and thought I was going to die for a few minutes; when I could speak, I stretched out my arms to your photo and said, 'My Trix, come to me; I'm so ill,

come to me!' Wasn't it strange?" It should be added that there was no expectation of Miss Ridd's sudden illness (angina pectoris) at the time it occurred, as she had not had an attack for some time (*Proc. S.P.R.*, x. 290).

It would be tiresome, even if space allowed, to quote the large number of similar cases, supported by first-hand evidence, which are published in the records of the S.P.R. The body of evidence is like a faggot—a single stick may be broken, but the whole bundle has a strength which resists fracture. Year by year this bundle is gaining in volume and solidity, and the most captious critic, though he may find a weak case here and there, cannot break down the accumulated evidence afforded by the whole.

How telepathy is propagated we have not the remotest idea. Certainly it is not likely to be through any material medium or by any physical agency known to us. The existence of wireless telegraphy and the bridging of vast spaces by messages transmitted in this way naturally suggest that thought might likewise be transmitted by a similar system of ether waves, which some have called "brain waves." And there is no doubt the fact of wireless telegraphy has made telepathy more widely credible and popular. As remarked on a previous page, hostility to a new idea arises largely from its being unrelated to existing knowledge. As soon as we see, or think we see, some relation or resemblance to what we

already know, hostility of mind changes to hospitality, and we have no further doubt of the truth of the new idea. It is not so much *evidence* that convinces men of something entirely foreign to their habit of thought, as the discovery of a *link* between the new and the old.

Let us, therefore, for a moment examine this analogy of telepathy to wireless telegraphy. Even if we assume the so-called "brain waves" to be infinitely minute waves in the ether that fills all space, they would still obey what is called "the law of inverse squares," that is to say, spreading on every side in ever expanding waves, they would decay in proportion to the square of the distance from their source. Thus, at a thousand yards away from the source, the effect produced on any receiver would be a million times less than the effect upon the same receiver a yard away from the originating source. Hence, to transmit waves over great distances through free space requires tremendous energy in the originating source of these waves, otherwise the waves would be so enfeebled when they reached the receiver that it could not detect them. Now we have no evidence to show that any tremendous mental effort is required on the part of the agent when experiments on thought transference—such as between Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden—are conducted at great distances apart. And what, on the brain-wave theory, must be the mental energy emanating from a dying person to transmit a mental impression from himself

to a friend on the other side of the globe ? for such cases are on record.

There are several other reasons that could be urged against any physical mode of transmitting telepathy, thus the incidence of "brain waves," if such existed, would be felt by great numbers of people and not by one or two percipients, as is the case, and they would only create a faint, but exact, image of their source, which is not the case in telepathy.

The fact is, in my opinion, the supernormal phenomena we are discussing in this little book do not belong to the material plane, and therefore the laws of the physical universe are inapplicable to them. It is hopeless to attempt thus to explain telepathy and other phenomena which transcend knowledge derived from our sense perceptions,—though these latter are the foundation of physical science and the proper guide for our daily business here on earth.

It is highly probable that the conscious waking self of those concerned takes no part in the actual telepathic transmission. The idea or object thought of in some way impresses the subliminal self of the agent, and this impression is transferred, doubtless instantaneously across space, to the inner subconscious self of the percipient. Here, however, a favourable moment may have to be awaited before the outer or conscious self can be stimulated into activity; for delay in the emergence of the impression is often

noted. It is quite possible, therefore, that if we knew how to effect this transfer, unfailingly and accurately, from the outer to the inner self and *vice versa*, telepathy would become a universal and common method of communicating thought. This may be the case in the unseen world, when—

> "As star to star vibrates light, may soul to soul
> Strike thro' a finer element of her own."

In the next chapter we must examine the subject of apparitions, and shall find in many of these cases additional evidence of telepathy.

CHAPTER IX

VISUAL HALLUCINATIONS: PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING AND DEAD

To most people the word "hallucination" means some delusion, or error of the mind, and nothing more. There are, of course, hallucinations of the insane and in delirium, where there is no objective reality whatever underlying the phantasm conjured up by the diseased mind. There are also hallucinations experienced by sane and healthy minds; some person is seen, or something is felt, or words are heard, for which there is no material cause. The mind receives the hallucination as if it came through the channels of sense, and accordingly externalizes the impression, seeking its source in the world outside itself, whereas in all hallucinations the source is within the mind and is not derived from an impression received through the recognized organ of sense.

Many hallucinations are due to some slight morbid affection of the brain, and their origin is a pathological study; but some hallucinations correspond with an appropriate real event occurring to another person; some accident,

illness, emotion or death happening at that time to a distant friend. Such hallucinations are termed *veridical* or truth-telling; their study is a branch of psychology, and is an important part of psychical research. There may be no more substantiality about such visual hallucinations than there is about the reflection of oneself in a looking-glass. The image in the mirror is veridical and caused by a neighbouring objective reality; a "veridical hallucination," in like manner, is a mental image coinciding with some distant unseen real occurrence; but the mental image is *not* derived through the organs of sense, as is the reflection seen in a mirror. It is in fact due to some impression made, otherwise than through the channels of sense, on the higher tracts of the brain, which then projects the impression into the outer world. In this it differs from an illusion where a slight external cause, perceived by the senses, may start an imaginary phantom.

Now there is unquestionable evidence that visual hallucinations can be produced telepathically. Thus a friend, and member of the Council of the S.P.R., the late Rev. W. S. Moses —more widely known only as 'M. A. Oxon'— one night desired to appear to a friend some miles distant, who was not informed beforehand of the intended experiment. At the very time his friend saw Mr. Moses appear before him, and as he gazed in astonishment, the figure faded away. A second time the experiment was repeated, with equal success.

A year or two later, Mr. S. H. Beard (well known to myself and others then on the Council of the S.P.R.) made a series of similar experiments, with equal success. The facts were investigated by Mr. Gurney, and fresh experiments made with success under his direction; full details of the evidence will be found in vol. i. of *Phantasms of the Living*. On one occasion, the phantom of Mr. Beard was seen and recognized by two persons in the room, simultaneously, who were unaware of the fact that Mr. Beard, some miles away, was then trying, by an effort of will, to appear to them. These results seemed at first almost incredible, but complete confirmation of them has been obtained from independent experiments made by others. In such cases the "agent" whose phantasm is seen is usually about to sleep, or is asleep, at the time of the apparition, although the wish to appear may have been formed earlier in the waking state.

Unless we reject all testimony, or attribute the numerous cases investigated to some illusion, there can be no doubt that a distant person can, by his directed thought, or by dream, create a phantom of himself in the mind of a distant percipient. This suggests a general explanation of those visual hallucinations, or apparitions, at the moment of death, which are supported by abundant first-hand evidence.

Now if a sane and healthy person sees a phantom of his friend B. at the moment when

B., a hundred miles away, was unexpectedly dying, we should rightly conclude, if this case stood alone, that it was simply a chance coincidence. Many hallucinations occur, which do not coincide with any particular event, and one which does do so is more likely to be remembered and talked of than the others. But what if investigation shows that there are hundreds of cases, well substantiated, where an apparition of B. is seen (or hallucination of some kind suggesting B. is perceived), and that this closely coincides with the time when the distant friend B. was dying, or suffering from a mental shock. When, moreover, before the hallucination there was no knowledge of B.'s state, nor anything to suggest B. Now this is precisely what has been ascertained by the S.P.R. Over two hundred cases of apparitions at or about the time of death, resting upon first-hand and unimpeachable evidence, have been collected and published in the two large volumes entitled *Phantasms of the Living*, the chief author of which was that brilliant and able man, Edmund Gurney. What conclusion can we draw from this except that some connection exists between the phantasm and the distant person who is dying? And in many cases the simplest explanation of this connection is that afforded by telepathy, though other cases lead us to infer what Mr. Myers calls an *excursive action* of the spirit, which in some way renders its presence manifest to the percipient.

In physical science we also meet with the problem of coincidences. Thus in the spectrum

of the sun it was noticed long ago that there were hundreds of transverse fine black lines running across the spectrum from the red end to the violet. These were for many years a mystery. Then it was discovered that in the spectrum of terrestrial metals there were numerous fine bright lines. It was found that the two bright yellow lines of sodium exactly coincided with two black lines in the yellow of the solar spectrum. That may have been a chance coincidence. But it was soon discovered that the hundreds of fine bright lines in the spectrum of iron vapour exactly coincided in position with hundreds of fine black lines in the solar spectrum. This could not possibly be due to chance, as the "law of probability" demonstrates; so there must be some *causal*, not casual, connection between the two; this was confirmed when many other exact correspondences were discovered between terrestrial and solar spectra. These facts, coupled with the known reciprocity of radiation and absorption, established the existence of the vapour of numerous terrestrial elements in the atmosphere enveloping the sun and fixed stars.

Science, by a study of coincidences, has annihilated space and definitely arrived at the knowledge of the composition of heavenly bodies, millions upon millions of miles distant from the earth.

Can we do for psychical science what has been done for physical science? Are the coincidences in *time* of hallucinations with

some distant event suggested by them,—sufficiently numerous and exact to warrant a conclusion with a confidence such as the coincidences in *space*, in the lines of terrestrial and stellar spectra, has afforded to physical science ?

The problem which Edmund Gurney first attempted to solve was to obtain a numerical comparison of veridical hallucinations with those which were purely accidental. When the relative frequency of these two classes is ascertained, the probability of mere chance coincidence being the cause of the former can be calculated. By a " census of hallucinations," begun in 1884, Edmund Gurney obtained from nearly six thousand adults replies to the question " whether during the preceding ten years they had experienced, when in good health and wide awake, a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a human being, or hearing a voice which suggested a human presence, when no one was there." After his death, a similar but more elaborate census was undertaken (with the approval of the International Congress of Experimental Psychology) by a committee of the S.P.R., over which Professor H. Sidgwick presided. This committee, in answer to a question similar to the above, except that no time limit was named, received written replies from seventeen thousand adults.

Careful and critical investigation of the affirmative replies led both Edmund Gurney and the committee to conclude that pure

chance could not account for the number of cases which showed a close coincidence between the time of death and the apparition of a dying person recognized by the distant percipient. The committee found that, making amplest allowance for various sources of error, the proportion of veridical (*i. e.* coincidental cases) to the meaningless (*i. e.* non-coincidental cases) is 440 times greater than pure chance would give; a result which they stated in the following cautious words: "Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold as a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be attempted in this paper;—nor perhaps exhausted in this age." (Report in *S.P.R. Proceedings*, vol. x., p. 394; the reader should consult this volume, which is devoted to a critical discussion of this important census.)

Such a result disposes once for all of the common explanation: "It was just an odd chance that the apparition happened to coincide with the death of that particular person;" the hits being remembered, and the misses forgotten. In fact, before arriving at the calculation above given, the committee made an almost extravagant allowance for forgetfulness in the latter case, and exaggeration in the former.

The statistical evidence is not, however, the argument that appeals most to the general public. Any person who has seen for himself an apparition, which he recognized as that of

a distant friend, and who afterwards found the time of the appearance to have coincided with the unexpected death of his friend, would be far more impressed by that single fact than by any statistics. This is also true of those who merely hear of such a case from intimate friends. It is much to be desired that every percipient of any hallucination should, before he knows whether it has any significance, make and show to some other person a written memorandum; thus precluding the objection often raised by sceptics, that there is no documentary evidence of his previous ignorance of the crisis through which his friend was passing when he experienced the hallucination. Unfortunately, people do not as a rule write down these experiences and send them to friends; but as communications of the kind are now taken more seriously, we may hope that this will become more common. Even as it is, there are not wanting cases authenticated by evidence of this very kind. The committee, for instance, gives seventeen evidential cases which were noted at the time by the percipient.

In the following case a note of the apparition seen shortly before death was made at the time, and preserved by the percipient, when she had no knowledge of the brief, fatal illness of the deceased. The percipient, Miss Hervey, then staying in Tasmania with Lady H., had just come in from a ride in excellent health and spirits, and was leaving her room up-stairs to have tea with Lady H., when she saw

coming up the stairs the figure of her cousin, a nurse in Dublin, to whom she was much attached. She at once recognized the figure, which was dressed in grey, and without waiting to see it disappear, she hurried to Lady H., whom she told what she had seen. Lady H. laughed at her, but told her to note it down in her diary, which she did. Diary and note were seen by the critical Mr. Podmore, who investigated the case on behalf of the S.P.R. The note ran as follows: "Saturday, April 21, 1888, 6 p.m. Vision of (giving her cousin's nickname) on landing in grey dress." In June news of this cousin's unexpected death reached Miss Hervey in Tasmania. She died in a Dublin hospital from typhus fever on April 22, 1888. A letter, written the same day, giving an account of Miss Ethel B.'s death, was sent to Miss Hervey, preserved by her, and seen by Mr. Podmore. It states that the crisis of the illness began at 4 a.m. on the 22nd, but that Miss B. lingered on for twelve hours, dying at 4.30 p.m. As the difference of time between Tasmania and Dublin is about ten hours, the apparition preceded the actual death by some thirty-two hours. The kind of dress worn by the nurses in the hospital was unknown to Miss Hervey, and was found to be of a greyish tone when seen from a little distance. The phantom made so vivid an impression on Miss Hervey that, on the evening she saw it, she wrote a long letter to her cousin in Dublin telling her about it. This letter arrived some six weeks

after her death, and was returned to the writer. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. x., p. 282.)

The next case is of high evidential value, the impression, which was unique in the percipient's experience, having been at once communicated to a third person, whose testimony to that point we have obtained; the coincidence in time was certainly close to within a very few minutes, and perhaps exact. Mr. S., the percipient, who was personally known to Mr. Gurney, and occupied a position of considerable responsibility, did not wish his name to be published, but permitted it to be given to inquirers, and offered to answer any questions personally. (See *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 210.)

Mr. S. and Mr. F. L. had been colleagues in an office and intimate friends for about eight years, entertaining for one another a very great regard and esteem. On Monday, March 19, 1883, Mr. F. L., on coming to the office, complained of having suffered from indigestion. On Saturday he was absent, and, as Mr. S. afterwards learned, was seen by a medical man, who thought he wanted a day or two of rest, but expressed no opinion that anything was seriously amiss.

On Saturday evening, March 24, Mr. S., who had a headache, was at home, sitting on a couch at the shaded side of the room lit by a gas chandelier, under which, in the middle of the room, his wife sat reading. Having remarked to her that for the first time for months he felt rather too warm, he leaned

back on the couch, and the next minute saw Mr. F. L. standing before him, dressed as usual. Mr. S. noticed that he was wearing his black-banded hat, his overcoat unbuttoned, and carried a stick. He looked fixedly at Mr. S., and then passed away. At the moment Mr. S. felt an icy chill, and his hair bristled. He quoted to himself from Job: "And lo, a spirit passed before me, and the hair of my flesh stood up."

Turning then to his wife, who had been looking in another direction, and had seen nothing, he asked her the time. She said, "Twelve minutes to nine." He said, "I asked because F. L. is dead. I have just seen him." She tried to persuade him that it was fancy; but he persisted that he had seen Mr. F. L., and was sure of his death. She noticed that he looked much agitated and very pale. He was afterwards struck by his own instant certainty, with nothing to suggest the idea, of his friend's death, and by his acceptance of the incident as a matter of course, without feeling surprise.

On Sunday afternoon, about three o'clock, Mr. F. L.'s brother, A., called with the news at Mr. S.'s house. It had occurred to him on the way that Mr. S. would probably have a presentiment of F. L.'s death owing to the strong sympathy between them. Seeing that this was the case, when Mr. S. met him at the door, he said: "I suppose you know what I have come to tell you?" Mr. S. replied: "Yes, your brother is dead," and told of his vision on the previous evening.

Mr. A. L. on Sunday about 8 p.m. had visited his brother F., whom he found sitting up in his room. Leaving him about 8.40, apparently much better, Mr. A. L. went down to the dining-room, where he stayed with his sister for about half-an-hour, and then left, upon which his sister immediately went up-stairs, and found her brother F. lying dead on his bed from rupture of the aorta. His death must therefore have occurred either a few minutes before or after 9 p.m.

There had never been any thought-transference between him and Mr. S., who had never seen an apparition before, nor believed in them. Mr. A. L. describes himself as "no believer in visions." Mr. Gurney calculates the odds against such an event being due to mere chance coincidence as 208,000,000 to 1.

Sometimes the phantom is not only seen but heard, and may be regarded as an auditory as well as visual hallucination. The following striking case, though remote in point of time, is so well attested as to be worth quoting. It is from Mrs. Richardson of Combe Down, Bath, who gave Mr. Gurney a *viva voce* account precisely as here recorded. (See *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 443.) Mrs. Richardson described herself as a matter-of-fact person, and not given to frequent or vivid dreams.

"*August* 26, 1882.

"On September 9, 1848, at the siege of Mooltan, my husband, Major-General Richard-

son, C.B., then adjutant of his regiment, was most severely and dangerously wounded, and supposing himself dying, asked one of the officers with him to take the ring off his finger and send it to his wife, who, at that time, was fully 150 miles distant, at Ferozepore. On the night of September 9, 1848, I was lying on my bed, between sleeping and waking, when I distinctly saw my husband being carried off the field, seriously wounded, and heard his voice saying, 'Take this ring off my finger, and send it to my wife.' All the next day I could not get the sight or the voice out of my mind. In due time I heard of General Richardson having been severely wounded in the assault on Mooltan. He survived, however, and is still living. It was not for some time after the siege that I heard from Colonel L., the officer who helped to carry General Richardson off the field, that the request as to the ring was actually made to him, just as I had heard it at Ferozepore at that very time.

"M. A. RICHARDSON."

General Richardson, in answer to Mr. Gurney's inquiries, stated that he distinctly remembered the incident. He was wounded in the evening of September 9, and taking the ring off his finger, said to the late Major Lloyd, who was supporting him: "Send this to my wife," or words to that effect. He had not promised before leaving home to send her the ring, nor had he expressed any presentiment

of being hurt. As Mr. Myers remarks, "The detail about the ring seems fairly to raise the case out of the category of mere visions of absent persons who are known to be in danger, and with whom the percipient's thoughts have been anxiously engaged."

In the following case the percipient appeared to be transported to the actual scene of the event, and observed some minute details (afterwards verified) of inanimate objects around, somewhat as in a crystal vision. Such cases suggest the phenomena of clairvoyance, when the percipient's powers of vision extend far beyond the range of their organs of sight, the information so obtained being independent of the thought passing in the minds of others. Here, however, it seems possible that the phenomena may have been due to an "excursive action" on the part of the decedent's spirit.

"On October 24, 1889, Edmund Dunn, brother of Mrs. Agnes Paquet, was serving as fireman on the tug *Wolf*, a small steamer engaged in towing vessels in Chicago Harbour. At about 3 o'clock a.m. the tug fastened to a vessel, inside the piers, to tow her up the river. While adjusting the tow-line, Mr. Dunn fell or was thrown overboard by the tow-line, and drowned."

Mrs. Paquet's Statement

"I arose about the usual hour on the morning of the accident, probably about six o'clock.

