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PRACTICAL VIEWS ON PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

PRACTICAL VIEWS ON PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

BY

GEORGE E. WRIGHT

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INTRODUCTION

The output of books dealing with so called super-normal phenomena has already become so considerable that an apology is plainly needed for any addition thereto.

Interest in the subject is undoubtedly widespread, especially (and most naturally) in that department thereof dealing with communication from the disembodied.

Anyone, however, who has had occasion frequently to discuss the subject, in one or more of its numerous branches, cannot but have noticed that, even among people of considerable general culture, there is undoubtedly much confusion of thought.

So many men and women, who in regard to matters of normal experience exhibit balanced judgment and adequate critical faculties, appear, when they pass to a consideration of super-normal phenomena, to divest themselves of that essential equipment. They either uncritically accept, as evidence, experiences which are of a purely emotional, and non-evidential, nature; or they dismiss, as the outcome of fraud or malobservation, the published results of many years of patient investigation by observers of unimpeachable integrity and weighty authority.

The present need is not for matter but for method. The present situation of the enquirer is not dissimiliar to that of the biologist before the "systema naturæ" of Linneaus reduced to order the then "endless chaos of different animal and vegetable forms."

The object of this book is therefore to suggest to the reader, who has not yet made any examination of the published records in the chief departments of psychical research, the broad lines on which this examination

should be carried out, to summarize briefly the evidence, and to put forward the conclusions to which a practical man has been led by that evidence. Considerations of space have prevented any adequate quotation of the evidence on which these conclusions are based. Full reference is however given to the original publications which are easily accessible.

Few will deny that the subject is one of prime interest to every thinking man or woman. The issues have, however, been greatly confused, both by the accretion of a vast amount of non-evidential matter from sources which carry little or no authority, and also by much illogical criticism based not on fact but on dogmatic opinion.

If the result may be, in some measure, to aid the reader to steer through this " strange uncharted ocean " a middle course ; avoiding, on the one hand, the shoals of illogical scepticism, and on the other, the rocks of unreasoning credulity, this book will have served its purpose.

I have to express my thanks to Messrs. Methuen & Co. for permission to quote a number of passages from Mr. Podmore's *Modern Spiritualism*, and to Messrs. J. M. Watkins & Co. for similar permission in regard to Dr. Crawford's work, *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena*. The debt of gratitude which I, in common with all students of these subjects, owe to the S.P.R. is obvious.

GEORGE E. WRIGHT

Nov., 1919.

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CHAPTER I

EVIDENCE IN GENERAL

BEFORE any useful progress can be made in the examination of phenomena it is obviously necessary definitely to decide and fix the rules on which the evidence for such phenomena is to be appraised. It is here that much confusion of thought is encountered.

It is futile to build if the foundations are unstable, to discuss the implications of phenomena, to construct theories on them, unless we are sure that the phenomena themselves are adequately vouched for.

It may be well to clear the ground by emphasizing the distinction between a fact, and the evidence for a fact. This is the more important as people, who have had intimate personal experiences of a certain nature, specially, for example, in communication with the disembodied, fail to realize that such experiences, although absolutely and finally convincing to themselves, may not be evidential. Mr. Constable puts this very clearly when he says (*Personality and Telepathy*, p. 314)—" Many of us know, outside cognition, that this communion is a fact, but the knowledge is purely personal. We have no human evidence to offer of the fact, so that we can offer no proof to others who have not had like experience."

The above remarks must not be taken as in any way belittling or disparaging such purely " interior " experiences, for, as Sir Oliver Lodge says, (*Raymond*,

p. 342), it is best if such experience "can be obtained privately and, with no outside assistance, by quiet and meditation."

In effect, such experiences are not evidence, because they lie beyond and above evidence. Most certainly they lie beyond the scope of the practical treatment of the subject herein attempted.

The definition of the laws of evidence on this subject is not a simple matter. Firstly, it should be made quite clear that the test of truth which is applicable to those departments of science dealing with *inorganic* nature, such as physics and chemistry, is not applicable here.

