

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 exposé 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 bed-clothes 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 Schiaparelli, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. A. R. Wallace, and many other famous men, including others of a past generation like that great exposé 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 so-called 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 Psychological 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 vrainsemblance 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 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, Litt.D., D.C.L.; 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.; Sir 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, Litt.D., LL.D.; Mr. H. A. Smith, M.A.; Hon. Treasurer S.P.R., Mr. Andrew Lang, M.A., LL.D.; Bishop Boyd Carpenter, D.D.; Professor Henri Bergson, Membre de l'Institut, Paris.



NOTE TO P. 201.—The remarkable book entitled *An Adventure*, written by two ladies, gives an account of their visit to Versailles in the year 1901, when they found themselves transported to the times of Louis XVI and saw the surroundings of the Petit Trianon as they were at that date. Without knowing the fact at the time, this collective hallucination was shared by both ladies, and extended to the people seen, the dresses they wore and the words they spoke to the ladies. On a second visit by one of the ladies, six months later, a somewhat similar hallucination was experienced, but on later visits both the ladies only saw the buildings, grounds and people as they are now. The critical review by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, published by the S.P.R., considered this case an illustration of hypothesis No. 5 (p. 200), and I was strongly disposed at first to agree with this view. Having since read the narrative written independently by each of the percipients, shortly after their strange experience, together with other documents supplied to me by the ladies, I am now more inclined to regard this case as a singular instance of retrocognitive vision.

Several dream romances have been inspired by the history of Marie Antoinette, the best known being the case of Hélène Smith, who regarded herself as a reincarnation of the ill-fated Queen. Professor Flournoy has discussed this case in an able book, a summary of which is given in *Human Personality*, vol. ii., p. 130 *et seq.* Another case is related by Mrs. Stapleton in the *S.P.R. Journal* for June 1907.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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.

*Proceedings of the American S.P.R.*, Vols. I to VI.

*Journal of the American S.P.R.*, Vols. I. to V.

*Combined Index* to the above down to the year 1900.

*Human Personality*, 2 vols., by F. W. H. MYERS, late Fellow of Trin. Coll., Camb. (Longmans & Co.).

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.



*Science and a Future Life*, by F. W. H. MYERS (Longmans & Co.).

A suggestive and eloquent essay.

*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.

*Personality and Telepathy*, by F. C. CONSTABLE, M.A. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.).

A work recently published, based on Kant's philosophy and advocating the view that telepathy is inexplicable except on the assumption that human personality is a partial and mediate manifestation in this world of a spiritual or intuitive self.

*Hypnotism and Suggestion*, 5th ed., by C. LLOYD TUCKEY, M.D. (Ballière & Co.).

This is a standard medical work on psycho-therapeutics or treatment by hypnotism and suggestion, and records numerous cases in the author's practice.

*Hypnotism: its History, Practice, and Theory*, by MILNE BRAMWELL, M.D. (Grant Richards).

Also a standard work of great value.

*The Influence of the Mind upon the Body*, by D. HACK TUKE, M.D. (Churchill & Co.).

A classical and early work on this important subject; now so widely recognized in psycho-therapeutic treatment.



*The Survival of Man*, by SIR OLIVER LODGE (Methuen & Co.).

An outline of the author's investigations on psychical research, more especially with regard to automatic writing and contemporary records, which have convinced him that trustworthy evidence exists on behalf of human survival of bodily death.

*On the Threshold of a New World of Thought*, by W. F. BARRETT (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.).

A new and revised edition is in preparation.

The author points out the many far-reaching implications involved in the acceptance of telepathy, and discusses the question of spiritualism from a scientific and religious point of view.

*Mors Janua Vitæ*, by H. A. DALLAS, with an introduction by PROF. BARRETT (W. Rider & Son).

The object of this book is to present a summary of the recent evidence for survival, so far as it relates to Mr. F. W. H. Myers. It is written in a thoughtful and reverent spirit.

*Modern Spiritualism: a History and a Criticism*, by F. PODMORE, 2 vols. (Methuen & Co.).

An important and able contribution to this subject from an agnostic point of view.

*Apparitions and Thought Transference*, by the same Author. Contemporary Science Series (Walter Scott & Co.).

A summary and discussion of the evidence on behalf of telepathy and visual hallucinations.

*Mesmerism and Christian Science*, by the same Author (Methuen & Co.).

An excellent account of the history of mesmerism and its phenomena, together with a discussion of the development of mental healing in the United States.

*Cock Lane and Common Sense*, by ANDREW LANG, M.A., LL.D. (Longmans & Co.).

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.



*The Making of Religion*, by the same Author (Longmans & Co.).

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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