I had slept well throughout the night, had no dreams or sudden awakenings. I awoke feeling gloomy and depressed, which feeling I could not shake off. After breakfast my husband went to his work, and, at the proper time, the children were gotten ready and sent to school, leaving me alone in the house. Soon after this I decided to steep and drink some tea, hoping it would relieve me of the gloomy feelings afore-mentioned. I went into the pantry, took down the tea-canister, and as I turned around my brother Edmund—or his exact image—stood before me and only a few feet away. The apparition stood with back towards me, or, rather, partially so, and was in the act of falling forward—away from me—seemingly impelled by two ropes or a loop of rope drawing against his legs. The vision lasted but a moment, disappearing over a low railing or bulwark, but was very distinct. I dropped the tea, clasped my hands to my face and exclaimed, 'My God! Ed. is drowned!'

"At about 10.30 a.m. my husband received a telegram from Chicago, announcing the drowning of my brother. When he arrived home he said to me, 'Ed. is sick in hospital at Chicago; I have just received a telegram,' to which I replied, 'Ed. is drowned; I saw him go overboard.' I then gave him a minute description of what I had seen. I stated that my brother, as I saw him, was bareheaded, had on a heavy blue sailor's shirt, no coat, and that he went over the rail or bulwark. I noticed that his

pants' legs were rolled up enough to show the white lining inside. I also described the appearance of the boat at the point where my brother went overboard.

"I am not nervous, and neither before nor since have I had any experience in the least degree similar to that above related.

"My brother was not subject to fainting or vertigo.

"AGNES PAQUET."

Mr. Paquet corroborates his wife's statement on all points. He went at once to Chicago, where he found that the appearance of the vessel, which his wife had never seen, was exactly as she had described it; while the crew confirmed her accounts of her brother's dress, "except that they thought he had had his hat on at the time of the accident. They said that he had purchased a pair of pants a few days before, and as they were a trifle long, wrinkling at the knees, had worn them rolled up, showing the white lining, as seen by my wife."

Upon this case (see *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vii., p. 34) Mrs. Sidgwick remarks—

"Here Mrs. Paquet not only had a vivid impression of her brother within a few hours of his death—not only knew that he was dead—but saw a more or less accurate representation of the scene of his death.

"It will have been noticed that her impression was not contemporaneous with the event to which it related, but occurred some six hours

afterwards. It was preceded by a feeling of depression with which she had awoken in the morning, and one is at first tempted to suppose that she had dreamed of the event and forgotten it, and that her subsequent vision was the result of a sudden revivification of the dream in her memory. But we do not know enough to justify us in assuming this, and against such a hypothesis may be urged the experience of Mrs. Storie, related in *Phantasms of the Living* (vol. i., p. 370), which somewhat resembles Mrs. Paquet's. Mrs. Storie tells us that all the evening she felt unusually nervous, and then, when she went to bed, she had a remarkable dream, in which she saw a series of scenes which afterwards turned out to have a clear relation to the death of her brother, who had been killed by a passing train four hours earlier. In her case the nervousness cannot be regarded as telepathic, as it is stated to have begun before the accident, but it seems quite possible that the nervousness and depression may have had to do with some condition in the percipient which rendered the vision possible."

A curious case, also involving the production of a kind of picture, which, having been seen by several people simultaneously, comes under the head of a "collective hallucination," is related by Mr. C. A. W. Lett (*Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii., p. 213) :—

"On the 5th April, 1873, my wife's father, Captain Towns, died at his residence, Cranbrook, Rose Bay, near Sydney, N.S. Wales.

About six weeks after his death my wife had occasion, one evening about nine o'clock, to go to one of the bedrooms in the [above] house. She was accompanied by a young lady, Miss Berthon, and as they entered the room—the gas was burning all the time—they were amazed to see, reflected as it were on the polished surface of the wardrobe, the image of Captain Towns. It was barely half-figure, the head, shoulders, and part of the arms only showing—in fact, it was like an ordinary medallion portrait, but life-size. The face appeared wan and pale, as it did before his death, and he wore a kind of grey flannel jacket, in which he had been accustomed to sleep. Surprised and half alarmed at what they saw, their first idea was that a portrait had been hung in the room, and that what they saw was its reflection; but there was no picture of the kind. . . .

"C. A. W. Lett."

The phantom portrait was immediately afterwards seen and recognized by Captain Towns' unmarried daughter, by his old body-servant, by the butler, by the nurse, by a housemaid, and finally by his widow, who passed her hand over the panel of the wardrobe, whereupon the figure gradually faded away, and never reappeared. The recognition of the appearance on the part of each was independent, and not due to any suggestion from the others. The case is attested by Mrs. Lett and Miss Towns, and much resembles

the vivid and sometimes collective hallucination seen in crystal-vision (p. 141).

In the foregoing cases, no purpose on the part of the agent can be inferred, beyond that of self-manifestation or announcement of death. There are, however, a considerable group of cases where the apparition communicates some definite information, hitherto unknown to the percipient. Only a brief message seems possible, and it is one probably felt by the deceased person to be of urgent importance. The evidence upon which such cases rest of course needs to be sifted with the utmost care, and this has been done in the following well-attested instance, of which we can only give a bare outline; the case is corroborated by different witnesses, and is fully reported and discussed in the *S.P.R. Proceedings*, vol. viii., p. 200 *et seq.*

In February 1891, Michael Conley, a farmer living in Iowa, U.S.A., died suddenly at Dubuque, about 100 miles from his home. After the inquest at Dubuque the old clothes which he had been wearing were thrown away, and his son brought home the body. On hearing of her father's death, his daughter Lizzie fell into a swoon, in which she remained for several hours. When she recovered consciousness she said: "Where are father's old clothes? He has just appeared to me dressed in a white shirt, black clothes, and satin slippers, and told me that after leaving home he sewed a large roll of bills inside his grey shirt with a piece of my red dress, and the money

is still there." This description of her father's burial clothes, which she had not seen, was quite correct; but neither she, nor anybody else, had known anything of the pocket and money in the shirt. To pacify her, her brother went back the 100 miles to Dubuque, where he found the old clothes were lying in a shed. In the shirt was found a large roll of bills, amounting to thirty-five dollars, sewed with a piece of red cloth, exactly like Lizzie's dress, the stitches being large and irregular, as if made by a man. Telepathy from living minds might account for her accurate knowledge about the unseen burial garments, but not for her statement about the secreted money, of which all the family were ignorant.

It is a curious fact that children are not infrequently impressed with some veridical hallucination. In the following case a little girl seems to have been utilized as an automatic machine, so to speak, and caused to utter words which for her can hardly have had any meaning :—

"*King's Ferry, New York.*

"On the afternoon of January 2nd, 1867, my little daughter, Augusta, aged three years, was playing with her dolly, sitting near her aunt, who was spending the day at my house in New York. Her little cousins, Darius and David Adams, aged eleven and nine years, to the younger of whom she was tenderly attached, were living in Penn Yan, New York,

25 miles away. The cousins had not met since the preceding summer or early autumn.

"While busy with her play, the child suddenly spoke, and said, 'Auntie, Davie is drowned.' Her father, who was present, and I, heard her distinctly. I answered, 'Gussie, what did you say?' She repeated the words, 'Davie is drowned.' Her aunt, who was not familiar with the childish accent, said, 'Gussie, I do not understand you'; when the child repeated for the third time, 'Auntie, Davie is drowned.' I chanced to look at the clock, and saw it was just four. I immediately turned the conversation, as I did not wish such a painful thought fastened on the child's mind.

"I cannot recall that any allusion had been made to the boys that day; neither was I aware that my daughter even knew the meaning of the word drowned. She simply uttered the words without apparent knowledge of their import.

"That evening a telegram came from my brother, saying, 'My little boys, Darius and Davie, were drowned at four o'clock to-day while skating on Kenks Lake.'

"E. M. Ogden."

The foregoing statement is corroborated by Mr. Curtis, brother-in-law to Mrs. Ogden. This case is interesting because a very young child is not likely to have nervous apprehensions or forebodings of disaster concerning young playmates, of whose whereabouts and

occupation at the time she had not the remotest notion. (*Journal S.P.R.*, vol. i., p. 435.)

If we could discover some underlying reason for these sporadic occurrences few would doubt the evidence. But nearly all the cases seem so meaningless and often trivial that we are disposed to reject the evidence on that account. This, however, is an unscientific and irrational attitude, and if adopted would be fatal to all scientific inquiry: how trivial and meaningless once seemed the attraction of light bodies to rubbed amber, and yet the science and very name of electricity arose therefrom. Here, as elsewhere, we must exercise patience and scrupulous care in collecting all available evidence, and leave the solution to the future.

CHAPTER X

DREAMS AND CRYSTAL-VISIONS

From the earliest times, the mystery attaching to the world of dream has been a fruitful subject of speculation. The swift and dramatic portrayal of scenes, the recovery of lapsed memories, the occasional glimpses of things beyond the range of vision during sleep; the illusions "hypnagogiques," or vivid images which sometimes arise between sleep and waking, all these and other points have often been discussed. Only a brief account can first be given of a few cases wherein the discovery of lost articles has been effected by a dream. In the consideration of such cases, we must, however, bear in mind not only the possibility of the emergence of a lapsed memory during sleep, but also that the dreamer may have unconsciously perceived the lost article and in sleep this fact may have floated into consciousness. There are, however, cases where the evidence appears to go beyond the border line between normal and supernormal percipience. During hypnotic trance—which may be regarded as a deeper form of sleep—there sometimes also

occurs clairvoyance, or *telæsthesia*, "perception at a distance."

The following case, sent by Mrs. Bickford-Smith immediately after its occurrence, may be taken as an illustration of the revival of memory during sleep—

"On reaching Morley's Hotel at 5 o'clock on Tuesday, 29th January, 1889, I missed a gold brooch, which I supposed I had left in a fitting-room at Swan & Edgar's. I sent there at once, but was very disappointed to hear that after a diligent search they could not find the brooch. I was very vexed, and worried about the brooch, and that night dreamed that I should find it shut up in a number of the *Queen* newspaper that had been on the table, and in my dream I saw the very page where it would be, and noticed one of the plates on that page. Directly after breakfast I went to Swan & Edgar's and asked to see the papers, at the same time telling the young ladies about the dream, and where I had seen the brooch. The papers had been moved from that room, but were found, and to the astonishment of the young ladies, I said, 'This is the one that contains my brooch;' and there at the very page I expected I found it.

"A. M. Bickford-Smith."

We received a substantially similar account from Mrs. Bickford-Smith's brother-in-law, Mr. H. A. Smith, the Hon. Treasurer of the S.P.R., who was a witness of the trouble taken to find the brooch.

A somewhat similar experience was communicated to us by Mrs. Crellin, known to Mr. Gurney—

"When a school-girl I one day foolishly removed from my French teacher's hand a ring, which I, in fun, transferred to my own. On removing it from my finger just before going to bed, I found that a stone had fallen out of the ring, and I was much troubled about it, especially as the ring had been given to my teacher. We had four class-rooms, and as I had been moving from one to another in the course of the evening, I could not hope to find the lost stone. However, in my dreams that night I saw the stone lying on a certain plank on the floor of our 'drilling-room,' and on awaking I dressed hastily and went direct to the spot marked in my dream, and recovered the lost stone. This narrative has nothing thrilling in it, but its simplicity and exactness may commend it to your notice."

Mr. Gurney adds: "In conversation with me, Mrs. Crellin described the four class-rooms as good-sized rooms, which it would have taken a long time to search over. She is positive that she went quite straight to the spot. She is an excellent witness."

Another similar dream was contributed by Mrs. Stuart, of Foley House, Rothesay, N.B., a lady well known to Mr. Myers. Here a friend lost, out of doors, an opal stone from his ring which he valued as it belonged to his father. All set to work to search for it on the

lawn and under the surrounding trees, but without success. The following night Mrs. Stuart dreamt she saw the lost opal, glistening with dew, lying by a leaf beneath a certain tree which she recognized as at the edge of the lawn. She was so much impressed with the vividness of the dream, that in the early morning she dressed and went out straight to the tree she had seen in her dream; there, sure enough, she found the stone exactly in the position she had seen it in her dream.

A corresponding case, which has the advantage of having been written down at the time by the witness and corroborated by the dreamer, is given by Miss Hunt, of Yeovil, who states that at 6 p.m., having paid her gardener his wages wrapped in a piece of paper, she gave him some letters to post on his way home. An hour later the gardener returned saying he had lost the paper containing his wages. He was told to retrace his steps and make a careful search; this he did, but to no avail. During the night he dreamt that upon crossing the road his foot struck a mud heap, and there was the lost paper containing his wages. He told his wife the dream, and falling asleep again dreamt the same dream. He got up early, went to the spot he had seen in his dream, and there found his wages and all exactly as he had dreamt. The gardener, who is described as a most intelligent, truthful man, corroborates the facts. Here, again, is another useful dream which, like the last, appears to lie on the border line between lapsed memory

and some supernormal percipience during sleep.

From Mr. Herbert J. Lewis, 19, Park Place, Cardiff—

"In September 1880, I lost the landing order of a large steamer containing a cargo of iron ore, which had arrived in the port of Cardiff. She had to commence discharging at six o'clock the next morning. I received the landing order at four o'clock in the afternoon, and when I arrived at the office at six I found that I had lost it. During all the evening I was doing my utmost to find the officials at the Custom House to get a permit, as the loss was of the greatest importance, preventing the ship from discharging. I came home in a great degree of trouble about the matter, as I feared that I should lose my situation in consequence.

"That night I dreamed that I saw the lost landing order lying in a crack in the wall under a desk in the Long Room of the Custom House. At five the next morning I went down to the Custom House and got the keeper to get up and open it. I went to the spot of which I had dreamed, and found the paper in the very place. The ship was not ready to discharge at her proper time, and I went on board at seven and delivered the landing order, saving her from all delay.

"Herbert J. Lewis."

The truth of the foregoing is certified by

two witnesses, and further inquiry on the spot also corroborated Mr. Lewis' statement.

It is, of course, possible that in all these cases the lost object might originally have come within the range of vision of the owner but only subconsciously noted; in sleep the faint impression may have emerged in a dream sufficiently vivid to be remembered upon awaking. There are, however, other cases wherein this explanation does not apply, showing that a higher perceptive faculty than ordinary vision appears sometimes to emerge in dream.

Several cases of this kind are cited in detail by Mr. Myers in *Human Personality*, vol. i., chap. iv., and in the appendix to that chapter. The narrow limits of our space will only allow a very brief reference to some of these cases.

A well-known instance is that of Canon Warburton, who states that when waiting up one night for his brother, who had gone to a dance, he fell asleep and dreamt he saw his brother "coming out of a drawing-room with a brightly illuminated landing, catching his foot in the edge of the top stair and falling headlong, just saving himself by his elbows and hands."

Soon after his brother returned and exclaimed—

"I have just had a narrow escape of breaking my neck. Coming out of the ball-room, I caught my foot and tumbled full length down the stairs."

Canon Warburton states he had never seen the house where the accident occurred, but the vivid impression he had of the details of the scene was corroborated by questions he put to his brother.

A case singularly like the foregoing occurred with the late Bishop of Iowa (Dr. Lee) and his son, between whom there was a tender and sympathetic affection. One night the son—living in a city three hundred miles distant from where his father was in Iowa—had a vivid dream of his father falling down-stairs; he jumped to catch the Bishop and awoke both himself and his wife, to whom he related his dream: looking at the time he found it to be 2.15. Unable to sleep further, he rose early and telegraphed to his father to know if all was well. The letter in reply informed him that on the night and almost to the minute of his dream, the Bishop *had* fallen down a flight of stairs and was very seriously injured. An independent confirmation of the incident was sent to Dr. Hodgson by the Bishop of Algowa. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vii., p. 38.)

Another instance, which had the advantage of being noted in a diary before the verification of the dream was known, is given by Mr. (now Sir Edward) Hamilton, who states: "On March 20th, 1888, I woke up with the impression of a very vivid dream. I had dreamt that my brother, who had long been in Australia and of whom I had heard nothing for several months, had come home, and that something had gone wrong with one of his

arms—it looked horribly red near the wrist, his hand being bent back." The dream vision recurred so persistently on getting up that, notwithstanding his prejudice against attaching any importance to dreams, he noted it down that day in his diary, the only time he had ever done such a thing; this entry Mr. Gurney saw. A week later a letter was received from the brother saying he was on his way home, and that he was suffering from a bad arm. On his arrival in London on March 29th, it turned out that his arm was suffering from blood-poisoning and that he had a bad abscess over the wrist-joint. On inquiry it was found that the letter received by Sir Edward Hamilton was written by his brother and posted at Naples on the morning of the dream in London.

These cases and several others we might cite may be attributed to telepathy, of the conditions and range of which we know so little. In fact, "telepathic clairvoyance" is considered by some investigators an adequate explanation of nearly all the phenomena which appear to indicate supernormal percipience, or "independent clairvoyance." Certainly it may account for much of the mystery of the visions seen in "crystal-gazing," which we must now consider. But it cannot, in my opinion, account for all the phenomena described in the next chapter, nor for the success of the "dowser" described in Chapter XII. Here, however, we must take into account the possibility of mis-

description and of chance-coincidence, of this the reader must judge for himself.

Crystal-gazing

We now come to a class of phenomena resembling day-dreams; vivid images of scenes and persons induced by abstracting the mind from the normal sensory impressions, through intently gazing upon some lucent object, such as a glass sphere or polished crystal. Hallucinations are thus evoked resembling those in dream pictures or in hypnotic trance. The percipient, or "scryer," is no doubt in a state of incipient hypnosis; detached from the surrounding impressions of the external world and awake to the impressions arising from his hidden or subliminal self. The crystal is a form of *autoscope*, not mechanical, like the pendule or dowsing-rod, but sensory. As with other autoscopes, the subconscious contents of the percipient's mind come into play. Forgotten memories of events or scenes are sometimes revived; a latent mental impression is developed into consciousness; very like the emergence of a picture on some photographic plate exposed years ago, then put aside and forgotten, until accidentally developed to-day. Yet mingled with these latent memories there sometimes come scenes of distant events then occurring, and afterwards verified, which the seer could not have known through any normal means. Thus the crystal-gazer, if evidence be worth

anything, is not infrequently clairvoyant without being entranced.

" In one point nearly all observers concur. These visions imply a visualizing power, greater than the seer can exercise by voluntary effort. The distinctness, artistic quality and illumination of these crystal pictures of the figures, often cause great surprise." This observation by Mr. Myers is very true. In fact, the vision is described with the vividness and sense of reality of an eye-witness of the actual scene, and resembles similar descriptions given by the clairvoyant in the hypnotic trance; as if the soul in both cases temporarily transcended its corporeal limitations.

Historically, crystal-gazing is one of the most ancient and interesting means of inducing hallucinations for the purpose of seeking information that could not be gained by the observer through any normal means. After all there was something to be said for the oracles in ancient Greece and Rome, where various forms of crystal-gazing were employed, known as crystallomancy or hydromancy, according as the seer gazed at polished crystals or a mirror, or at a still pool of water.

In India we find similar methods have been employed from a remote period, and also in Arabia, where visions are seen in a mirror by certain men. Mr. A. Lang tells us that an Arabian writer of the thirteenth century, one Ibn Khaldoun, gives practically the same account of how visions appear in the crystal

as is given to-day. Certain men, Khaldoun says, "look into mirrors, or vessels filled with water . . . intently, until they perceive what they announce. The object gazed at disappears, and a sort of curtain, like a fog, interposes between the observer and the mirror. Upon this the things they wish to perceive are depicted and they recount what they see. When in this state the diviner sees things not with his ordinary eyesight, but with his soul. A new mode of perception has taken place. And yet the perceptions of the soul are so like those given by the senses as to deceive the observer, a fact which is well known."