This test is that of *repetition*. Thus, if a proposition is made that, given certain conditions and certain processes, certain results follow—this proposition can be proved or disproved by simple repetition.

If a chemist states that, by applying certain reagents to certain substances and following certain procedure in the application of heat, pressure, and so forth, he gets a certain result, it is at once possible for any other qualified chemist to verify or disprove his conclusions by *repeating* the experiment any number of times.

In inorganic science, then, the test of repetition can be applied just as often as it is possible to obtain the same materials and conditions, the necessary apparatus, and the services of a competent experimenter. This, generally, means that the test can be applied at will.

The evidence for the phenomena which we are now considering will certainly not sustain the test of

repetition. One reason alone, amongst others, is sufficient to account for this, namely, that we are never in a position to assure identical conditions. Conditions may be approximately equal in many cases, but we are certainly never able definitely to assure that they will so be.

Are we, therefore, to say that the evidence for psychic phenomena is not amenable to scientific analysis, that it is even too uncertain and fickle to be worthy of scientific consideration? Surely not!

When we pass to those departments of science which deal with *organic* nature we find that the criterion of repetition can, by no means, be rigidly applied. In biology the conditions of experiment are, to a greater or a less degree, uncontrollable. Theories and hypotheses are built up, not on the unvarying results of repetition under identical conditions, but on the *average results* of experiments and observations where both the conditions of the experiment and the material (vital organisms) experimented upon, are, to a greater or less extent (but always to some extent) uncontrollable. Gurney (*Phantasms of the Living*, cap. 1) puts this very clearly. "Biological science . . . is at work not on steadfast substances with immutable qualities like those of the inorganic world, but on substances whose very nature is to change . . . The unconquerable spontaneity of the organic world is for ever setting previous generalization at defiance."

To some readers the above may seem so obvious as to need, no more than a passing reference. But this can hardly be the case when we find a distinguished physiologist, Dr. Tuckett (*Evidence for the Super-*

natural, Cap. 1, Kegan Paul), laying down as a rule for the consideration of evidence for supernormal phenomena that "In problems where repetition of the process of verification is not possible . . . the only rational attitude is humbly to say "we do not know."

Of course in the widest sense it is a truism that "we do not know" anything. But, using the words in their ordinary sense, a moment's reflection will show that, by a rigid application of this rule, very many of the most strongly held and firmly established theories in the organic sciences would be reduced to nothing more than humble speculative opinions.

It is of course, open to the reader to follow Dr. Tuckett's advice and "to be agnostic about any causal sequence until the phenomena have been repeated under the same conditions a sufficient number of times to convert . . . probability . . . into relative certainty." If, however, he adopts this attitude in regard to supernormal phenomena he is logically bound to the same attitude in regard to many phenomena in science and "to be agnostic about" very many theories which are universally considered to be so firmly established that no one would venture to argue against them.

Dr. Schiller puts this very clearly, (*Proc. S.P.R.* Vol. XXVII., p. 197).

> "Even the best established laws of nature, rest in fact on a finite number of historical observations, and in the case of laws which can be verified only with difficulty, or at long intervals, that number is by no means large. It takes seventy eight years (more or less) to verify the orbit of

Halley's comet, and it would seem that at most about forty re-appearances of this luminary are on record. The atomic weight of some of the rarer metals has probably not been calculated more than three or four times, and finally there are whole sciences (like palaeontology) in which important conclusions repose upon single historical observations as to where a bone was found in a bed. Thus the name and fame, nay the very existence, of *Pithecanthropus erectus*, the 'Missing Link' depend on the truthfulness and competence of Dr. Eugene Dubois's assurance that he had found a cranium sufficiently near a thigh bone for both to be attributed to the same creature."

The evidence for supernormal phenomena is, cumulative not repetitive.

The analogy to be adopted is, as Gurney says, that of the faggot composed of individual sticks of evidence, which taken separately are weak, but which in the aggregate constitute a stiff and unyielding body of evidence.

So much for the general nature of the evidence which is to be examined. How then is the evidence to be obtained for such examination? Is the inquirer to confine his attention solely to the consideration of evidence obtained, and recorded, by others, or is he to endeavour to supplement and verify such records by personal experimentation?