One can hardly believe this was written seven centuries ago, so admirably does it describe the facts and probably the true explanation of crystal vision, a transcendental, or spiritual perception rather than the normal sense perception.

No wonder that in the Middle Ages the Christian Church regarded the whole thing as very uncanny and the work of evil spirits, and those who had the gift of "scrying"—the *specularii* they were termed—were looked on as heretics and treated accordingly. They survived, however, till the sixteenth century, when the famous Dr. Dee (1527–1608) gave a new impetus to crystal-gazing: no doubt the seer he employed had some clairvoyant faculty; the "shew-stone" Dr. Dee used is still preserved in the British Museum. Aubrey in his *Miscellanies* (1696), p. 165, tells us of

" Visions in a Beryl or crystal," and remarks that learned divines connect the " Urim and Thummim " with crystal-vision. In modern times Dean Plumptre in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible* takes a not unlike view; the High Priest by gazing at the bright point in the Urim passed into a state of abstraction and saw visions. The antiquity and universality of some form of crystal-gazing is, as we have said, unquestionable. We find it in ancient as well as in modern Egypt, in Assyria, Persia and India, in Siberia, China and Japan, among the North American Indians, the Maoris of New Zealand, and various African tribes. It was practised by the Incas of Peru, and is still used among the natives of Australia, Polynesia and Madagascar. The practice was largely in use both in England and on the Continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its exponents were neither fools nor charlatans, but often learned men of note.

Now let us turn to some of the modern evidence on behalf of crystal-gazing. Students will find ample details in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., vols. v. and viii., or in Mr. A. Lang's *The Making of Religion*, from which we will quote the following. Mr. Lang has a friend, Miss Angus, who is a remarkable " scryer." Miss Angus states—

" A lady one day asked me to ' scry ' out a friend of whom she would think. Almost immediately I exclaimed, ' Here is an old, old lady looking at me with a triumphant smile on her face. She has a prominent nose and

nut-cracker chin. Her face is very much wrinkled, especially at the sides of her eyes, as if she were always smiling. She is wearing a little white shawl with a black edge. But . . . she can't be old, as her hair is quite brown, although her face looks so very, very old.' The picture then vanished, and the lady said that I had accurately described her friend's mother instead of himself; that it was a family joke that the mother must dye her hair, it was so brown, and she was eighty-two years old. The lady asked me if the vision were distinct enough for me to recognize a likeness in the son's photograph; next day she laid several photographs before me, and in a moment, without the slightest hesitation, I picked him out from his wonderful likeness to my vision." The facts were verbally communicated to and corroborated by Mr. A. Lang within a week of the occurrence.

Another case, also vouched for by Mr. A. Lang, is interesting as it appears to be a telepathic transfer of the vision, seen by Miss Angus, to a friend, Miss Rose—

"At a recent experience of gazing, for the first time I was able to make another see what I saw in the crystal ball. Miss Rose called one afternoon, and begged me to look in the ball for her. I did so, and immediately exclaimed, 'Oh, here is a bed, with a man in it looking very ill [I saw he was dead, but refrained from saying so], and there is a lady dressed in black sitting beside the bed.' I did not recognize the man to be any one I knew, so I told her to

look. In a very short time she called out, ' Oh, I see the bed too. But, oh, take it away, the man is dead.' She got quite a shock, and said she would never look in it again. Soon, however, curiosity prompted her to have one more look, and the scene at once came back again, and slowly, from a misty object at the side of the bed, the lady in black became quite distinct. Then she described several people in the room, and said they were carrying something all draped in black. When she saw this, she put the ball down and would not look at it again. She called again on Sunday (this had been on Friday) with her cousin, and we teased her about being afraid of the crystal, so she said she would just look at it once more. She took the ball, but immediately laid it down again, saying, ' No, I won't look, as the bed with the awful man in it is there again.'

" When they went home, they heard that the cousin's father-in-law had died that (Sunday) afternoon, but to show he had never been in our thoughts, although we all knew he had not been well, no one suggested him; his name was never mentioned in connection with the vision."

With regard to this incident, Miss Rose, independently and without consultation with Miss Angus, wrote, that on looking at the glass ball after Miss Angus had said she saw a man ill in bed,—

" I received quite a shock, for there perfectly clearly in a bright light, I saw stretched out

in bed an old man, apparently dead; for a few minutes I could not look, and on doing so once more there appeared a lady in black, etc. At the time I saw this I was staying with cousins and it was Friday evening. On Sunday we heard of the death of the father-in-law of one of my cousins, but my thoughts were not in the least about him when looking at the crystal. I may also say I did not recognize his features."

This looks like a prophetic vision, or *precognition* of the death two or three days before it actually occurred; it may be only a chance coincidence, but if the evidence on behalf of precognition compels us eventually to accept it this case may well come under that designation.

The following case is given by Sir Joseph Barnby, the well-known musician, and is quoted by Mr. Myers in his *Human Personality*, vol. i., p. 590. Sir J. Barnby writes—

"I was invited by Lord and Lady Radnor to the wedding of their daughter, Lady Wilma Bouverie, which took place August 15, 1889.

"I was met at Salisbury by Lord and Lady Radnor and driven to Longford Castle. In the course of the drive, Lady Radnor said to me: 'We have a young lady, Miss A., staying with us in whom, I think, you will be much interested. She possesses the faculty of seeing visions, and is otherwise closely connected with the spiritual world. Only last night she was looking in her crystal and described a room which she saw therein, as a kind of London

dining-room. [The room described was not in London, but at L., and Miss A. particularly remarked that the floor was in large squares of black and white marble—as it is in the big hall at L., where family prayers are said.—H. M. Radnor.] With a little laugh, she added, 'And the family are evidently at prayers, the servants are kneeling at the chairs round the room, and the prayers are being read by a tall and distinguished-looking gentleman with a very handsome, long grey beard.' With another little laugh, she continued: 'A lady just behind him rises from her knees and speaks to him. He puts her aside with a wave of the hand, and continues his reading.' The young lady here gave a careful description of the lady who had risen from her knees.

"Lady Radnor then said: 'From the description given I cannot help thinking that the two principal personages described are Lord and Lady L., but I shall ask Lord L. this evening as they are coming by a later train, and I should like you to be present when the answer is given.'

"The same evening, after dinner, I was talking to Lord L. when Lady Radnor came up to him and said: 'I want to ask you a question. I am afraid you will think it is a very silly one, but in any case I hope you will not ask me why I have put the question?' To this Lord L. courteously assented. She then said: 'Were you at home last night?' He replied, 'Yes.' She said: 'Were you having family prayers at such a time last

evening?' With a slight look of surprise he replied, 'Yes, we were.' She then said: 'During the course of the prayers did Lady L. rise from her knees and speak to you, and did you put her aside with a wave of the hand?' Much astonished, Lord L. answered: 'Yes, that was so, but may I inquire why you have asked this question?' To which Lady Radnor answered: 'You promised you wouldn't ask me that.'"

In commenting on the account Mr. Myers adds—

"This incident has been independently recounted to me both by Lady Radnor and by Miss A. herself. Another small point not given by Sir J. Barnby is that Miss A. did not at first understand that family prayers were going on, but exclaimed: 'Here are a number of people coming into the room. Why, they're smelling their chairs.'"

Among others who have the faculty of crystal-vision may be mentioned Miss Goodrich-Freer (now Mrs. Hans Spoer)—whose papers on this subject in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. (vol. v., etc.) are of great interest.

Space will not allow the quotation of further illustrations of this strange faculty. What we find is a mingling of mere fantasy, dream, memory, telepathy, and clairvoyance; sometimes apparently even prevision and traces of spirit communion. "A random glimpse," as Mr. Myers says, "into inner visions, a reflection caught at some odd angle from the universe, as it shines through the perturbing

medium of that special soul." This, however, is precisely what we find in other directions of psychical research. The hidden subliminal self, sensitive to telepathic impress, emerges through various "autoscopes" accompanied with a medley of normal and supernormal knowledge. In fact, all autoscopes whether sensory or mechanical (p. 28) seem at times to become *heteroscopes*—"other viewers"—a means whereby some distant intelligence appears able to give fragmentary glimpses of its presence. Automatic writing tells us the same story, and only by patient and long-continued labour can we unravel the tangled skein and discover the high transcendent powers that lie concealed in even the humblest human personality.

CHAPTER XI

SUPERNORMAL PERCEPTION: SEEING WITHOUT EYES

The existence of some kind of supernormal percipience possessed by certain individuals has been widely believed in, as in cases of so-called second sight. The business of psychical research is to ascertain whether there is trustworthy evidence on behalf of that belief. The preceding chapter has afforded some evidence in its support, and we must devote the present chapter to a further examination of this subject.

In the mesmeric trance, a state of "lucidity" or "clairvoyance," as it was called, was asserted by competent observers in the middle of the last century. Thus, Dr. Mayo, F.R.S. (referred to on p. 70), gives cases he himself had witnessed, which he thought could only be explained by "seeing without eyes." The entranced patient often appeared to locate his organ of transcendental vision in his hand, or pit of the stomach, or any part of the body that lent itself to the illusion. In 1826, the French Medical Commission appointed to inquire into mesmerism

relates several cases in which persons in the mesmeric trance could describe objects or read lines in a book, when their eyes were bandaged or eyelids closed by the fingers. But this may be explained by thought-transference, as we are not told whether the operators knew the thing selected.

Here, for example, is a comparatively recent case, which appears on the borderland between telepathy and so-called clairvoyance. It is attested by one of the most eminent continental physiologists now living.

Professor C. Richet states (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vi.)—

"On Monday, July 2, 1888, after having passed all the day in my laboratory, I hypnotized Léonie at 8 p.m., and while she tried to make out a diagram concealed in an envelope I said to her quite suddenly: 'What has happened to M. Langlois?' Léonie knows M. Langlois from having seen him two or three times some time ago in my physiological laboratory, where he acts as my assistant. 'He has burnt himself,' Léonie replied. 'Good,' I said, 'and where has he burnt himself?' 'On the left hand. It is not fire: it is—I don't know its name. Why does he not take care when he pours it out?' 'Of what colour,' I asked, 'is the stuff which he pours out?' 'It is not red, it is brown; he has hurt himself very much—the skin puffed up directly.'

"Now, this description is admirably exact. At 4 p.m. that day M. Langlois had wished to

pour some bromine into a bottle. He had done this clumsily, so that some of the bromine flowed on to his left hand, which held the funnel, and at once burnt him severely. Although he at once put his hand into water, wherever the bromine had touched it a blister was formed in a few seconds—a blister which one could not better describe than by saying, 'the skin puffed up.' I need not say that Léonie had not left my house nor seen any one from my laboratory. Of this I am absolutely certain, and I am certain that I had not mentioned the incident of the burn to any one. Moreover, this was the first time for nearly a year that M. Langlois had handled bromine, and when Léonie saw him six months before at the laboratory he was engaged in experiments of quite another kind."

We may regard this either as a case of telepathy or what has been termed "travelling clairvoyance." The reputed evidence on behalf of the latter is indeed more widespread and more ancient than for the former. As Mr. A. Lang says, "Evidence proves that precisely similar beliefs as to man's occasional power of 'opening the gates of distance' have been entertained in a great variety of lands and ages, and by races in every condition of culture." Mr. Lang gives instances of this among the Zulus, the Lapps, the Red Indians, the Peruvians, as well as cases, ancient and modern, of Scotch "second sight." Aubrey in his *Miscellanies* (1696), gives "an accurate account of second-sighted men in Scotland,

in two letters from a learned friend of mine in Scotland." His learned correspondent concludes by remarking, "They generally term such as have this second sight *Taishatrin*. . . . Others call these men *Phissichin* from *Phis*, which is properly fore-sight or fore-knowledge."

Swedenborg, who was in his day one of the leading *savants* of Europe, is alleged to have possessed this faculty, and occasionally could "open the gates of distance." The evidence was investigated at the time by the philosopher Kant, and is given in an appendix to his book, entitled *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*.

The three most famous cases are :—

(1) Swedenborg's communication to the Queen of Sweden of some secret information, which she had asked him for, and believed that no living human being could have told him.

(2) The widow of the Dutch ambassador at Stockholm, Madame Harteville, was called upon by a goldsmith to pay for a silver service which her deceased husband had purchased. She believed that her husband had paid for it, but could not find the receipt; so she begged Swedenborg to ask her husband where it was. Three days later he came to her house and informed her, in the presence of some visitors, that he had conversed with her husband, and had learnt from him that the debt had been paid, and the receipt was in a bureau in an up-stairs room in her house. Madame Harteville replied that the cupboard had already been searched, but to no

purpose. Swedenborg answered that the ghost of her husband had said that after pulling out the left-hand drawer a board would appear, and on drawing out this a secret compartment would be disclosed, containing his private Dutch correspondence and the receipt. The whole company went upstairs, and the papers, with the receipt, were found, as described, in the secret compartment, of which no one had known before.

(3) In September 1759, at four o'clock on a Saturday afternoon, Swedenborg arrived at Gottenburg from England, and was invited by a friend to his house. Two hours after he went out, and then came back and informed the company that a dangerous fire had just broken out in Stockholm (which is about fifty German miles from Gottenburg), and that it was spreading fast; he was restless and went out often. He said that the house of one of his friends, whom he named, was already in ashes, and that his own was in danger. At eight o'clock, after he had been out again, he declared with joy that the fire was extinguished at the third door from his house. This news occasioned great commotion throughout the whole city, and was announced to the Governor the same evening.

On Sunday morning, Swedenborg was summoned to the Governor, who questioned him about the disaster. He described the fire precisely, how it had begun and in what manner it had ceased, and how long it had continued. On Monday evening a messenger

arrived at Gottenburg, who had been dispatched by the Board of Trade during the time of the fire. In the letters brought by him, the fire was described precisely as stated by Swedenborg, and next morning the news was further confirmed by information brought to the Governor by the Royal Courier. As Swedenborg had said, the fire had been extinguished at eight o'clock.

Sixty or seventy years ago, when the public were profoundly interested in the novel and wonderful accounts of mesmeric phenomena, many cases of alleged clairvoyance were noted by Dr. Elliotson and others who were constantly engaged in hypnotic treatment of patients. One of the most remarkable cases was that of a girl named Ellen Dawson, who had been subject to epileptic fits as a child, for which she had been treated mesmerically and with great success by a West-end surgeon, Mr. W. Hands. The latter, observing that Ellen, when in the trance, could apparently see objects without the use of her eyes, tried to cultivate her clairvoyant faculty, and, it is asserted, she developed a power of accurately describing distant places and persons she had never seen with her normal vision. If telepathy be accepted as a *vera causa* no doubt it affords a partial explanation, but the frequent relation of facts afterwards confirmed, though at the time unknown to the hypnotizer and others present, as well as the vividness and accuracy of description given by the subject, unduly strain any telepathic hypothesis.

Two most remarkable communications about Ellen Dawson's clairvoyance are to be found in the *Zoist* for 1845. The first is from Mr. Hands, who states that in order to satisfy himself that Ellen did not use her normal vision, he filled the covers of two pill-boxes with cotton-wool and tied one over each of Ellen's eyes with a broad strip of ribbon, taking care that the edges of the boxes rested on the skin:—

"Still she read and distinguished as before. I now placed her" (Mr. Hands continues) "in a room from which I had shut out every ray of light and then presented her with some plates in Cuvier's *Animal Kingdom;* she described the birds and beasts and told accurately the colour of each, as I proved by going into the light to test her statements. She also distinguished the shades and hues of silks."

This incident, assuming the observations are correct, presents an interesting psychological puzzle, as the colours of objects are due to their action on light rays, by selective absorption or otherwise; in the absence of light, colour, as our eyes know it, has no existence. If Mr. Hands knew what the particular colours and coloured plates were, a telepathic explanation removes the difficulty, but apparently he did not, and telepathy does not explain other incidents. Thus Mr. Hands asked her to visit his birthplace, Berkeley (where Mrs. Hands was staying), 140 miles from London. She accurately

described the church at Berkeley and various monuments therein, and also the house where Mrs. Hands was staying; asked what the latter was doing, Ellen said she was playing a game of cards, and described the other persons present. Then she exclaimed, "Mrs. H. has won the game and is getting up from her chair." All these details turned out to be perfectly correct, for Mr. Hands adds: "At this time (9 p.m.), as I subsequently learnt, Mrs. H. did rise from her chair, saying to her adversary, 'I have beaten you completely.'"

On another occasion, a lady having lost her brooch, asked Mr. Barth if Ellen, whom she had not seen before, could trace it when entranced. Accordingly she was put to sleep, whereupon

"Ellen Dawson described a former servant of Mrs. M.'s, who she said had stolen the brooch, and said that she had kept the case with some diamonds in it in her trunk, and sold the brooch for a very small sum; that it was then in a place like a cellar, with 'lots of other property,' silver spoons, etc., and that the servant had moved from the place she had lived at when she first left Mrs. M. This latter point was found to be correct, and Mrs. M. (who had suspected another of her servants), on the advice of the clairvoyant, sent for the girl to come to her house and taxed her with the theft. Finally, the girl confessed that she had stolen the brooch and pawned it, keeping the case and two diamond

chains which were worn with the brooch. All the property was finally recovered."

Many other well-attested cases by good observers were published both in England and the Continent some sixty years ago. Nor is the evidence for clairvoyance confined to the older mesmerists. One of the members of the S.P.R., Mr. Dobbie, living in Australia, has in recent years had several clairvoyants among subjects whom he had hypnotized. A case like the preceding one is given by him in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. Mr. Adamson, a leading citizen in Adelaide, communicates the facts, which are briefly as follows. His daughter had lost a trinket off her watch-chain, and both went to Mr. Dobbie to see if his clairvoyant could trace it. When entranced, the clairvoyant described what the trinket was, where it was lost, the person who found it, and the place where he had put it, and gave so exact a description of the house that it was readily found. Not only was the trinket thus recovered, but on questioning the finder, Mr. Adamson learnt that it was picked up on the road exactly as the clairvoyant had described.

In another case in which the clairvoyant was tested, she accurately described what a gentleman, then fifty miles away, was doing, the furniture in the room where he was, and a book he was holding. On returning home a week later, the gentleman was astonished to hear what the clairvoyant had said, and stated that she was perfectly correct in every

particular, even to the book which he had purchased on his journey from home. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. vii., p. 68 *et seq.*)

Some critics have objected that the evidence on behalf of clairvoyance is never written down before the facts are confirmed; this, however, has been done, as in the following case sent to us by an American naturalist, Dr. Elliot Coues, of Washington. It seems that a friend of Dr. Coues, Mrs. Conner, was going up the steps of her residence in Washington one afternoon, carrying some papers, when she stumbled and fell. About the same moment a friend of hers, Mrs. B., had a singular vision of the whole incident whilst she was in her own house a mile and a half away. The vision was so vivid that Mrs. B. wrote to Mrs. Conner the same evening about it, telling her, in a letter seen by Dr. Coues, that when sewing in her room at two o'clock that afternoon "what should I see but your own dear self . . . falling up the front steps in the yard. You had on your black skirt and velvet waistband, your little straw bonnet, and, in your hand, some papers. When you fell your hat went in one direction and the papers in another. It was all so plain to me that I had ten notions to one to dress and come over and see if it were true. Is there any possible truth in it? I can distinctly call to mind the house in which you live, but can't for the life of me tell whether there are any steps."

On investigation it appears that not only

was the description of the dress, bonnet, etc., perfectly correct, but also the entrance to the house and the steps up to it. Mrs. Conner had only moved to this house a few days before and Mrs. B—— had never seen it. (*Journal S.P.R.*, vol. iv., p. 89.)

Perhaps the most extraordinary and apparently unimpeachable evidence of clairvoyance is given in a little book kindly sent to me by Dr. Heysinger, of Philadelphia, who suggests the term *telegnosis*, or knowing at a distance, instead of clairvoyance. The book bears the strange title of "X + Y = Z, *or the Sleeping Preacher of North Alabama.*" It was published in 1876, and includes statements by numerous witnesses of the supernormal knowledge possessed by the sleeping preacher, as he was called, a respected Presbyterian minister, the Rev. C. B. Sanders. Additional corroboration of the facts was obtained by Professor W. James and Dr. Hodgson. The late U.S. Chief Justice Brickell, whose home was near Mr. Sanders' residence, states that the witnesses named in the book are of the highest character, and some of considerable learning. In this case any explanation by fraud, collusion, or fabrication cannot be suggested. It seems from the evidence of the medical man, Dr. Thach, who attended Mr. Sanders, that his patient periodically went into trances, often accompanied with violent paroxysms and extreme sensitiveness to touch. It was during these trances that Mr. Sanders became conscious of events taking place at a distant spot

to which his attention was directed. On returning to his normal state, he was totally ignorant of anything that had occurred during the trance or "sleep,"—which lasted from a few minutes to days. During the sleep Mr. Sanders ignored his own name, and signed himself X + Y = Z.

The Rev. G. W. Mitchell, who gives a careful record of the evidence relating to Mr. Sanders' clairvoyance, quotes sixty-nine witnesses who testify to the fact that during his sleep he described incidents afterwards verified, which could not possibly have been known to him through normal means. Among these witnesses are ten clergymen and six physicians, the evidence being corroborated by others present. We have only space to quote one or two incidents. Here, for example, is an amusing case. Mr. Sanders having been confined to his bed from a dislocated thigh, a neighbouring minister, the Rev. De Witt, one day took him over some delicacy and had to cross a fence before getting to the house. Having both hands full and the fence being very unstable, with its top rail loose, he nearly tumbled off in crossing it. On arriving at Mr. Sanders' house, more than half a mile away, he found Mr. Sanders in his so-called "sleep," but animated and laughing, saying he was greatly amused at the predicament in which De Witt had been placed in crossing the fence with his hands full. As it was impossible to see the fence from the house and no one else present had witnessed the occurrence,

Mr. De Witt was greatly astonished. A friend who was present at the time, Mr. J. W. Pruitt, writes as follows concerning this incident—

"I certify that one day about the middle of the month of February 1866, while Brother Sanders was confined to his bed from a dislocated thigh, I was at his house, and he was lying in his bed and in one of his so-called 'sleeps.' He attracted my attention by a hearty laugh. I asked him the cause of his amusement. He replied, 'I was laughing at De Witt.' I asked what was De Witt doing. He said, 'He was having a hard scuffle to keep from falling off the fence, for the top rail was turning with him and he was trying to keep from falling over it.' Nothing more was said on the subject until De Witt arrived, which was in ten or fifteen minutes.

"The fence where the difficulty occurred was from three-fourths to a mile distant, on the other side of a thick grove of timber and underbush, and of an intervening hill.

"And I further certify that no communication from any person or source was received in reference to De Witt until he arrived and confirmed what Mr. Sanders said.

"J. W. Pruit."

Several cases, corroborated by witnesses, are also recorded of Mr. Sanders' knowledge that a distant person was just dying or dead, of accidents occurring to friends at some

distance, of a fire taking place in a distant town, with a description of a shop in which it broke out and the extent of its ravages, much resembling the far vision of Swedenborg already quoted. Various cases are also given of Mr. Sanders in his sleep finding lost articles, coins, a watch-chain, and specifying correctly where they would be found. Here is a striking instance, attested by three witnesses; Mr. Bentley writes—

"Some time during the summer [1867] a bunch of keys, among which was my wheat-garner key, was lost. After a lapse of about one week, I requested Mr. William White, who was employed in the store and boarded at the Rev. C. B. Sanders' in the village, on going to his dinner, to ask him to tell me where my keys were. On his return Mr. White said he made the request; but Mr. Sanders paid no attention to what he said, he being in one of his spells. However, during the same afternoon, while my younger sister, in company with other persons, was at his house, he told her that my keys were under the steps at the west door of my dwelling. In consequence of this information I returned home earlier than usual. As soon as I arrived, I told my wife what I had heard. She ran immediately and found the keys under the doorstep, just as Mr. Sanders had said; and somewhat rusty. They must have been thrown there a week before by a little child that played about the house.

"I add that I know Mr. Sanders had not been in my house, nor on the place for at least twelve months before that time.

"A. J. BENTLEY."

The other witnesses present certify that "the above statements are true, as far as they relate to us personally; and that we heard all the particulars as above mentioned, at the time they occurred." Another case of the finding of a gold coin from Mr. Sanders' description of the exact position in which it was actually discovered is signed by four witnesses, but the details are too long to quote here.

Some may be disposed to say, if these facts are well established why does not Scotland Yard keep a professional clairvoyant? Like all other psychical phenomena such cases as we have described are rare, and frequently normal and supernormal knowledge are intermixed. At present, at any rate, they must be studied for their scientific interest rather than for their practical utility. It is said that, years ago a challenge was made to give a £1,000 bank-note, enclosed in a sealed opaque box, to any clairvoyant who could read its number. A similar challenge has been made as I write these pages, for a conclusive proof of thought-transference. Others, no doubt, would give a large multiple of this sum for a demonstrative evidence of survival after death. All such pecuniary short-cuts to gain knowledge are futile. Those who wish to

arrive at any definite conclusions with regard to either rare normal or alleged supernormal phenomena must pay due attention to the subject and study the evidence of trustworthy and independent witnesses, as the late Professor Tait said concerning the phenomenon of "globe-lightning."

We may close this chapter by recalling Goethe's remark to Eckermann: "If any one advances anything new . . . people resist with all their might; they act as if they neither heard nor could comprehend; they speak of the new view with contempt, as if it were not worth the trouble of even so much as an investigation or a regard; and thus a new truth may wait a long time before it can make its way."

CHAPTER XII

THE SO-CALLED DIVINING- OR DOWSING-ROD

THE singular success of certain "dowsers" in locating underground water, hard by wells that had been sunk in vain, led the Council of the S.P.R. to ask me to investigate and report upon this subject some twenty years ago. Like most people, I was at that time not only sceptical but inclined to scoff at what seemed a mere relic of an ancient superstition. Scientific men as a body held that dowsers were merely clever charlatans and the twisting of the forked rod a bit of stage-play. It soon became evident that such views were absurd, —for one thing many successful dowsers were amateurs, whose good faith it was impossible to question. Men of distinction and of high rank, church dignitaries, and even the president of a geological society, informed me they were unable to restrain the motion of the forked twig and abundant water had been found at the places so indicated. Nor was their success due to the detection of surface signs of water, for ignorant country-folk and young children were no less successful as dowsers. In fact the evidence on behalf of dowsers, in

finding comparatively shallow supplies of potable water in very unlikely spots, was far more extensive and remarkable than one had imagined. Hence the collection and verification at first hand of such evidence, the experimental tests made and the hunting up the history of the subject became a formidable task and it was not until after some years that my first lengthy report was published in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. for 1895. This was followed by a second lengthy report in 1900, and abundant materials have since accumulated for a third report.

Obviously in a brief survey such as this it will be impossible to do more than relate a few cases personally investigated, and give an outline of the conclusions arrived at, referring those who wish for fuller information to the monographs mentioned above.

So far as historical researches in the British Museum and other libraries extend, the first mention of the forked rod, or *virgula divina*, as it was then called, appears to be in an ancient Latin folio, entitled Sebastian Munster's *Cosmography* published early in 1500. At that time the rod was only used in the search for metallic ores, and a quaint picture is given in this work of a diviner striding over the hilly country with his uplifted forked rod prospecting for minerals. A little later the first great treatise on Mining, Agricola's *De re metallica*, published in Basle in 1540, gives a more detailed account of its use for this purpose, with a couple of admirable plates showing the

diviner at work. Agricola calls the rod the *virgula furcata*, forked rod, to distinguish it from the *virgula divina*, the name attached to the ancient superstitious practice of rhabdomancy,—divining by bits of sticks, referred to by Cicero and other classical writers. Nevertheless, the word divining-rod has persisted, together with some of the superstitious notions attached to the old virgula.

The miners of Saxony and the Hartz mountains seem to have been the first to use the forked rod. Possibly they were led to its use from the belief, once universal, even among educated men like Melanchthon, that metallic ores attracted certain trees which thereupon drooped over the place where those ores were to be found; the drooping no doubt being due to the soil or other causes. A branch of the tree was therefore cut and held to see where it drooped; later on a branch was held in each hand and the extremities tied together as shown in an old Italian plate; finally, for convenience, a forked branch was cut, the two ends grasped one in each hand with palms upwards, the arms of the holder were then brought to the side of the body, so that the forked rod was held in somewhat unstable equilibrium, and the "diviner" set forth on his quest with, in old time, certain solemnities and invocations.

In Queen Elizabeth's reign the exploitation of the Cornish mines was entrusted to a few notable "Merchant Venturers," who went over to Saxony to examine the best methods

of prospecting and mining ore. These merchant venturers probably brought back with them a " diviner " with his rod, for soon after we find its use common in Cornwall. Now, the colloquial German word for the rod was then *schlag-ruthe* or *striking rod;* this, translated into the Middle English, became the *duschan* or striking rod, and finally " deusing or dowsing rod." Locke, born under the shadow of the Mendips, where the rod early came into use in the search for lead ore, is the first writer using the word " deusing rod," in 1691. To dowse or " strike " the sail is still a common expression in Cornwall, so we get the word " dowser " now used throughout the south-west of England. The phrase to " strike " the lode in a mine, or to " strike " oil, may thus have arisen. The esteem in which the dowsing-rod was held by old English miners is shown by a passage in Robert Boyle's famous scientific essays published in 1663, and still more by Pryce's standard work on Cornish mines published in 1778. Pryce tells us that nearly all the Cornish mines were located by the dowsing-rod and to the present day it is widely used for this purpose.

It was not until near the end of the eighteenth century that the rod was used in England for finding underground water, and as might be expected it first came into use for this purpose in the south-west of England. Two centuries earlier it was employed for this purpose in the south of Europe. For in a recent admirable Life of St. Teresa of Spain, the

following incident is narrated: Teresa in 1568 was offered the site for a convent to which there was only one objection, there was no water supply; happily, a Friar Antonio came up with a twig in his hand, stopped at a certain spot and appeared to be making the sign of the cross; but Teresa says, "Really I cannot be sure if it were the sign he made, at any rate he made some movement with the twig and then he said, 'Dig just here'; they dug, and lo! a plentiful fount of water gushed forth, excellent for 'drinking, copious for washing, and it never ran dry.'" As the writer of this Life remarks: "Teresa, not having heard of dowsing, has no explanation for this event," and regarded it as a miracle. This, I believe, is the first historical reference to dowsing for water. In a little book published at Lyons in 1693, entitled *La verge de Jacob* (it should be called, as Sir Thomas Browne remarks, "the Mosaical rod," not Jacob's rod), pictures are given showing different kinds of rod, or baguette, different ways of holding it, and the success attending those who can use it in discovering springs. Other and more learned writers of that date, such as the Abbé de Vallemont (1695) and Father le Brun (1702), deal with the mystery of the baguette and afford evidence of its widespread use in water-finding throughout arid districts in the south of France.

As stated in a previous chapter, the use of the baguette in the seventeenth century, especially in the south of France, spread to many

other hidden things, such as the finding of buried treasure and even the tracking of criminals! Jacques Aymar, a poor mason of Dauphiny, obtained great reputation as a *sourcier* in 1692, and when a terrible murder was committed in a wine-shop in Lyons he was sent for to track the criminals with his baguette, as no trace of them could be found. The whole details of this famous case have been preserved in contemporary documents. Arriving at the scene of the murder with his rod, Aymar started off in pursuit of the murderers like a bloodhound on the scent: he tracked them to the river Rhone, followed them from place to place, discovered there were three engaged in the crime, traced two of them till they crossed the frontier, finally ran down the other one, a hunchback, who was arrested, confessed the crime, and was executed: the last person in Europe who suffered that terrible penalty of being "broken at the wheel." Strangely enough the depositions made at the trial showed that Aymar was correct in every detail, witnesses testifying to the flight and halting-places of the culprits in the very places Aymar had indicated. The keen interest this case excited, and the critical examination it underwent, is shown by the large amount of literature it called forth for some years afterwards, and Aymar became notorious throughout Europe. He was, however, subsequently somewhat discredited owing to his failure in some tests devised by the Prince de Condé.

The often fallacious and mischievous results which followed the indiscriminate use of the baguette for all sorts of purposes rightly led to its use being prohibited in the *moral* world early in the eighteenth century. Its widespread use in finding underground water nevertheless continued throughout France and many other parts of Europe. One of the physicians of Louis XVI, Dr. Thouvénel, published able and lengthy reports in 1781 and 1784 of the results of his critical tests of a *sourcier* named Bleton, a charity boy, who was perhaps the most remarkable dowser known in history. According to contemporary evidence, Bleton by his discovery of numerous underground springs in an arid province in France "converted a desert into a fruitful country." Nor must we suppose, as we are apt to do, that the critical and sceptical spirit belongs exclusively to ourselves or to our own age; such startling results as were achieved by Bleton led to the most searching inquiry, the severest tests were applied, and many of the most sceptical were convinced.

Later on, in our own country, De Quincey tells us of the wonderful success of the "jowsers," as he calls them, in Somerset, where in certain parts underground water is very hard to locate, and where scientific skill is frequently at fault. At the present day landowners and well-sinkers in the south-west of England, when in difficulty where to sink a well, almost invariably employ a dowser; usually an un-

educated man who has discovered that he possesses this peculiar "gift," as he terms it. The use of the dowsing-rod has also spread to America, where it is employed not only in the search for underground ores and water, but also for finding oil-springs. Here, however, as mentioned on p. 22, a sort of plumb-bob, suspended by a wire or chain, is frequently employed, as it is also in some parts of France. A recent number of the *Journal* of the American S.P.R. gives some striking results of numerous successful tests made with a dowser using this ancient magic pendulum.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century in England, among other notable dowsers, John Mullins, of Wiltshire, achieved extraordinary success in locating underground water, especially when all other means had failed. In some districts, of course, underground water can be found anywhere upon digging down a few feet, *e. g.* where a bed of gravel rests upon an impermeable bed of clay; but these are places where the dowser is rarely called in. It is in what may be called "fissure water," which is the geologist's difficulty, that the dowser's opportunity occurs. At first it seemed to me probable that the successful results were merely due to the dowser having a shrewd eye for the ground, experience having taught him the surface signs of underground water. But this hypothesis broke down; then it seemed likely his success was due to lucky hits, which were remembered and the failures forgotten: this theory also had to be given up.

Finally, and with reluctance, I was driven to the conclusion that certain persons *really* possessed an instinct or faculty new to science, of which the muscular spasm, that causes the twisting of the forked rod, is the outward and visible sign. It is impossible to give here even an outline of the evidence on which this conclusion rests; a brief summary of a few remarkable cases, which I have personally investigated, is all that can be attempted.

The late Sir Henry Harben had built a mansion, water towers, etc., on his fine estate near Horsham, in Sussex. He then had a well, 90 feet deep, sunk, hoping to get water, but the well was dry. Acting upon expert advice, he next had a well, 55 feet deep, sunk in another place, with no result. Then he was advised to sink a third well at another spot; this was done, and a huge well, 100 feet deep, was sunk in the Horsham clay; alas! little or no water was found. Scientific experts then advised him to run adits in different directions at the bottom of this big well. This he did at the cost of £1,000, but the result was a complete failure. Finally in despair, he reluctantly sent for the dowser John Mullins. Sir Henry met him at the station, drove him to his place, and gave him no information. Mullins perambulated the estate holding his forked twig, and, after searching for some time in vain, at last the dowsing-rod turned violently, and he asserted an abundant supply of water would be obtained at that spot at a depth of under 20 feet; another spot was found close

by, and both were on a small elevation. Two wells were dug at these spots, through a sandstone rock, and an immense perennial supply of excellent water was found at about 15 feet deep. It is true, shallow wells are generally objectionable, but this happens to be an excellent potable water, as it comes from the hill-top. This sandstone cap over the Horsham clay was unsuspected, being covered with surface soil and grass. The explanation of the dowser's success might possibly have been attributed to a sharp eye for the ground, had it not been for the fact that the dowser was no geologist, was a stranger to the locality, and the spot had been passed over by the scientific experts previously engaged.

The next case is still more remarkable, and here J. Mullins was also concerned. In 1887 the proprietors of an extensive bacon factory at Waterford, Messrs. Richardson & Co., needed a larger water supply than they possessed; accordingly, they had a well 62 feet deep sunk at the most promising spot, but no water was found. They then obtained professional advice, and, based on geological considerations, determined to have a boring made at another spot. This was carried out and a bore-hole 292 feet deep was sunk, and, as only a trifling quantity of water was obtained, the bore-hole was widened; but it was no use, the yield of water was so insignificant that the bore-hole was abandoned. The next year, acting upon other skilled advice,

they had a bore-hole, 7 inches diameter, sunk at the bottom of the 62-feet well. The work was undertaken by the Diamond-drill Rock-boring Company. With difficulty, 612 feet were bored through a very hard silurian rock, but no water was obtained. The boring was, however, continued 338 feet deeper, or a total of 950 feet, which—added to the depth of the well—made 1,012 feet in all from the surface. The result was a complete failure, and this bore-hole, which cost nearly £1,000, was abandoned. Then, acting upon the best geological advice, another spot was selected, and a bore-hole 52 feet deep was made. The strata encountered were, however, identically the same, and geologists advised the firm to go no farther, as the quest was hopeless. They were considering the advisability of moving their factory elsewhere when they were urged to try John Mullins, the English dowser. Mullins was sent for from Wiltshire. He came over, was told nothing of what had been done, he walked over the premises, about 700 by 300 feet in area, asked no questions, but traversed the ground silently, holding his dowsing-rod. Suddenly, at one spot, only a few yards from the deep bore-hole, the forked twig twisted so violently that it broke in his hands. Here Mullins declared there was an abundant supply of water, which he estimated would be found at 80 or 90 feet below the surface. At two or three other places hard by the rod also twisted as he walked in and out of the sheds. Boring was begun at

the spot indicated by Mullins, where the rod broke. It was considered a waste of money, and a local geologist was asked to report progress to an officer of the Irish Geological Survey. His letters, written at the time, I have been allowed to copy, and the result reads like a fairy tale. At a depth of rather less than 90 feet water suddenly rushed up the bore-hole, pumping was begun, and so great was the yield that the bore-hole was enlarged to a well, and from that time (1889) to the present an unfailing supply of excellent water, of from 3,000 to 5,000 gallons an hour, has been obtained from the dowser's well. Mr. Kilroe, of H.M. Geological Survey, has kindly investigated the whole matter for me, and his report shows that Mullins must have struck a line of fault or narrow fissure in the hard "ordovician rock," as the water-bearing points he fixed on all lie in a straight line. Through this fissure the water, no doubt, streamed from the adjacent high ground, but there were no surface indications of this fissure, as the rock was covered by 40 feet of boulder clay.