To answer this question it is necessary to emphasize an important distinction between inquiry in this subject and inquiry in most departments of natural science. In the latter, reading and experiment

proceed side by side—the lecture-room is but an annexe to the laboratory. Practical personal experience is rightly considered essential. Generally speaking, experiment in inorganic science is always instructive and never, finally, misleading. The experimenter is dealing with phenomena which are invariably referable to the fundamental dimensions of space, mass, and time. The possible errors are those of instrumentation, observation and external interference, these can, with time and patience, be eliminated or, rather, to speak quite accurately, reduced within narrow and known limits.

The personality of the experimenter does not, in such cases, have much effect. Mechanism is available to take the place of Sensation. One is not required to decide the temperature of liquids by placing the hand in them. The thermometer is available for this purpose. The influence of the personality of the observer is, then, confined to the possible visual errors in reading the thermometer.

The ultimate appeal, therefore, is always to mechanism. In psychic experimentation, however, we have generally no mechanism to help us. The experimenter is his own apparatus, his own Psychoscope. He is dealing with phenomena which are, by definition, extra-normal, and not referable to physical dimensions. He is evaluating these phenomena by their sensory effects on himself, and, even so, not only effects on his normal consciousness, his normal senses, but on that obscure extra-normal or subliminal intelligence.

It is clear therefore, that uninstructed experiment is very likely to be misleading. It is surely best that

the inquirer should defer personal experiment until he has made some little study of the recorded results of the lengthy and laborious experiments of tried observers, and has, thereby, made himself acquainted with the immense complexity of the subject and the manifold possibilities of error. By so doing he is far more likely to arrive at a just and balanced opinion. And, having thus arrived, he will be able, should opportunity occur and inclination lead, to engage in personal experiment which may have results of real evidential value.

If then the inquirer is to rely on the records of others, it becomes a matter of first importance to decide the grounds on which such records are to be accepted or rejected.

The first essential is, obviously, that the inquirer should be satisfied as to the integrity of those who have made the records under his survey. Thus, for example, we want to be sure that the reports of the Piper Sittings in the *Proceedings of the S.P.R.* or of the various sittings recorded in "*Raymond*" are fair and accurate records and are not in any way garbled or edited, expanded or compressed, so as to give an unfair or distorted view.

In short, we want to feel quite sure that the observers have not, to use a colloquialism, "faked" the observations.

Direct proof of integrity is, of course, impossible, but, if anyone, after examining the names of the authors of the various papers in the S.P.R. *Proceedings* herein referred to, still believes in the "fake" hypothesis, he stands self convicted of most irrational prejudice.

However, much we may dislike psychical research, or however strongly we may disbelieve in any supernormal phenomena, we must be fair and must receive records furnished by responsible persons, or published by a responsible society, as being fair and accurate as far as fairness and accuracy can be assured by honesty and care.

Such an admission does not exclude the possibility that the recorders are unconsciously deceived; that the observers are malobservant.

This possibility must be carefully considered, the more so as, in some form or other, it has been, and even is, largely used as a rapid and (superficially) effective argument for disposing of any phenomena which are incapable of normal explanation. It is so easy, and, for the pure materialist so comforting, simply to say "the thing did not happen at all; they only thought it happened."

The possibility of malobservation and unconscious deception is certainly not lightly to be dismissed in the case of records of phenomena which are of considerable complexity, where the conditions under which they took place were such as to impede accurate observation, and where records are incomplete and not contemporary.

In some departments of our subject the observations, if so they may be called, are of the very simplest nature. Thus, accurately to record words spoken by the automatist and the sitters at a seance is surely a most simple "observation." It is unreasonable to admit the possibility that a person of normal auditory power sitting with pencil and note-book before him, for the express purpose of taking down

spoken words could unconsciously misreport the words spoken.

In the case of trance communications received by automatic writing the observation called for is even simpler being but to record the words spoken by the sitters. The subsequent transcription of the script is a matter of experience rather than observation.