Here, again, are the results of some severe tests to which an amateur dowser, Mr. J. H. Jones, of Waterford, was submitted by an experienced lawyer, my friend Sir John Franks, C.B., the former Secretary to the Irish Land Commission. Sir John wanted a water supply on some property of his in West Kilkenny, and, being very sceptical as to dowsing, tested Mr. Jones as follows. It

seems there are some old long-disused wells on the property with nothing on the surface to show where they were. Sir John writes to me that Mr. Jones, who was a stranger to him and to the locality, "had never been over the ground before and knew nothing of these wells, which were only apparent when quite close, with no paths leading to them; he (Mr. Jones) quartered the ground backwards and forwards like a dog looking for game . . . found the direction of flow of the water, followed it steadily until he hit off the place where the concealed wells are. The last test was quite wonderful, as I brought him quite half a mile away to the top of the watershed, to a place from which he could not have had an idea where the well opened, in a spot quite out of sight until one got within two yards of it, but he hit it off with absolute accuracy. In the place where he indicated a site to sink for a new well, there were no surface indications at all, and it was quite half a mile away from any of the old wells. We had to cut and blast principally through solid rock, 38 feet down before we hit the spring. There are now 20 feet of water in this well."

I was anxious to put the dowser to the test of comparing his indications with those of another independent dowser, and ascertaining whether both would indicate the same spots where water would be found, and also where it would *not* be found. A site was therefore selected on a mountain slope in Co. Wicklow which no dowser had ever visited,

and where the most shrewd observer could not possibly predict beforehand the presence or absence of underground water at any particular spot. The rock is sandstone and quartzite, and water springs only occur in a few places. I sent for a good English dowser, Mr. W. Stone, who came over specially from Lincolnshire, where he lived. The field was covered with grass, and the bed-rock was believed to be only a few feet below the surface. The dowser marched to and fro, and fixed on two spots where he said plenty of water would be found within 20 feet from the surface, and another adjacent spot where he said no water would be found. Then I took him to another field on the other side of the mountain, here he declared no water would be found anywhere, the forked twig refusing to move in his hands.

A second dowser, a successful amateur, was then tried a few weeks later; he knew nothing of the previous dowser's visit. His indications exactly coincided with those of the first dowser. Boring apparatus was obtained and a set of bore-holes were made, first in one field, then in the other. The bed-rock was deeper than we thought, and after boring through 16 feet of hard, dry boulder clay, at the spot where the dowser said water *would* be found, a splendid spring of water was encountered. At the spot, a few yards distant, where the dowser said there was *no* water, we bored down to the solid rock, and spent a week boring into the rock, but no water was

found. At the third place where he predicted water we found on boring a splendid supply at 18 feet below the surface. The first and third borings showed that a bed of sand and gravel, through which the underground water streamed, lay above the bedrock and below the surface boulder clay. But how had the dowser hit upon this permeable water-line, when there was nothing whatever to indicate its presence? In the other field, on the other side of the mountain, which seemed much more likely to be water-bearing, but where both the dowsers said no water would be found, we bored in several places down to the solid rock, spending nearly a month making bore-holes, but not a drop of water was found.

It was in consequence of the unexpected and plentiful supply of water found in the first mountain field, that I secured the land for the purpose of a country cottage, which was subsequently built, and a well sunk in place of the bore-hole; even in times of great drought—when most springs have run dry—this well at Carrigoona has never failed.

These cases are only illustrations (though striking ones) of upwards of a hundred other cases I have investigated of the dowser's success when other means had failed. No doubt there are rogues who pretend to be dowsers, and who hopelessly fail when underground water is difficult to locate; and, no doubt also, when a large water supply to a town is needed, it would be far better to seek

skilled geological advice than trust to even the best dowser.

The twisting of the forked twig occurs with many persons who are not good dowsers; with such any subconscious suggestion will start its motion. A dowser requires to be tested before he can be relied upon, and it is always better before sinking a well to have the independent evidence of more than one water-finder: for the dowser is by no means infallible, though he generally thinks he is.

What is the explanation of this peculiar gift, or instinct, if such it be, that is possessed by a good dowser? The dowser himself usually thinks it is electricity, but that is only a convenient, and to the ignorant a meaningless, word, used to account for any mysterious occurrence. If the dowser knows that he himself or his forked twig is insulated from the ground, it is true the rod will not work, but if he *doesn't* know it, although good insulation has secretly been effected, the rod works as well as ever, and *vice versa*. Precisely the same effect of suggestion occurs, if the dowser be tried with radio-active substances and is disposed to believe that is the cause: or if he believes the rod moves upward for approaching underground water and downward on receding from it; or if it turns, for minerals when he holds a piece of ore in his hand, or for water if he holds a wet rag, or just the reverse of this, as is actually the case in some parts. All these are well-known

effects of suggestion, and the dowser is a very suggestible subject.

The sudden twisting of the twig, even the violent breaking of one branch of it, upon attempting to restrain its gyration, is an involuntary act, and probably only a remarkable instance of unconscious muscular action, as explained in Chapter II. It is true that cultured men of scientific tastes who are dowsers, like Dean Ovenden, utterly deny this explanation of its sudden motion and believe an unknown force of some kind is the true cause; but if so, it must be an external force of which we have not the remotest conception. The chief question, however, is the nature of the faculty which leads a good dowser to discover the hidden spring or metallic ore when other means have failed.

The explanation, I believe, is not physical, but *psychical.* All the evidence points to the fact that the good dowser subconsciously possesses the faculty of clairvoyance, a supersensuous perceptive power such as we have described in a previous chapter. This gives rise to an instinctive, but not conscious, detection of the hidden object for which he is in search. This obscure and hitherto unrecognized human faculty reveals itself by creating an automatic or involuntary muscular spasm that twists the forked rod. Sometimes it produces a curious *malaise* or transient discomfort, which furnishes some dowsers with a sufficient indication to enable them to dispense with the use of a forked

twig, or loop of wire, used by some. This hypothesis I have put to the test of experiment with a good amateur dowser and found he really possessed this kind of second sight. If so dowsers ought to be able to find other hidden things, besides water and minerals, and this is the case. Long ago the divining-rod was used in the search for buried treasure and hidden coins, and although we may smile at such credulity, nevertheless there is in recent times good evidence of the dowser John Mullins repeatedly finding carefully hidden coins. With two amateur dowsers, Mr. J. F. Young and Miss Miles, I have made numerous experiments to ascertain their powers in this respect. The experiments were in all cases arranged so as to exclude the possibility of their gaining any knowledge, from unconscious indications given by myself, of the position of the coin, hidden in their absence. To get rid of possible telepathy was more difficult; the person who alone knew where the coin was hidden was excluded from the room and unaware when the trial was begun; this made no difference in the results, which, though not invariably successful, were far beyond any success that could be achieved by mere chance.

There is, therefore, very strong presumptive evidence that a good dowser is one who possesses a supernormal perceptive power, seeing as it were without eyes. Like other supernormal faculties it resides in the subliminal self and usually reveals itself through

some involuntary muscular action. Possibly a like faculty of discernment beyond the power of vision may exist in certain animals and birds, and afford an explanation of the mystery of many otherwise inexplicable cases of homing and migratory instincts.

If the case of Jacques Aymar, narrated on a previous page, can be relied on, it might be accounted for by an extension of the clairvoyant faculty to the supernormal detection of traces of scent or footprints left by the criminals. Records exist of certain old Indian tribes in Mexico, among whom were certain persons possessing a like faculty, and from the Indian word for these men came the name Zahoris (meaning gifted with second sight or clairvoyant) applied to wandering individuals in Spain in the sixteenth century, of whom are related (as early as 1515) wonderful stories of their strange occult gifts of vision, etc.

Whatever truth there may be in these old stories, we are less inclined to ridicule them as fables after the conclusions to which we have been led as regards dowsing. These conclusions are: (1) that those who really possess this curious faculty are rare, and many pretenders exist; the good dowser is a case of *nascitur non fit;* (2) the involuntary motion of the forked twig which occurs with certain persons, is due to a muscular spasm that may be excited in different ways; (3) the explanation of the success of good dowsers, after prolonged and crucial tests, is—like that of

any other obscure human faculty or instinct —a matter for further physiological and psychological research, though provisionally we may entertain the working hypothesis suggested, viz. unconscious clairvoyance, an aspect of what Mr. Myers terms *telæsthesia*, "perception at a distance."

CHAPTER XIII

HAUNTINGS AND POLTERGEISTS

Among the most popular of traditional "ghost-stories" are those of haunted houses and places. Cases of reputed hauntings are to be found in the literature of all countries, both ancient and modern, the types remaining alike throughout.

This inveterate persistency of species in ghost-stories appears rather curiously in a letter of the younger Pliny to his friend Sura, containing three stories of three still well-marked types: a premonitory vision, a haunted house, and a "poltergeist." Of these the first, about Curtius Rufus, an eminent public man, is also told, more briefly, by Pliny's friend Tacitus in the eleventh book of his *Annals*. The second has the most orthodox features of conventional fiction. A commodious residence in Athens had long stood empty, its tenants routed by the nightly visits of a spectral old man of extremely emaciated and squalid appearance, with long beard and dishevelled hair, rattling the chains on his feet and hands, who so alarmed the beholders that some of them died. The

philosopher Athenodorus, seeing the house for sale on extraordinarily low terms, resolved to investigate the spectre and took up his abode there—a pioneer among psychical researchers. As he sat alone at midnight, the inevitable ghost appeared, and with beckoning hand and clanking chains led him to a place in the area of the house, where it vanished. Marking the place, Athenodorus next day induced the magistrates to order excavations, which disclosed a fettered skeleton. Whereupon the bones being publicly interred, with propitiatory rites, the house was haunted no more! In conclusion, Pliny begs his friend to consider the subject carefully; "and though," he adds, "you should as usual balance between two opinions, yet I hope that you will lean more to one side than the other, lest you should dismiss me in the same suspense and indecision that occasions you the present application." Pliny was neither the first nor the last of puzzled psychical researchers.

A century later, Lucian, in his *Philopseudês*, characteristically ridicules a similar story about a house in Corinth. The poltergeist related by Pliny was of a very simple type, merely an account of how "supernatural" visitants cut off the hair of certain of Pliny's servants, when they were asleep, and strewed it about the room.

Ancient and widespread as is the belief in hauntings, the evidence for the most part is open to suspicion, hence few educated

persons have been disposed to accept a supernormal origin for the stories, believing that some simple explanation would be found to cover the ground, such as rats, or owls, or practical joking. The subject cannot, however, be so easily dismissed, for the careful investigations made by the S.P.R. have shown that amid much that is absurd and exaggerated certain cases remain which cannot be explained away by illusion or practical jokes. At the same time we rarely find anything corresponding to the traditional ghost-story, like that of Pliny, which connects some tragedy in a particular house or place, with the vague and often confused accounts of sights or sounds which perplex or terrify the observer. We often wonder why the numerous cases carefully investigated by the S.P.R. and recorded in its publications have not been used by writers to furnish the mystery-loving public with ghost-stories more in accordance with fact.

Here, for instance, is a remarkable case, which has stood the test of long and searching inquiry. The account was first received in 1884 through Mr. J. W. Graham, Principal of Dalton Hall, Manchester, and the case subsequently investigated by Mr. Myers. To avoid injury to the owner of the house the locality is not stated, and also the name "Morton" is substituted for the real family name, but the initials are the true ones. Miss "Morton"—a brief outline of whose account is given below—is a lady of scientific training and an exceptionally good witness.

"In April 1882 Captain Morton and his family moved into a detached house at the corner of two cross roads, with a lawn and a short carriage-drive in front, and a garden and small orchard at the back. It was built in 1860, and occupied by Mr. S. and his family for sixteen years. His wife died there one August (year uncertain), whereupon Mr. S. took to drink, and when, two years afterwards, he married again his second wife contracted the same habit. They quarrelled continually, and a few months before his death, which occurred in July 1876, she left him, and lived at Clifton, till, in September 1878, she died of dipsomania, and was buried about a quarter of a mile from the house in question. After Mr. S.'s death it was occupied for six months by Mr. L. and his family. He died there, and it then remained empty for about four years, during which time the grounds are said to have been haunted by the figure of a lady, but the Mortons had heard no rumours. From June 1882 until 1889 there was frequently seen moving about within and without the house, by day and night, the apparition of a tall lady in widow's weeds, holding a handkerchief to her face, and seemingly weeping. The figure was believed to resemble the second Mrs. S., but in what degree the concealment of the face makes doubtful. It often went into the drawing-room, taking up a position in a window, where the second Mrs. S. used to sit.

The wraith was first, and most frequently,

seen by the eldest Miss M., who followed it, spoke to it, when it would stop as if about to speak, but never did so; tried to touch it, but found it elude her grasp, vanishing when cornered, though in full view a moment before. Then with scientific care, she tested its immateriality by stretching lightly across the stairs fine threads, at various heights from the ground; twice, at least, she saw the figure pass through the threads, yet its passage left them undisturbed. Its footsteps were faintly audible. Later on it was seen by Miss M.'s sisters and brother, to whom she had not mentioned it, and by visitors and servants, in all about twenty persons. Neither her father nor her mother, who was an invalid, ever saw it. Miss M. sometimes saw it when other persons present did not. It often vanished at a door leading into the garden. Once it was seen by Miss M. and her sister to pass from the drawing-room along the passage, and disappear at this door, while their sister E., coming in from the garden, said she had seen it emerge from the steps outside: the three sisters then went into the garden, when a fourth sister called from an upper window that she had just seen it pass across the front lawn and along the carriage-drive to the orchard. This is a noticeable feature in the case, since it seems probable that the figure was traced by independent observers through the successive points in space which a material body would have occupied in going from the drawing-room to the orchard; and this, *prima facie*,

implies some spatial relations. Mrs. Sidgwick observes (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. iii., p. 146) that, in the absence of accurate notes of the time, we cannot be certain that the appearances *were* successive, or in the order assumed, as a phantom might possibly appear in several places at once—which is doubtless true; but we seem to have no records of such an occurrence.

The figure was seen most frequently in the months of July, August and September, which include the anniversaries of the deaths of Mr. S. and his wives. The frequency was at its maximum in the summer of 1884, after which time the appearances became fewer, and finally ceased in 1889. Towards the end of this period, the figure, which had at first looked life-like and substantial, became shadowy and semi-transparent. There was also a gradual cessation of the phenomena which had occurred during these years, namely footsteps, soft and slow—unlike those of any in the house,—thumps on bedroom doors and turning of the door-handles, sounds of the dragging about of heavy weights, and unaccountable lights.

Miss M., who investigated the apparition quite fearlessly, describes herself as having had at first "a feeling of awe, as at something unknown, mixed with a strong desire to know more about it." Subsequently she became conscious of a feeling of loss, as if she had "lost power to the figure." Most of the other percipients were greatly alarmed, and felt

chilled as if by a cold wind. Two dogs in the house were at times much terrified. Full details of this case, which Mr. Myers considered "in some respects one of the most remarkable and best authenticated instances of 'haunting' on record," will be found in the *S.P.R. Proceedings*, vol. viii. Mr. Myers took much trouble in the investigation of this case, personally examined several of the witnesses, and was convinced of the genuineness of the whole story, which, however, loses much of its impressiveness in the brief summary which is all that it is possible to give in these pages.

A remarkable case of haunting occurred some years ago in a manor-house in the midland counties of England. I was invited to investigate the case and was offered hospitality. Though the ghost did not appear to me, whilst I slept in the haunted room, yet I heard certain mysterious knockings and some other disturbances which accompanied it; nor could I find any satisfactory explanation of these sounds. The first-hand evidence on behalf of the ghostly figure was, however, abundant and surprising. It was seen in the house independently by nearly a dozen different persons, who at first believing it to be a practical joke, tried to catch it, but it was uncatchable and impalpable; the latter was proved by a young officer, who when staying in the house saw the phantom one night, rose from his bed, followed it and shot through the figure, which moved on unconcerned. The children of my host, from whom the story of

the ghost had been carefully concealed, described the same figure, which did not frighten, but rather amused, them, as they said " they could see the wall of the school-room through its body."

Another case of haunting investigated by myself and also by Professor Sidgwick, occurred not far from my own residence in Kingstown. Here the phantom of a woman wrapped in a grey shawl was seen on the stairs and in a particular bedroom of a house tenanted by a lady and her brother. The figure was seen by different occupants of the room and by a child of five years old, though none were previously aware of the ghostly visitant : the door of the room was locked, yet still the figure made its appearance to the occupier of the room. All attempts at a normal explanation failed and the occupiers had at last to leave the house. Subsequently it was found that some previous tenants of the house had been troubled by inexplicable disturbances of various kinds, details of which they gave. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. ii., p. 141.)

In all these cases one is naturally very sceptical that really similar phantoms have been seen quite independently. Even if the ghost be actually seen by the investigator, it is easier to assume that the figure is a pure hallucination, or some real person playing a trick. I confess, however, that a careful consideration of first-hand evidence has led me to the same conclusion at which Mrs. Sidgwick, one of the most critical and able of investi-

gators, arrived so far back as 1885, namely, that in spite of all reasonable scepticism, it is difficult "to avoid accepting, at least provisionally, the conclusion that there are, in a certain sense, haunted houses, *i.e.* that there are houses in which similar quasi-human apparitions have occurred at different times to different inhabitants, under circumstances which exclude the hypothesis of suggestion or expectation" (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. iii., p. 142).

Here is a typical case of haunting, resting on the evidence of educated persons who tried in vain to account for what was seen: full details are given in the *Journal* of the S.P.R., vols. vi. and ix. In 1892, Miss Scott, living at St. Boswells, Roxburghshire, upon walking home one afternoon in May, saw a tall man dressed in black a few yards in front of her. He turned a corner of the road, being still in view when he suddenly disappeared, although no exit seemed possible. Hurrying on to find what had become of him she met her sister, who was looking round bewildered; she too had seen the same figure, whom she took to be a clergyman, but the figure suddenly vanished and search yielded no clue.

In the July following, at the same place, Miss Scott again saw the same figure, the upper part of which was also seen by another sister who was walking with her; it was dressed like an old clergyman in knee-breeches, silk stockings, buckled shoes, white cravat and low-crowned hat. Resolved not to lose sight of him this time Miss Scott kept her eyes fixed

on the figure, but both sisters saw it gradually fade away before their eyes. Again in June, the next year, Miss Scott, walking one morning near the same place, saw the same apparition. Determined to solve the mystery she rushed to overtake it, but it seemed to glide away in front of her, then it stopped, turned round and faced her, enabling her to note in minute detail the features and dress, that of a Scotch clergyman of a century ago. Finally the figure again faded away by the roadside.

Other persons also independently testified to having seen the same figure at the same place. One lady, Miss Irvine, was attracted by the quaint dress of the old clergyman, and watched him walking to and fro by the hedgeside, when, to her astonishment, the figure vanished when she was about three yards off. The various witnesses gave separate written and concordant reports of what they had seen. The figure was not further seen until 1897, when Miss Scott and one of her sisters again saw it, noting the thin white features and dress of the phantom; they had not been thinking of it and are sure it was no morbid hallucination or illusion of their senses, or practical joke. A plan was sent of the road and locality, with the positions marked where different persons had seen the apparition. In July 1900 Miss Scott saw the figure again on two occasions near the same spot, and wrote an account to the S.P.R. the next day. Persons employed on that particular road have been interrogated, but have never seen the phantom,

nor has a man who passes up and down the road to the village every morning and evening.

It is very difficult to believe Miss Scott and the other percipients were all mistaken, and it is equally difficult to frame any theory to account for the persistence of the phantom in this spot, except by the hypothesis given below.

The case of the " haunted house at Willington " has been a familiar theme on Tyneside for half a century, and accounts of it have appeared in various publications. The best report will be found in vol. v. of the *Journal* of the S.P.R., where Mr. J. Proctor, a member of the Society of Friends, who was born in the house, gives a vivid account of his experience of the hauntings and of their wholly inexplicable character.

Other cases might be quoted, which, like the two preceding ones, suggest that some kind of *local imprint*, on material structures or places, has been left by some past events occurring to certain persons, who, when on earth, lived or were closely connected with that particular locality; an echo or phantom of these events becoming perceptible to those now living who happen to be endowed with some special psychic sensitiveness. Although this theory seems extravagant and incredible, there are not wanting analogies to it both in the domain of physics and psychical research. A coin left on a pane of glass and after some time removed, leaves a local imprint which may be revealed by breathing on the glass;

pieces of wood, coal, and many other materials laid on a photographic plate and then removed, leave a "local imprint" so that the very structure of the materials is revealed when the plate is developed, it may be long after. The causes of these and other curious phenomena are now known, but this cannot be said of somewhat analogous phenomena in psychical research.

Certain sensitives are said to be able to detect, or "psychometrize" as they call it, the influence left on material objects worn by an absent or deceased person. Whether this be the case or not, there are some startling and well-attested phenomena related by the older mesmerists which apparently indicate that some specific influence is left on a material object by the passes of a mesmerizer. The scientific objections to a specific effluence are perhaps not so formidable now that we are acquainted with certain physical and psychical facts that would have been deemed utterly incredible a century ago.

In the early years of the S.P.R., Mr. Gurney was present with me when certain hypnotic experiments were made, in the rooms of the Society and under our direction. The results of these experiments seemed so incredible that I believe they were never published. Any particular book or coin or other object over which the hypnotizer had made a few passes, or even pointed his fingers, could be detected by a sensitive subject, who was subsequently brought by us into the room,

from which the hypnotizer had in the meanwhile been excluded and the positions of the objects then changed by us. In fact, every precaution was taken to avoid collusion or any direct knowledge being gained by the subject, who was not entranced at the time. Finally, we were driven to telepathy as a possible explanation; but even this seemed unlikely, for our presence in the room made no difference, nor was any difference found when *we* did not know which object had been treated by the hypnotist. Here, as in many other problems of psychical research, we have no solution to offer, and must leave future investigators to confirm or disprove the results we obtained.

To return to the subject of hauntings, different theories have been suggested—

(1) The popular view that the apparition belongs to the external world like ordinary matter, and would be there whether the percipient was present or not. Some cases appear to support this view, such as the one to which I have already referred (p. 191), in which the phantom was followed from place to place and seen by different independent observers at successive points. This theory, however, has insuperable difficulties, among others that of accounting for the clothes of the ghost, and it may be dismissed. (2) That the phantom was projected from the mind of the percipient, and was, therefore, a hallucination; not a baseless one, but created by a telepathic impact from the mind of a deceased person.

Here we have the difficulty of explaining why the phantasm should be dependent on a particular locality, although with our present knowledge this theory appears the most plausible. (3) That the phantom was due merely to expectancy and telepathically transferred from one mind to another. This may account for some cases such as the two that will be cited immediately. (4) That some subtle physical influence is left in the building or locality which affects certain brains and creates the hallucination. This, Mrs. Sidgwick remarks, "one can hardly expect to appear plausible," albeit it corresponds best to a certain part of the evidence, and from what has been said on a previous page cannot be hastily rejected. To these we may add an extension of the second theory that hauntings are due to dreams of the deceased, telepathically projecting scenes of their life on earth to some persons there present. Finally, those who have *not* made a study of the subject will have their own theory that all the alleged phenomena are due to delusion or fraud.

A lively imagination stimulated by expectancy probably accounts for the two following cases. Early in 1911 a book entitled *An Adventure* was published in London, giving an account of the experiences of two ladies on visiting Versailles some ten years ago, when they appeared to be transported into the times of Marie Antoinette. On more than one visit they thought they saw the surroundings of the place and the people therein, as their

subsequent investigations showed might have been the case had they been present during the life of Marie Antoinette. This narrative, however, when examined for the S.P.R., appears to be based on slender evidence and trivial incidents, undesignedly amplified by the authors, and cannot be accepted as of any real evidential value. In some points it resembles a story of apparent obsession by Marie Antoinette, sent to the *S.P.R. Journal* by Mrs. Stapleton, and published in June 1907, but the stories have no connection with one another. Both are instances of several dream romances inspired by the history of the ill-fated Queen, the best known of them being the case of Hélène Smith, who regarded herself as a reincarnation of Marie Antoinette. This interesting romance of a "secondary personality" is described in an able book by Professor Flournoy, a summary of which is given by Mr. Myers in *Human Personality*, vol. ii., p. 130 *et seq.*

The other case is as follows: About 9 p.m. on May 8, 1885, a gardener named Bard, returning from work, passed through Hinxton churchyard, in Essex, and thought he saw his former employer, Mrs. de Frèville, leaning on the railings round her husband's tomb, five or six yards distant. He recognized her black mantle and poke-bonnet, and her face, which was paler than usual. He supposed her to be, as was her habit, visiting the tomb, and he kept his eye on her as he walked round the railings to see if the gate into the vault were

open, but stumbled over a grass-tussock, and when he looked again the figure had disappeared. He found the gate locked, and could see her nowhere in the churchyard. Looking at the clock, he saw that it was 9.20. On reaching home, he told his wife, as she testifies, that he had seen Mrs. de Frèville. On that afternoon, about seven hours earlier, Mrs. de Frèville had died very suddenly in London, but this was unknown in Hinxton until the next day. This case, which was carefully investigated for the S.P.R., rests on strong evidence with respect to the character of the percipient, a highly intelligent and trustworthy man, and the closeness of the coincidence. Its weak points are: (1) that he *might* have already heard of the death—this, however, is very improbable; (2) he saw the figure two hours after sunset on a moonless evening, when, unless there was unusually bright starlight, or an unusually prolonged after-glow, it must have been very dark; (3) he said himself that he half thought he had imagined it; (4) churchyards suggest fancies of the kind.

The term "haunting" is usually restricted to those cases where quasi-human phantoms are seen at different times by different persons in a particular locality. Neither the last case nor the next are hauntings in this sense, but the following is interesting theoretically, for the supposed ghost was alive at the time; this case rests upon excellent evidence.

In December 1896, Mrs. Blaikie was staying

away from home in Edinburgh, where, on December 10, she fell ill with an attack of acute laryngitis. About 11 p.m. on December 11, her three women servants were sitting by the kitchen fire in her house, when they heard steps exactly like hers coming from the hall towards the nursery door. They all went to the door leading from the kitchen to the nursery passage, but saw nothing. At the same time her daughter Frances, while undressing in her room, heard coming along the passage to the door footsteps heavy and rather quick, exactly like her mother's, and unlike any of the servants', though she supposed it must be one of them until they all came in alarm to ask if it had been she. The other daughter, Jeanie, in her room up-stairs, had also heard steps exactly like her mother's, but conjectured burglars; however, on the house being searched, nothing was found to account for the sounds.

Mrs. Blaikie writes: "On the evening of December 11, about eleven o'clock, I had such a sensation of being suffocated that I felt as if I were dying, and would never see my home again. I was suddenly filled with an overpowering longing to be at home, and whether I fell asleep for a few moments and dreamed I do not know, but it seemed the next minute as if my desire was granted, and I felt I was actually there. I was conscious of walking along the passage past the dressing-room door, and towards the room we call the nursery, but I had hardly time to realize my

own joy and relief when I found myself still lying in bed, and the feeling of suffocation, from which I had had such a happy respite for a few moments, again tormenting me. When I returned home a week later I was told of the curious occurrence on the evening of Friday, the 11th" (*Journal S.P.R.*, vol. viii., p. 320).

How are we to account for this collective hallucination? Had it some normal explanation, or was it a telepathic impression conveyed to one of the daughters, and did this start a similar impression on the other percipients, or was it simultaneously impressed on all? We have no experimental evidence on behalf of either of these latter hypotheses. Mr. Myers, from this and several similar cases, was led to adopt the idea of a temporary excursion of the spirit to the place where it desired to be, in some unknown way being able to make its presence perceptible. It is improbable that any physical instrument could detect and record the sounds heard, though the experiment is worth trying. Would a sensitive flame, for instance, which is affected by the feeblest sounds, have detected the footsteps or rustling of Mrs. Blaikie's phantasmal dress? Would a photographic plate record an apparition? I am inclined to think not in either case.

In passing, it may here be remarked that the evidence for so-called spirit photography is wholly inconclusive, most alleged cases are pure fraud. The impression in all phantasms, I believe, is made directly on

the *mind* of the percipients and not through their organs of hearing or sight. The mind then projects the impression outside itself, and hears sounds and sees visions apparently in external space. But why this particular impression ? Why should Mrs. Blaikie's spirit have been able to conjure up only the sound of her footsteps and the rustling of her dress ? Were the details of her presence fashioned by the transmitting or receiving mind, or by both ? Possibly the result was due to the subconscious and symbolical manner in which the personality of a friend is conceived, whose presence is suggested telepathically. But telepathy is only a provisional explanation, and is completely out of court in the still more puzzling phenomena of poltergeists, to which we must now turn.

Poltergeists

We have no exact English equivalent for the German word " Poltergeist," usually translated " hobgoblin " ; a " polterer " in German is a noisy or boisterous fellow, and a " poltergeist " is therefore a boisterous ghost. The phenomena are sporadic, breaking out suddenly in some place and disappearing after a few weeks or months of annoyance to those concerned. Unlike hauntings, the disturbances appear to gather round a particular, usually young, person in a particular place. All kinds of mischievous pranks are played, objects are thrown about, bells rung, furniture

moved, noises made, all utterly meaningless. And the closest scrutiny fails, in genuine cases, to discover any conceivable explanation, except some unseen agency.

Similar phenomena are recorded in different countries throughout the world, and go back to a remote period of time. No doubt in part they gave rise, as Mr. A. Lang suggests, to fetishism among savage races, *i. e.* a belief that an inanimate object may be tenanted by what is thought to be a spirit. One of the best-attested English cases of poltergeists occurred in 1661, and is known as the "Demon, or drummer, of Tedworth." This was minutely investigated and described by one of the most critical among the early Fellows of the Royal Society, the Rev. J. Glanvil, who published a full account of this case in his well-known book, *Saducismus Triumphatus.* Briefly, the facts are as follows. A Mr. Mompesson, a magistrate in Tedworth, Wilts, ordered the arrest of a vagrant drummer in 1661. Shortly afterwards at Mr. Mompesson's house began an amazing series of unaccountable noises and disturbances which continued for two years. The drummer was tried for witchcraft but acquitted, and the disturbances went on when he was far off in jail. The evidence as to these disturbances was given on oath at this trial and the eye-witnesses were numerous. Glanvil himself came to investigate, and relates that he saw chairs move about without any one touching them, shoes thrown by invisible hands, that

he heard scratchings on the bed, etc., all the phenomena apparently clustering round Mr. Mompesson's two young children. They were naturally suspected, but Glanvil relates how he convinced himself, as others had been convinced, that it was quite impossible for the children to have played these tricks, which often occurred in daylight before the eyes of numerous sceptical inquirers.

Omitting many other similar cases in Scotland and different parts of England, we come to the famous case of the disturbances at Epworth vicarage during the Rev. S. Wesley's residence there in 1716. These formed the subject of a long investigation and careful record by his son, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who came to the conclusion that their origin was "Satanic," a not unnatural conclusion as the following entries in the journal of Mr. Wesley, senr., show—

"December 25.—The noises were so violent it was vain to think of going to sleep. December 27.—They [the disturbances] were so boisterous I did not care to leave my family." Again he writes: "I have been thrice pushed by an invisible power, once against my desk in the study, a second time against the door of the matted chamber, a third against the frame of my study door as I was going in." Their mastiff seemed more afraid than the children, as it came whining to them when the disturbances arose. Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, states that "the testimony . . . is

far too strong to be set aside because of the strangeness of the relation."

Then, in 1834, we have the remarkable case of "Bealing bells," investigated and related by Major Moor, F.R.S. Here, day after day for nearly two months, the bells of the house were continually ringing in broad daylight, no known cause being discovered; the bell-wires were in full view and a careful watch kept, until at last Major Moor was thoroughly convinced the ringing was by no human agency; the inmates were driven from the house and the mystery never cleared up.

Similar inexplicable cases of bell-ringing have occurred elsewhere. One such case, associated with other poltergeist phenomena, was critically investigated in Massachusetts in 1868. Not only were the bell-wires detached and the bells suspended near a lofty ceiling, but they continued to ring and were seen ringing in daylight whilst observers kept watch. The phenomena began after the arrival of a maidservant, who, of course, was suspected, but it was soon found impossible for her to be the culprit, as the bell-ringing and violent pitching about of furniture occurred when she was observed to be quietly at her work in another room. The investigation appears to have been a very thorough and careful one, yet no explanation could be found.

Perhaps the most conclusive evidence for poltergeist phenomena is that given on oath in connection with Cideville parsonage, a

place some thirty miles from Havre. Here, in 1850–51, knockings, movements of furniture, noises of all kinds occurred in daylight, and every would-be exposer of the mystery was baffled.

In 1877 I investigated a remarkable poltergeist occurring in an Irish farmer's cabin a few miles from Enniskillen. I was aided in the inquiry by two sceptical scientific friends, but we were all convinced that the phenomena could not be accounted for by any known agency. In an article published in the *Dublin University Magazine* for 1877, I gave a detailed account of these occurrences and the precautions taken to avoid the possibility of trickery. Here, in my presence, violent knockings and scratchings were heard, but the closest scrutiny on the part of three critical observers failed to account for them.

More recently in Enniscorthy, a town in Co. Wexford, I have investigated a case of poltergeist that occurred in July 1910. Here the disturbances centred round a young carpenter, and, though they had ceased when I visited the spot, the testimony of various witnesses convinced me that it was practically impossible to attribute them to the lad or to any other human being. For two sceptical and intelligent investigators were present one night when unaccountable knockings and amazing disturbances took place. The bedclothes were pulled off the bed on which the lad was sleeping, the bed itself was pulled into the middle of the room and the lad lifted off

the bed and deposited gently on the floor. The light was sufficient to enable them to see that no practical jokes were being played. The reader who may be interested will find a full report of this and other cases in my paper on Poltergeists, in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., vol. xxv. In earlier volumes and in the *Journal* of that Society will be found other well-attested cases of poltergeist occurring in England and on the Continent.

What are we to say to these mysterious and bizarre phenomena? The witnesses had certainly nothing to gain by narrating them, for, as Glanvil remarks of Mr. Mompesson, "he suffered in his name, his estate, and all his affairs, and in the general peace of his family and loss of his servants and of his health," through the occurrences. Fraud, mal-observation, misdescription, illusion, etc., doubtless explain some cases, but are, in my opinion, inadequate to account for all the cases. Imitation of some of the phenomena by children and others may, and does sometimes, occur, but is likely to be, and indeed in some such cases has been, quickly detected.

Confronted by these perplexing phenomena, all we can do is to continue collecting and sifting the evidence with scrupulous care, hoping that in time patient inquiry will throw some light on these investigations as it has done on some of the sporadic and puzzling phenomena of meteorology.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM

One of the objects which the Society for Psychical Research was founded to investigate is officially described as follows : " An Inquiry into various alleged phenomena apparently inexplicable by known laws of nature and commonly referred by Spiritualists to the agency of extra-terrene intelligences, and by others to some unknown physical force." These phenomena include the alleged movement of both light and heavy objects without known cause, responsive raps and other sounds, luminous appearances, the levitation of human beings, etc., etc.

Whether such an inquiry is thought worthy of serious attention or not depends upon the degree of knowledge or amount of prejudice one happens to possess. The question to be considered is not any particular theory as to the origin of these phenomena, but whether they are really supernormal, or an exhibition of credulity, ignorance and imposture. The repugnance with which the whole subject is widely regarded is very natural; for the alleged phenomena only occur in the presence

of a "medium" and usually in darkness; moreover, a class of paid professional mediums has arisen, several of whom—a particularly detestable class of rogues—have been caught in barefaced trickery. The necessity for a medium need not concern us; some intermediary, animate or inanimate, between the seen and unseen is requisite in the physical as well as in the psychical world, as remarked earlier, whenever unseen agencies are rendered perceptible to the senses. What peculiar psychological state constitutes a medium we have not the remotest idea; sex, age, and education are alike immaterial. In other departments of psychical research no injurious effect on the psychic or medium, so far as I know, has ever been observed; here, however, there seems to be in many cases a deteriorating influence as incomprehensible as that which sometimes occurs among "horsey" people. But we don't blame the horse or reject its services on this account, and we have no right to exclude from scientific inquiry any subject because it appears repellent from its associations. The dogmatic refusal to listen to evidence is no less reprehensible than the temper of uncritical acceptance of these phenomena by many spiritualists.

Two conditions are obviously essential for any satisfactory investigation of these phenomena. One is the presence of good light for observation, and the other the absence of any pecuniary motive on the part of the medium; even so the love of notoriety often affords as

strong a motive as the love of money—of this I could relate more than one instance in the course of my inquiries. Hence the difficulty which many on the Council of the Society for Psychical Research have experienced in arriving at any definite conclusions in this obscure region, inasmuch as the requisite conditions are not often attainable. But throughout psychical research we invariably find that phenomena which have been alleged to occur experimentally, are paralleled if genuine by similar phenomena which occur spontaneously and sporadically. Now the undeniable evidence (in my opinion) on behalf of poltergeists affords ground for belief in similar phenomena occurring experimentally. Rappings, disturbances of all kinds, the movement of objects without contact, etc., have in fact taken place, as testified by many observers, without the presence of a paid medium, sometimes in good light and with every precaution which ingenuity could suggest to prevent trickery.

On the other hand, the Society for Psychical Research have shown that mal-observation accounts for many of the marvels attested by good witnesses. The attention is so easily diverted that an investigator may honestly believe he kept his eyes continuously fixed on the medium, when actually he did nothing of the kind. This, however, assumes that the medium, intentionally or otherwise, was able to take advantage of movements when the attention of the investigator was relaxed.