In the case of spontaneous Telepathy observation can hardly be said to be called for. The work consists of the accurate enumeration and transcription of documents and, in effect, the adequate cross-examination of witnesses. The thoroughness with which this work has been done, from the earliest days of systematic psychical research, will be shown in the next chapter.

We see, then, that in two most important departments of psychic research—Communication with the Disembodied, and Telepathy—no exceptional demands are made on the recorders.

When, however, we have to consider the records of complex phenomena, which are not merely simple reports of spoken words, but descriptions of lengthy and complicated occurrences such as "physical" phenomena and materializations, we certainly do need to consider both whether the training, experience and temperament of the leading observers and investigators are such as to warrant confidence in the records of their observations, and also whether the conditions under which the observations were made were such as to render accurate observation impossible.

In regard to the various authorities quoted herein, and indeed in regard to all the S.P.R. investigators, it can hardly be denied that their qualifications for

these tasks are high. They include physicians, physiologists, psychologists, alienists, physicists and even conjurers. They are, therefore, largely composed of men whose training eminently fits them for this class of investigation.

Such remarks as those of Dr. Tuckett who says (*Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 62). "The fact of the matter is that scientific men who are accustomed to accurate laboratory conditions and instruments which do not lie, are no match for the subtle degrees of deception practised by certain mediums," are, therefore, pointless. Were, or are, such men as Lombroso, Morselli, Richet, Gurney, James, Sidgwick, Von Schrenk-Notzing, Hyslop, Hodgson, Newbold, Baggalay, and Carrington, accustomed only to " accurate laboratory conditions?"

In this matter we have also to remember that experience grows with time. For this reason the records which I have quoted are all of recent date. It is surely, obvious that the years of experience which the S.P.R. investigators have had must have made them thoroughly familiar with all the artifices of fraud and the tricks of sub-conscious deception.

In regard to temperament, let it be remembered that there is not one of the investigators, whose work is referred to herein, who did not commence his inquiries in a definitely sceptical spirit, and who has altered his views simply owing to the weight of the evidence.

The attitude of these men and women has been, and is, intensely critical. The inquirer may therefore, rely that any evidence which has run the gauntlet of their investigation is as sound as honesty, care, and

skill can make it. The impartiality of their methods and the caution of their conclusions contrast favourably with the attitude of their opponents in the past and even, in some cases, in the present day.

As that eminently sceptical and unbiassed inquirer Podmore wrote (*Modern Spiritualism*, Vol. 2, p. 141, Metheun, 1902).

> "The dealings of science with spiritualism form an instructive chapter in the history of human thought. Not the least instructive feature is the sharp contrast between the tone and temper of those men of science, who, after examination, accepted, and those who, with or without examination, rejected the evidence for the alleged phenomena. Those who held themselves justified in believing . . . . . showed in their writings a modesty, candour, and freedom from prepossession which shine the more conspicuously by comparison with the blustering arrogance of some of the champions of scientific orthodoxy."

It is unfortunate from the point of view of the unbiassed inquirer that the contributions on the opposite side of the controversy, contributions directed to prove that the evidence for alleged extra-normal phenomena is fallacious, are so very unequal either in number or quality to those on the affirmative side of the argument.

There has been, indeed, much superficial generalization, but, we have no publication from any man of science who has investigated the records of psychic research (with anything approaching the care and labour devoted to the compilation of those records)

and has reached the conclusion that *all* the phenomena are fictious.

A few words must now be said on the question of the "antecedent improbability" of the phenomena which we are to consider. The point is sometimes taken that these phenomena are so utterly at variance with the known laws of nature, so remote from the common experience of mankind, that no evidence can outweigh this antecedent improbability.

Logically, this is a falsity, for as Mr. Massey said,

> "The antecedent improbability of any event is simply equivalent to the improbability that evidence reaching a certain standard of value will be forthcoming, and therefore, vanishes with the occurrence of such evidence."