Moreover, the long series of experiments which Sir W. Crookes made with the medium, Mr. D. Home, under stringent test conditions, when he obtained the most amazing phenomena, demonstrates either that the occurrences actually took place, or that Sir William was the victim of hallucination. This latter explanation is plausible, and was indeed adopted for some time by myself, but personal acquaintance with the phenomena convinced me it was quite inadequate. The limits of space will only allow me to give a brief reference to a fragment of my own experience; for further information on this long-disputed subject the reader should consult various papers on both sides by Mrs. Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, Dr. Hodgson, Sir W. Crookes, myself, and others, published in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. (see vols. iv., vi., vii., ix., etc.), or the new edition of my book entitled *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought.*

When a sceptic as to the reality of these physical or *telekinetic* phenomena, it so happened that I was able to investigate some inexplicable rappings and movement of objects that occurred in the presence of a child, the daughter of an acquaintance who was residing for the season in a house near my own. Here the occurrences took place in broad daylight, frequently with no one present but myself and the child, and I sought in vain for some normal explanation. Vigorous raps, which had an intelligent origin—for upon pointing to the letters of the

alphabet they spelt out answers to questions —came on the table, on the back of my chair and sometimes in a far distant part of the room. Even when I asked the young medium to lie on the sofa and firmly held her hands and feet, no other person being present, the raps came as before, and upon repeating the alphabet aloud, a rap at particular letters answered any question I put. The answers were such as the child would give, and the misspelling of words corresponded to those made by the young medium, as afterwards was ascertained. Nevertheless, I am perfectly certain that she could not have produced the sounds, nor could she have lifted the heavy mahogany dining-table, which sometimes rose some six inches with only one leg resting on the floor, and this in full sunlight, with our hands gently resting on the top and in view the whole time. Nor was I the victim of hallucination, for on the numerous occasions wherein I tested every plausible explanation, this hypothesis was always in my mind and was completely discredited. The child's music-master informed me that raps, often very loud, would come inside the piano when his pupil was practising and grew listless; they came on a garden seat in the lawn and on an umbrella handle, whenever the young medium was near. After a few years the annoyance faded away, to the relief of all concerned.

Some time subsequently I had the opportunity of some sittings with the niece of a well-known photographer, when even more remark-

able and unaccountable phenomena occurred. I will only mention one incident. The room was brightly lighted with gas, and after sundry raps had spelt out a message, a small table, untouched by any one, came hobbling across the room towards me until it imprisoned me in the arm-chair on which I was sitting. There were no threads or wires or any known cause for the movement of the table, nor for other movement of objects witnessed by me in excellent light.

But these marvels are slight compared to the amazing phenomena recorded by Sir W. Crookes during his investigations with Home and another medium. It is needless to detail the facts, as they are generally known, and incredible as they appear, Sir W. Crookes is far too skilled and accurate an observer to allow any doubt as to the precautions he took to avoid fraud. In fact, all the phenomena took place in his own house, and many of the more startling occurrences under the blaze of an electric light. As some persons were under the impression that his conviction of the supernormal character of these manifestations had been shaken, Sir William Crookes in his presidential address to the British Association in 1898 stated that was not the case, and that he adhered to the statements he had published. Although Home has been accused of fraud, Mr. Myers and myself could obtain no evidence in support of this charge. We published a joint paper in the *Journal* of the S.P.R. for July 1889, giving the result of our investiga-

tions and a summary of some of the astonishing phenomena attested by excellent witnesses.

Here, for instance, is the testimony of a well-known lawyer, the late Mr. W. M. Wilkinson, which he sent to us. He states that in the winter of 1869 "I saw Mr. Home take out of our drawing-room fire a red-hot coal a little smaller than a cricket-ball and carry it up and down the room. He said to Lord Adare, now Earl Dunraven, who was present, 'Will you take it from me, it will not hurt you.' Lord Adare took it from him and held it in his hand for about half a minute. Before he threw it in the fire, I put my hand close to it and felt the heat like that of a live coal." This handling of white-hot bodies with impunity by Home has been described to me by several eye-witnesses. Lord Crawford also saw it done on eight occasions; Sir W. Crookes saw it, and states no known chemical preparation (had Home used any) could have preserved the skin from injury, and yet there was no sign of burning. Another phenomenon, that of levitation, was witnessed by several good observers. In past time, the handling of fire and walking through the fire, and the levitation of the body have been recorded of many persons in many parts of the world.

What can be said of these miracles? They are so foreign to ordinary experience, that even the testimony of numerous and distinguished witnesses fails to carry conviction to the majority of readers. And yet it is impossible

to reject the evidence, and it seems inconceivable that so many critical and sceptical observers were all mistaken or the victims of hallucination. For I might quote scientific men, trained observers, throughout the Continent and America as well as in England, who after long and patient inquiry have been driven to a belief in the genuineness of the phenomena, the explanation of which all agree must be found in some department of knowledge new to science. Professors Richet, Lombroso, Morselli, and other physiologists and psychologists of note; Professor Schiaperelli, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. A. R. Wallace, and many other famous men, including others of a past generation like that great exposer of humbugs, Professor De Morgan,—all unite in giving their testimony to the reality of some of these *telekinetic* phenomena.

If, as all religions assume, life exists in the unseen, creatures of varied type and capacity may exist there as well as here; some may be able to act upon material objects and even on the molecules themselves. It is true that the things done appear trivial, meaningless and incomprehensible from our present point of view. But as a great *savant* has remarked, "Only in proportion to the difficulty there seems of admitting the facts should be the scrupulous attention we bestow on their examination." That is now being done, and with that we must pass from this branch of our subject.

CHAPTER XV

AUTOMATIC WRITING
CROSS-CORRESPONDENCE

We must now pass on to the phenomena of the messages, spoken or written, which appear to be delivered involuntarily and automatically, and which are a fruitful though difficult branch of our inquiry. The main source, indeed, of the most remarkable evidence recently obtained has been automatic writing, in conjunction, at times, with automatic speech. This curious faculty, commonly possessed by those who are endowed with any "mediumistic" gifts, may be said to manifest itself in an extremely rudimentary form whenever anybody takes a pencil and scribbles on a scrap of paper, while thinking about something else. With some persons who have had the patience to sit regularly, and as passively as possible, the product varies in value from meaningless scrawls to messages which purport to be the words of an intelligence other than the writer's. Much care and patience, however, are required in sifting the messages so received;

for even when we are convinced that a certain message, or fragment of it, is not attributable to the conscious self of the writer, nor to telepathy from some living person, it may come from some deeper stratum, the subliminal self of the writer's own personality.

Still, abundant evidence, dating from very ancient times to our own, shows that messages have been thus received, with contents attesting their supernormal origin. Sometimes one comes to the recipient as a single experience, never repeated; sometimes such communications seem to *haunt* a place or a person, described then respectively as an oracle and a medium, though to the presence of a medium the phenomena are no doubt in both cases really due, a fact which may be inferred from the cessation of oracles, and the persistence of mediums. In earlier days when facilities for writing were fewer than now, these communications usually took the form of voices, as they did many centuries since with Joan of Arc, and yet farther back with Socrates, historic cases, the psychological problems presented by which owe to Mr. F. W. H. Myers their only adequate exposition.

Socrates, eminently shrewd and sane, tells us that he was guided in the affairs and crises of his life by a warning voice—"the demon of Socrates"; and even if these monitions were, for the most part, such as his own wiser self might possibly have given, this could hardly be said of the unlettered Maid

of Orleans, whose " voices " gave her counsels transcending any act of her conscious reason. To call them intuitions does not explain their origin, and as little as the monitions of Socrates can they be classed as signs of incipient madness. "To be sane," as Mr. Myers says, "is to be adjusted to our environment, to be capable of coping with the facts around us. Tried by this test, it is Socrates and Joan who should be our types of sanity."

Our limits will not allow us to sketch, however briefly, the ancient and modern history of this faculty. It was never more abundantly manifested than at the present time, though no written report of its investigation, still less this brief summary of a fragment of the evidence, can convey the impression produced on all who have had long personal experience in this branch of inquiry.

Forty years ago my attention was drawn to this subject by the perusal of numerous MS. books containing automatic writing, which came unbidden through the hand of a personal friend, a lady well known in the educational and philanthropic world of London for the high capacity and sobriety of judgment she brought to bear on the various Boards of which she was an esteemed member. These MS. books contained handwriting, sentiments, and modes of expression unlike those of my friend, as she was known to us all, while, amid much irrelevant verbosity, information unknown to the automatist was occasionally

given, proving on inquiry to be correct. The writing was frequently interrupted by the invasion of other influences, some of a lower type and wholly alien to the character of my friend.

I might quote many instances of automatic writing and drawing which have occurred more recently among my acquaintances. One, the wife of a late eminent colonial Lord Chief Justice, had a strange experience : though in her normal state quite unable to draw, her hand, when allowed to remain passive, rapidly sketched in the twilight most exquisite faces, which she completely failed to imitate by conscious volition. Another, the aged mother of a famous dramatic author, though also in her normal state quite incapable of drawing a line, involuntarily sketched fantastic and intricate foliage, with a precision and skill possible only to a gifted artist.

But the most remarkable series of automatic scripts, which drew public attention to the whole subject, came through the hand of the late Rev. W. Stainton Moses, M.A., who for twenty years was an able and much-respected master in London University College School; he was a Vice-President of the S.P.R. at its foundation, and intimately known to me. The writings, continued from 1873 to 1883, coming through an Oxford M.A., known for his high integrity and sound judgment, are of great value, enhanced by the more recent evidence obtained for alleged spirit control. The twenty-four lengthy note-books of auto-

matic script left by Mr. Moses, and partially published by him, were carefully and critically examined by Mr. Myers, who has given a detailed analysis of them in vols. ix. and xi. of the *S.P.R. Proceedings*, and in vol. ii. of his work on *Human Personality*.

The caligraphy of these scripts, unlike Mr. Moses' own large, thick, and rapid writing, was said to be fine, minute, regular, and beautiful. He tells us that to avoid as far as possible the influence of his own conscious thoughts on the writing, he occupied himself with other subjects, even reading abstruse books, and following a chain of close reasoning, all the time that his hand was writing long, elaborate messages, given without a single correction, with great vigour and beauty of style. He never could command the writing: it came unsought, a sudden, irresistible power impelling him to write, and sometimes indeed causing him to fall into a trance, when he spoke under "control" words of which he had no recollection on returning to his normal state.

The nature and effect of his automatic writings, and the teaching they inculcated, convinced Mr. Moses that he was merely the amanuensis of the lofty, discarnate spirits from whom they purported to come; and the result was a profound change in his whole spiritual outlook, the life of the unseen world becoming to him an ever-present and vivid reality.

Nevertheless, were there no further evidence than this, these writings might conceivably

be produced by his own subliminal self; but there *is* evidence in Mr. Moses' script of supernormal knowledge. In three cases he had distinct prevision of a death before the news was generally known. One was the death of President Garfield twelve hours before even a rumour of it had reached England. Another was that of a man who threw himself under a steam-roller in Baker Street, London. A former member of the S.P.R. Council, well known to me, was with Mr. Moses at the time, and has narrated the whole occurrence. Mr. Moses' hand suddenly drew a rough sketch of some horsed vehicle, and then wrote: "I killed myself to-day, Baker Street;" after which, passing into a trance, Mr. Moses, greatly agitated, said: "Yes, yes, killed myself to-day under a steam-roller—yes, yes, killed myself." No one present knew what this meant, but later on, an evening paper related that a cabman had that day committed suicide in Baker Street by throwing himself under a steam-roller.

Perhaps the most remarkable of these communications was that purporting to be from a lady who died on a Sunday in a country house two hundred miles from London, the telegraphed announcement of her death appearing in Monday's *Times*. Mr. Moses had once met this lady and her husband at a séance, but knew nothing about her, or of her illness and death. On this Sunday night, in his North London lodgings, his hand wrote an announcement of her death; and a few days later she

purported to write herself, saying that the handwriting was *like her own*, as evidence of her identity. There is no reason to believe that Mr. Moses had ever seen this lady's handwriting. On receiving other messages, which contained private matters relative to her, Mr. Moses gummed down these pages of his MS. book, marking it outside "private matter," and mentioned them to no one. On Mr. Moses' death, years afterwards, Mr. Myers, authorized by the executors, opened the pages, and to his surprise found that the communications were from a lady whom he had known, and with whom he had corresponded. The handwriting in the script was considered on comparison by Mr. Myers, her son, and an expert, to resemble unmistakably that of her own letters, and the contents of the communication were characteristic; a curious sequence of coincidences thus leading to the verification of the case.

During some years past the Society for Psychical Research has devoted much attention to a number of automatic writers, including, among others, Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Verrall and her daughter, Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Forbes, and Mrs. Willett. Why ladies more than men should have these psychical gifts we do not know; certainly not one of the ladies named could be classed as an hysterical or romancing person. The reason may perhaps be that they have, as a rule, more leisure in which to cultivate gifts of the kind. From its long standing, and the thoroughness

with which it has been studied, as well as from the extraordinary nature of the phenomena, Mrs. Piper's case derives a peculiar interest and importance. It differs from those of the other automatists mentioned in the circumstance that her writing is done during a trance, whereas theirs is produced almost invariably without even a momentary loss of consciousness, though signs are not wanting that the trance-state, if encouraged, might readily supervene.

Mrs. Piper's trance-communications used formerly to be made by word of mouth, while she was "controlled," or possessed, by what claimed to be the spirit of a Franco-American doctor named Phinuit, a life-like and vivacious character, whom we cannot easily imagine to be, as some people have suspected, nothing more substantial than a secondary personality of Mrs. Piper herself. Be this as it may, however, many sitters have received through him what they felt justified in accepting as proofs of the continued existence of their departed friends. Nowadays Mrs. Piper writes instead of speaking, while she lies entranced, but her sitters talk to the writing hand, which replies in script, and these strangely conducted conversations have yielded much first-rate evidence. They *profess* to be presided over by the band of soi-disant spirits who were formerly known as the "guides" of Stainton Moses, and who have superseded Phinuit, importing a somewhat perplexing element into the case, though the

change has been on the whole decidedly for the better. It is, for instance, startling at first to learn that on one occasion two of them claimed to be respectively Homer and Ulysses, and often in the company of Telemachus, while they all persistently comport themselves with ostentatious solemnity, discoursing in what Professor William James called "sacerdotal verbiage," mixed incongruously with slangy colloquialisms.

Absurdities and inconsistencies such as these, however, belong merely to the trance's visionary setting or framework, which fits it naturally enough, since it certainly comes from somewhere in the region of dreams, that mysterious borderland lying unexplored between two worlds. And like in origin, no doubt, is the fantastic streak which so frequently runs through other automatic writings. Mrs. Verrall, for example, refers to "the few words of nonsense—sheer and absolute nonsense—which often seem requisite before the script can get under way."

Through the above-mentioned group of automatists it is that the recent very remarkable evidence bearing on the continued existence of human life after bodily death has for the most part been received, in messages which purport to come from Henry Sidgwick and Frederic Myers, together with their friends and fellow-workers Edmund Gurney and Richard Hodgson, who departed this life in 1888 and 1905. In the evidence

thus obtained, the new and noteworthy feature is what the investigators of the phenomena have called *cross-correspondence*, the beginning of which, a complicated bit of history, we can only briefly outline here, referring the reader for details to the very full account given in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vols. xx.–xxv.

It has not infrequently happened that references to the same topic have appeared simultaneously in the script of two automatic writers, a fact which might be—and therefore, in weighing evidence of this kind, is provisionally—accounted for by thought-transference between them, even though they were on some occasions as far apart as England and India. But in 1906 Miss Johnson, an official of the Society, studying the scripts of Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland, saw traces of attempts on the part of a control to produce a more complex sort of coincidence, by causing a single statement to appear in two scripts, divided into fragments, unmeaning until put together, thus making telepathy seem a less adequate explanation. The group of controls, including Frederic Myers, by whom these scripts appear to be inspired, manifested themselves also in the trance-writings of Mrs. Piper, who at this time came from her home in Boston, Massachusetts, on a visit to England; and with a view to encouraging the production of even more elaborate and complex cross-correspondences, the following experiment was planned by members of the

Society: A message, addressed to Frederic Myers, was written in Latin, and ostensibly communicated to him through the entranced Mrs. Piper, who has no knowledge of any ancient language. Its last clause ran: "Try to give to A and B [*i. e.* any two automatists] two different messages, between which no connection is discernible. Then as soon as possible give to C [a third automatist] a third message, which will reveal the hidden connection."

In so far as the experiment had been designed to test the survival of classical scholarship, it proved a partial failure, for only a small portion of the message was ever actually translated by Mrs. Piper's control. But an answer immediately sent through other automatists seemed to imply an apprehension of its object on the part of the soi-disant Frederic Myers, and it has led to a series of cross-correspondences, conforming to the type suggested, and successfully carried out with an ingenuity which in some cases draws upon stores of knowledge not possessed by the automatic writers through whom the messages are sent. It is a significant fact that evidence of this kind, the desirability of which had been pointed out by Frederic Myers in his earthly life, has begun to appear since his passing over, and not only so but the initiation of it apparently came from his side.

Considered from an evidential point of view, these complex cross-correspondences, if

their assumed meaning be confirmed, have a value which can hardly be over-estimated. They are so contrived that they seem to exclude the explanation by that telepathy from the living which a psychical researcher might appropriately describe as the "source of all my bliss and all my woe"; but while increasing the antecedent probability of survival, conclusive proof of the fact, in any given instance, is made almost impossible, for the present, at least, when our ignorance can set no limits to the scope of telepathic powers.

Furthermore, in her very interesting Report on Mrs. Holland's automatic writing (*S.P.R. Proceedings*, vol. xxi.), Miss Alice Johnson says, with reference to a view held by Dr. Leaf, that the evidence on the subject indicates a gradual disintegration of the spirit after death, on the analogy of the body's decay: "I venture to think that some of the evidence obtained since Dr. Leaf wrote [four or five years earlier] has a certain bearing on this argument. In these cross-correspondences, we find apparently telepathy relating to the present—that is, the corresponding statements are approximately contemporaneous—and to events in the present, which, to all intents and purposes, are unknown to any living person, since the meaning and point of her script is often uncomprehended by each automatist, until the solution is found by putting the two scripts together. At the same time we have proof of what has occurred in the scripts themselves. Thus

it seems as if this method is directed towards satisfying our evidential requirements.

"There is no doubt that the cross-correspondences are a characteristic element in the scripts of Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Holland, and still more recently, Mrs. Piper. And the important point is that the element is a new one. We have reason to believe . . . that the idea of making a statement in one script *complementary* of a statement in another had not occurred to Mr. Myers in his lifetime. . . . Neither did those who have been investigating automatic script since his death invent the plan, if plan there be. It was not the automatists who detected it, but a student of the scripts (Miss Alice Johnson); and it has every appearance of being an element imported from outside: it suggests an independent invention, an active intelligence constantly at work in the present, not a mere echo or remnant of individualities of the past."

The earliest of the cross-correspondences recorded between the automatic scripts of Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland began towards the end of 1903, when the former was in Algeria and the latter in India. Several minor points of resemblance occur during this period in their scripts, and both of them refer to the approaching third anniversary of Mr. Myers' death, January 17, 1904. On that day they both wrote automatically, the script purporting to come from Mr. Myers, and each mentions a sealed envelope and a

text. Mrs. Verrall wrote: "The question is answered . . . The text and answer are one, and are given;" and though the text actually given by Mrs. Holland was *not* this answer, it was one which had a special significance for Mrs. Verrall and Mr. Myers. Mrs. Holland wrote: "I am unable to make your hand form Greek characters, and so I cannot give the text as I wish, only the reference: 1 Cor. xvi. 13." This text is: "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." "It is," Miss Alice Johnson writes (*S.P.R. Proceedings*, Part LV.), "the text inscribed, omitting the two last words, in Greek, over the gateway of Selwyn College, Cambridge, which would be passed in going from Mr. Myers' house to Mrs. Verrall's, or to the rooms in Newnham College where Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick lived. . . . The Greek inscription has an error in it—the omission of a mute letter—on which Mr. Myers had more than once remarked to Mrs. Verrall." But Mrs. Holland, who has never been in Cambridge, did not know that any such inscription existed, and was quite unaware that the text had any significance for Mrs. Verrall and her friends.

Mrs. Holland's script of January 17, 1904, concluded with a message apparently addressed to Sir Oliver Lodge, an old friend of Mr. Myers: "Dear old chap, you have done so much in the past three years—I am cognizant of a great deal of it, but with strange gaps in my knowledge. . . . There's so much to

be learnt from the Diamond Island experiment . . ." This refers to Diamond Island at the mouth of the Irrawaddy in Burma, where wireless telegraphy experiments, on the Lodge-Muirhead system, were then in progress. "The script," Miss Johnson writes (*S.P.R. Proceedings*, Part LXIII.), "is remarkably appropriate in several respects as a message to Sir Oliver Lodge. It was written on the third anniversary of Mr. Myers' death, which was also the end of Sir Oliver Lodge's three years' presidency of the S.P.R. I take the phrase—'you have done so much in the past three years'—to refer to this. The tone of affectionate intimacy running through the whole script is also especially appropriate. . . . It is further significant that, as Sir Oliver Lodge tells me, Mr. Myers had been keenly interested in his work in wireless telegraphy; and it was while with Mr. Myers, and stimulated by him, that he devised the fundamental plan for 'tuning,' which in some form or another is necessarily used in all systems of wireless telegraphy, and was first patented by him in 1897. The term 'syntony' was invented for him by Mr. Myers and Dr. A. T. Myers. . . . While the script is thus thoroughly characteristic of the relation between Mr. Myers and Sir Oliver Lodge, the fact that it is connected in point of time with the first important cross-correspondence between Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Verrall—the 'Selwyn Text Incident'—seems to lend weight to the supposition that what we may call the 'Diamond Island

script' may have been at least partially inspired by Mr. Myers."

Mrs. Holland is doubtful whether at the time she wrote this script she knew that these experiments were being made; but she certainly knew nothing of the details, nor about the other circumstances, which gave appropriateness to the message. Neither the cross-correspondence nor the message to Sir Oliver Lodge was recognized by the readers of the script for some years after they were written, and the " control " in the meanwhile expressed much disappointment at his failure to make himself understood.

On January 28, 1902, Dr. Hodgson had a sitting with Mrs. Piper in Boston, Massachusetts, and when she was in the trance, suggested that her control should try to impress Miss Verrall at Cambridge in England with a certain scene or object. This being assented to, Dr. Hodgson said : " Can you try to make Miss Verrall see you holding a *spear* in your hand ? " The control answered : " Why a *sphere ?* " Dr. Hodgson repeated " spear "; this was understood by the control, and the experiment promised during the week. At the next sitting, on February 4, the experiment with the *sphear*—so spelt in the trance script—was said to have been made with success. The confusion between " spear " and " sphere " evidently persisted in the mind of the medium, and the combination " sphear " resulted.

Now, on January 31, 1902, intermediate,

therefore, between these two sittings with Mrs. Piper in Boston, Mrs. Verrall suddenly felt impelled to write automatically whilst she was in London, and the script which resulted (written partly in Greek and partly in Latin) was interpreted by Mrs. Verrall at the time to mean: "the seeing of a sphere effected a mysterious 'co-reception,'" and the script associated this statement with the words *volatile ferrum* (flying iron) which Virgil uses to signify "spear." Mrs. Verrall states that in no previous automatic writing of hers had there been any reference to a spear, and the word "sphere" only once occurred some time before, in some very unintelligible script. Further, her writing in London on January 31 was signed with a Greek cross, which makes the connection between Mrs. Verrall's script and Mrs. Piper's still more striking, as the "control" then operating through Mrs. Piper always signed himself with a similar Greek cross.

Here, quite apart from the good faith of Dr. Hodgson and Mrs. Verrall, we have the *written* record made on the two sides of the Atlantic. Dr. Hodgson, in fact, forwarded the report of this American sitting with suggested experiments to Mrs. Verrall, and it was received by her on February 13—a fortnight after Mrs. Verrall had been controlled to write the sentence quoted. Mrs. Piper's controls, it may be observed, have a tendency not to distinguish between the scripts of Mrs. Verrall and her daughter.

CHAPTER XVI

AUTOMATIC WRITING (*continued*). SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH

INVALUABLE though it is, were no evidence forthcoming other than such mosaics of messages, with their cryptic language and allusions studiously veiled, until the disclosure of some missing word or phrase shall piece them together into an intelligible whole, we might indeed receive a discouraging and utterly erroneous impression that the manufacture of puzzles and enigmas is the sole faculty and employment of discarnate spirits. But we have, of course, much other evidence, which, though attaining less completely to the rigorous standard demanded by Psychical Research—is quite strong enough to be considered by many unimpeachable, except on the hypothesis of terrene telepathy pushed to its very farthest limits.

This evidence forms a most useful, in fact an indispensable supplement to that which aims primarily at elaborating conclusive proofs. It is given in communications of various kinds, professing to come from some discarnate spirit, and by their characteristic matter and manner creating an impression

that they really do so. The well-authenticated cases of such communications that have occurred during the last few years are far too numerous for recital here, even in the form of the barest catalogue. If we consider only the one particular little group of friends and colleagues who have so swiftly reassembled on the other side, we find instances many and impressive. Those who, like the present writer, were intimate with them have recognized repeatedly the familiar traits, material and trivial, habits of thought, and tricks of speech, that betoken a personality, or its vrai-semblance still existing, though contending with obstacles which forbid more than an incomplete expression. Such changes as are noted might spring naturally from the changed conditions of the communicators. Thus we learn that Frederic Myers has lost nothing of his intense concern about his comrades on their homeward way, but that what he now most eagerly desires is to assure them how "immortality, instead of being a beautiful dream, is the one, the only reality, the strong golden thread on which all the illusions of all the lives are strung." And, again, that Henry Sidgwick retains his propensity for awaiting results with scrupulous patience, though he has now, as well he may, added to patience a confident hope. A short account may be given here of an incident from which this appears, the rather as it involves two cross-correspondences of a not unmanageably complicated type.

In Cambridge on February 9, 1906, Mrs. Verrall's automatic writing informed her that in Professor Henry Sidgwick's *Memoir*, which was shortly to be published, she would find two clues to the meaning of certain passages in her earlier script. The *Memoir* was published on February 27, and on the following day she found one of these clues, but noticed some inconsistencies whence she inferred a mistake in the passage concerned, the writer of which had purported to be Professor Sidgwick. She at once mentioned this to Mrs. Sidgwick, and at the same time Mrs. Holland, away in the country, and unaware of what had happened, wrote automatically: "*Henry* (*i. e.* Professor Sidgwick) *was not mistaken.*"

Soon afterwards Mrs. Verrall found the second clue in a letter from Henry Sidgwick on the subject of immortality, in which he says: "On moral grounds, *hope* rather than *certainty* is fit for us in this earthly existence." The letter was addressed to his friend, Roden Noel, with whom neither Mrs. Verrall nor Mrs. Holland had been acquainted. Yet in her next automatic script, a few days afterwards, Mrs. Holland wrote, under the "control" of Henry Sidgwick, the date of Roden Noel's death, twelve years before, and added the following passage, in which the sentiments strongly resemble, with some appropriate modifications, those of the letter to him wherein Mrs. Verrall had just found her clue: "We no more solve the riddle of death by dying than we solve the problem of life

by being born. Take my own case—I was always a seeker, until it seemed to me at times as if the quest was more to me than the prize. Only the attainments of my search were generally like rainbow gold, always beyond and afar. It is not all clear; I seek still, only with a confirmed optimism more perfect and beautiful than any we imagined before. *I am not oppressed with the desire that animates some of us to share our knowledge or optimism with you all before the time. You know who feels like that; but I am content that you should wait.* The solution of the Great Problem I could not give you—I am still very far away from it. And the abiding knowledge of the inherent truth and beauty into which all the inevitable uglinesses of existence finally resolve themselves will be yours in due time."

Moreover, at this time Mrs. Verrall's as well as Mrs. Holland's script produced appropriate references to Roden Noel and his poems, while each almost simultaneously wrote a description of the, to them, unknown poet which intimate friends of his pronounced to be very characteristic.

Much has been said by these controls about the difficulties which beset them in their endeavours to communicate; and we may ourselves reasonably infer and conjecture much more, without supposing that we have by any means fully realized the magnitude of the obstacles which they encounter, or even, in many respects, the nature of them. Amongst those which lie to some extent

within the ken of our imagination, the most formidable may perhaps be: (1) the impossibility of securing the complete passivity of the mind of the medium whom the communicator is using as an instrument, and therefore of excluding its influence on the working of his own; (2) the all but total impossibility of transcending the limits imposed by the medium's mental apparatus and intellectual equipment.

The effects of this first difficulty are obvious to anybody who studies the phenomena occurring in different automatists under what is, or purports to be, the same control, and an exceptionally favourable opportunity for making such observations is afforded by the above-mentioned allied group of automatists and controls. If the variations noticeable, from medium to medium, in each controlling spirit were eliminated, leaving only the features common to all its manifestations, we should no doubt discover that the characteristics which it had really possessed in earth-life formed this residuum. But the emerging personality would often seem a thing of shreds and patches, so closely had it been interwoven with that of the medium through which it made its way. For, as Sir Oliver Lodge remarks: "The process of communication is sophisticated by many influences, so that it is very difficult, perhaps at present impossible, to disentangle and exhibit clearly the part that each plays."

This difficulty is a difficulty indeed. In the case of an entranced medium, whose spirit

is supposed to withdraw temporarily from the organism, of which another spirit takes possession, the situation has some resemblance to that of a stream, with its main current deflected, and another stream turned into its channel. The new stream will of course be bounded by the old channel, and its waters tinged by the pools which lie in its bed, and the deposits over which it flows. But when the medium is not entranced, the analogy points rather to those fresh-water springs which sometimes rise in the sea. Here the separateness of the waters is generally sure to be far more transient and less complete. Only when the spring wells up with unwonted force and copiousness does it reach the surface free from briny admixture. And, in fact, something about the manner in which the more characteristic of the communications often come, does suggest a sudden uprush of this kind through an always resisting and encroaching element.

Then, as for the second great difficulty which confronts the communicator, entailed upon him by the limitations of the automatist, we may imagine some faint resemblance between his plight and that of a writer constrained to compose an abstruse treatise in words of three letters, or in those occurring on some chance scrap of print. The smaller and sillier the scrap, the more fatal will he find his restrictions, just as the control's power of expressing himself is diminished by the illiteracy and unintelligence of the

medium. We must allow likewise for the possibility, if not probability, of other still more baffling impediments, unimaginable by us in our ignorance of what the conditions are in the spirit-world. Thus, there is reason to believe that an intelligent communicator is sometimes, when communicating, in a more or less dazed and drowsy condition, which gives his message the character merely of a fantastic dream.

Curious glimpses, by the way, may sometimes be gained from the confused and incoherent, but often very interesting utterances of Mrs. Piper, as she begins to waken half-dazed from her trance. She always represents herself as returning most reluctantly from surroundings compared with which her earthly abode appears dark and dismal, and shared by inhabitants who are decidedly unprepossessing. They seem to her, she says, like black people. On one occasion, indeed, she addressed her sitters with a quaint and uncompromising frankness: "I don't want you—I want the other place—you look funny. . . . You *are* ugly, to say the least. I never! I wouldn't look like you. . . . Are you alive?" she added; "there are others more alive than you are up there." More significantly, she often speaks of being surrounded on her departure by those who are endeavouring to communicate with this world, and who seize the opportunity of impressing upon her some brief message, which she has at times been able to deliver,

as a valuable bit of evidence, before the fleeting recollection of her trance-experiences has faded.

Dr. Hodgson began his investigation of Mrs. Piper's trance-utterances as a thorough sceptic, but after many years of unremitting and critical investigation, testing one hypothesis after another, he was finally driven to the conclusion "that the chief 'communicators' are veritably the personalities that they claim to be, and that they have survived the change we call death." Though some of us may be unable fully to share Dr. Hodgson's conviction, we must remember that his experience and knowledge was larger than ours, and at any rate we may dismiss the futile criticism of those who have not spent as many minutes as he spent years in the study of this subject. Dr. Hodgson's opinion, it may be added, is now shared by many other able inquirers, who have made a searching and impartial investigation of the evidence which has accumulated since his death.

Moreover, when appraising the most recent testimony in favour of life after death, we should remember that the evidence is being constantly strengthened, not by accumulation merely, but by increased cogency and purposefulness. If we review the past ten years, we cannot fail to be struck by the steadily growing clearness of attempts on the part of those who have passed over to improve and multiply methods of communication. These efforts are seconded on our

side with admirable industry, patience and tact, alike by automatists and students of psychical phenomena, and the results come daily to light. At the present time, the Society for Psychical Research has just published the details of some very remarkable incidents which took place in the course of 1910. Writing of these, Sir Oliver Lodge says: "He [the scientific explorer] feels secure and happy in his advance only when one and the same hypothesis will account for everything—both old and new—which he encounters. The one hypothesis which seems to me most nearly to satisfy that condition in this case, is that we are in indirect touch with some part of the surviving personality of a scholar, and that scholar F. W. H. Myers."

All things considered, it seems a not wholly extravagant conjecture that another ten years may put us in possession of more knowledge about the means whereby these supernormal messages are conveyed to us, and therefore in more favourable circumstances for receiving them. Hitherto our experiences on the subject have certainly tended to correct the popular notion of a ghost as a being whose coming and going is very much a matter of its own casual caprice, barred by nothing, except, perhaps, some form of exorcism. And they have heightened our appreciation of the insight shown by Wordsworth in making his afflicted Margaret say—

"I look for ghosts, but none will *force*
Their way to me,"

little disposed as we may be to draw her despairing conclusion—

"'Tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead."

Certainly, for our own part, we believe there is some active intelligence at work behind, and apart from, the automatist, an intelligence which is more like the deceased person it professes to be than that of any other we can imagine. And though the intelligence is provokingly irritating in the way it evades simple direct replies to questions, yet it is difficult to find any other solution to the problem of these scripts and cross-correspondences than that there is an attempt at intelligent co-operation between certain disembodied minds and our own.

But does the evidence afford us proof of immortality? Obviously it cannot; nor can any investigations yield scientific proof of that larger, higher, and enduring life which we desire and mean by immortality. Some of the evidence, indeed, seems rather to indicate a more or less truncated personality, a fragment of earthly memories, partly roused by, and mainly connected with, those through and to whom the communications come; to picture, in fact, a dim, wraith-like survival such as that imagined by Homer when he made Achilles in the underworld declare that he would rather serve as a hireling among the

living than reign a king among the dead. The intelligent and characteristic messages, however, suggest that the vague ones are due to the fading and dissolving of earthly memories and ties, as the departed become more absorbed in their new life, the very nature of which we are in our present state incapable of conceiving. Our own limitations, in fact, make it impossible for the evidence to convey the assurance that we are communicating with what is best and noblest in those who have passed into the unseen.

In fine, psychical research, though it may strengthen the foundations, cannot take the place of religion, using in its widest sense that much-abused word. For, after all, it deals with the *external*, though it be in an unseen world; and its chief value lies in the fulfilment of its work, whereby it reveals to us the inadequacy of the external, either here or hereafter, to satisfy the life of the soul. The psychical order is not the spiritual order, but a stepping-stone in the ascent of the soul to its own self-apprehension, its conscious sharing in the eternal divine life, of which Frederic Myers thus foretells—

> "And from thee, o'er some lucid ocean-rim,
> The phantom Past shall as a shadow flee;
> And thou be in the Spirit, and everything
> Born in the God that shall be born in thee."

NOTE.—It is desirable to mention that the Society for Psychical Research (referred to as the S.P.R. in the foregoing pages) has no collective opinion for or against the existence of the supernormal phenomena discussed in this little book. In fact the Council of that Society welcomes the severest instructive criticism of the evidence adduced in any of its publications. As Mr. Andrew Lang pointed out in his recent Presidential address : " The Society, as such, has no views, no beliefs, no hypotheses, except, perhaps, the opinion that there is an open field of inquiry; that not all the faculties and potentialities of man have been studied and explained up to date, in terms of nerve and brain."

The Presidents of the Society have been as follows :—Professor Henry Sidgwick, D.C.L., Litt.D.; Professor Balfour Stewart, LL.D., F.R.S.; Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P., D.C.L., F.R.S.; Professor W. James, of Harvard, U.S.A.; Sir W. Crookes, O.M., D.Sc., F.R.S.; Mr. F. W. H. Myers, late Fellow Trin. Coll., Camb.; Sir Oliver Lodge, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.; Professor W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.; Professor C. Richet, M.D. (of Paris); Right Hon. Gerald W. Balfour, late Fellow Trin. Coll., Camb.; Mrs. H. Sidgwick, D.Litt., LL.D.; Mr. H. A. Smith; Hon. Treasurer S.P.R., Mr. Andrew Lang, M.A., LL.D.

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So numerous are the books and papers which have been published at home and abroad on the subject matter of this book, that only a very brief outline can be given of some of the modern and more instructive English books dealing with psychical research.

An extensive and valuable collection of English and foreign works on psychical research will be found in the Edmund Gurney Library, in the rooms of the Society for Physical Research.

Students will find in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research a wealth of information upon, as well as a critical examination of, alleged supernormal phenomena. These publications can be obtained from the rooms of the Society, 20, Hanover Square, London, W. Among them are :—

Proceedings of the S.P.R., Vols. I to XXV (1882–1911).

Journal of the S.P.R., Vols. I to XIV (1884–1911).

The journal is only issued to members and associates of the Society.

Phantasms of the Living, 2 vols., by E. GURNEY, F. W. H. MYERS and F. PODMORE.

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An abridgment in one volume by Mr. Leo Myers has also been published. This *magnum opus* contains the substance of the Society's investigations down to the time of the author's death in January 1901, and is the standard text-book on psychical research.

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A Modern Priestess of Isis, by V. S. Solovyoff, abridged and translated from the Russian by Walter Leaf, Litt.D. (Longmans & Co.).

This translation was made on behalf of the S.P.R. by Dr. Leaf, to whom a grateful acknowledgment is made in a prefatory note by Prof. H. Sidgwick. The book is an entertaining and valuable supplement to the exposure of the claims made by Madame Blavatsky, the result of an investigation undertaken for the S.P.R. by Dr. Hodgson. Prof. Sidgwick writes, "Mr. Solovyoff's vivid description of the mingled qualities of her [Mme. Blavatsky's] nature—her supple craft and reckless audacity, her intellectual vigour and elastic vitality, her genuine *bonhomie*, affectionateness and (on occasions) persuasive pathos," afford some explanation of the remarkable success of her imposture and also furnish a most interesting psychological study.

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Contains valuable chapters on comparative psychical research and the ghost-theory of the origin of religions. Mr. Lang shows how each antagonist calmly ignores everything which does not fit in with his own theory.

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A volume with appendices full of interest to students of psychical research. The author compares primitive and savage beliefs in the existence of many supernormal phenomena with modern evidence of the same, and shows the need of modifying current anthropological and religious theories in the light of modern knowledge.

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