In practice, however, the scales are heavily weighed in favour of the *status quo ante*. In effect, when we are confronted with new facts which appear to transcend all our preconceptions, we naturally exert every effort to fit them into the pigeon-holes of existing theories. It is only when we find that they cannot be made to fit in, that we are constrained to open new pigeon-holes, to adopt new hypotheses. But in this matter we must be fair. We must not use the sledge-hammer of intolerance to drive obviously square pegs into obviously round holes.

Huxley's words are apposite:

> "Sit down before fact as a little child. Be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, and follow humbly wherever, and to whatsoever abyss Nature leads."

CHAPTER II

TELEPATHY

THERE are several good reasons which make it fitting that any ordered consideration of psychic phenomena should start with Telepathy.

Firstly, it has been under serious discussion for a considerable period for it was as far back as the year 1876, when it was first brought to scientific notice by Sir Wm. Barrett's paper before the British Association.

Secondly, the general theory of the subject has received and sustained the test of time. An exhaustive presentation thereof was put forward more than 30 years ago in that monument of patient research and brilliant analysis "*Phantasms of the Living.*" Although as might be expected, since that time much additional data has been brought to light, yet, as stated by Mrs. Sidgwick in her preface, to the new and abridged edition of this work, (Kegan Paul, 1918), which edition is herein quoted, "its value has been but little affected by subsequent investigations."

Thirdly, the subject is one which lends itself to (relatively) systematic treatment, and in which the records are of such a nature that critical analysis, and even numerical computation, can be applied thereto.

Fourthly, the implications of Telepathy are profound. Thus Mr. Constable in that remarkable

example of close reasoning "*Personality and Telepathy*" and in his subsequent "*Telergy*" (Kegan Paul, 1911 and 1918) logically developes the argument that "If Telepathy be a fact of human experience . . . then we have human experience which proves evidentially . . . that we exist, transcendent of time and space, in communion one with another as souls."

Or, on the other hand, the acceptance of Telepathy provides us with an alternative explanation for many alleged communications with the disembodied, which, in its absence, might be confidently assumed to be veridicial.

We require firstly a definition of Telepathy. The standard definition is that of Myers in "Phantasms of the Living."

> "Communication between human beings by other means than through the recognised channels of the senses."

It is quite important to keep in mind the limitation imported by the words "human beings." Telepathy can strictly only include those communications in which the transmitter—the agent—is physically living, *i.e.* embodied. It excludes all communications in which the agent is dead. It does not affirm or deny anything as to the latter. It simply excludes them from its department of enquiry.

This line of demarcation is natural and judicious, as physical death is an occurrence which permits of fairly precise determination in time. As will be seen later, this is a matter of the first importance in deciding whether any alleged communication, referring to the death of the agent, is to be considered telepathic,

or whether it may be dismissed as a chance coincidence.

It must, on the other hand, be emphasized, that this definition does not require that the agent shall be in possession of his normal faculties. It expressly *includes* cases where the agent is in a state of coma, which is so often the immediate precedent of death. The dividing line is merely *death* in the ordinary physiological sense. It is no doubt a matter for speculation whether the vital principle—the soul—does actually leave the tabernacle of the flesh at the moment when the physician would pronounce that life is extinct, or whether, as some think, this final dissociation takes place several hours later. This speculation, however, does not concern us here.

The authors of "*Phantasms of the Living*" divided telepathic communications under two main heads "Experimental" and "Spontaneous." They define as experimental all those cases where the transference of impressions is deliberately sought by the transmitter, and, by prearrangement, observed by the receiver, or, to use the standard nomenclature, by the *agent* and *percipient* respectively. They count as "spontaneous" all those cases where no such transmission was prearranged or deliberately intended.

Strict classification would require a third division namely, the semi-experimental where the agent acts consciously as in experimental telepathy, while the percipient is not consciously a party to the transmission. These cases are called by Mr. Gurney "transitional."

The above definition of telepathy includes cases which are somewhat loosely called "*clairvoyant*"

(in this term we include cases of *clairaudience* since the essential telepathic transmission is the same in both cases, the difference being that the externalization of the affect received by the percipient is, in the one case, visual, in the other, auditory).

A few words in justification of this conclusion may be necessary.

Clairvoyance, where agents and percipients are concerned, is obviously only a variety of Telepathy. An example will make this clear. "A" is in England. His friend "B" is dying in America. The ordinary telepathic case is that the affect from "B" to "A" is externalized by the latter as a vision of "B" present with "A" in *England*. Alternatively, the externalization may, as it sometimes does, take the form of a hallucination that the percipient "A" is present with "B" (say at his bedside) in *America*.

The latter case is sometimes called "travelling clairvoyance," but as both visions are, of course, subjective, the *modus operandi* is obviously the same and telepathic, the percipient "A" receiving an affect from Agent "B" of which he may externalize, as a *locus*, England or America.

It may be said that cases of "*pure*" clairvoyance where there appears to be no agent involved, *e.g.* when a crystal gazer sees a picture of a landscape or a building, cannot be brought within the definition of Telepathy.

I think, however, that there is no adequate evidence that crystal, or other, visions which are totally disconnected with any animate agent, are more than creations drawn from the storage of ideas of the seer,

an emergence, if one may use a contradiction in terms, of *forgotten memories*, cases where "*cryptomnesia*" is involved.

Nor, also, can we generally be certain that a visualization of an inanimate object may not have an animate origin. Thus an affect from a friend might cause the percipient to externalize, not a vision of the friend, but a vision of something inanimate, closely associated, in memory, with that friend. Thus Mr. Gladstone's collars were as familiar to many people as his face. An affect from him might, therefore, have caused the percipient to externalize a collar of the familiar shape, instead of the face of the statesman.

Enough has, I think, been said to show that there is no impropriety in including *all* "communications between living beings other than through the normal channels of the senses" under the one heading of Telepathy.

The first matter to be dealt with is the proof of Telepathy as a fact of human experience. Space does not permit of more than an outline of the methods by which proof has been obtained. Nor perhaps is it necessary as there are probably few impartial people who do not accept Telepathy as a fact.

In regard to the Experimental department a very large number of trials have been made of such a nature that the number of successes which could be due to mere chance alone, can be accurately computed. We take an Agent "A" and a percipient "P" so separated that they cannot communicate with each other by normal means. "A" thinks of an object and "P" records his impression of what

that object is. If the number of correct guesses is more than can be attributed to chance, it is proved, that some cause other than chance is at work. Anyone with a slight mathematical knowledge knows that the theory of probabilities enables us to form an exact estimate of the number of successes which can be attributed to chance in any series of trials of sufficient length.

A very simple example may be given. Suppose "A" cuts a card at random from a pack, and that the experiment is that "P" shall guess the *colour* of the card cut. We see at once that the mathematical probability is that the guesses will be right just as often as they are wrong.

As the length of the series increases the probability approximates more and more to certainty, and, in the limit, as mathematicians say, the probability becomes certainty.

In this case suppose the percept to be right six times in ten, or 60 times in 100 trials, we should say rightly, that this might be accounted for by nothing more than chance, If right 600 times in 1,000 trials we should suspect the operation of something besides chance. If right 6,000 times in 10,000 trials we should be certain that some extra-normal influence, *i.e.* telepathy, was at work. As the number of trials increases, the number of successes above that given by chance, needed to establish the operation of telepathy becomes less. In 10,000 or more trials a very slight excess of correct results, even one or two per cent., above the figures which chance alone would give, demonstrates the presence of telepathy, since an application of the calculus of probabilities would

show us that the probability against the operation of mere chance was so enormous as to amount to a certainty that the coincidences were not due to chance.

If any reader says that probability is not certainty, he may be reminded of the mathematical truism that certainty is only probability taken to the limit. No fact, even the rising and setting of the sun is an absolute certainty. That it will rise to-morrow is only a probability though a probability approximating to certainty. The reader interested in the mathematical aspect of the question should consult the papers by Mr. H. F. Y. Edgeworth in Vol. III, *Proc.* S.P.R., also some extracts thereof in *Phantasms of the Living*, pp. 20-1.

An enormous number of experiments (of a nature similar to the above, which permit of exact computation of the possibilities of chance coincidence) have been carried out and recorded not only in England, but in France, America, and other countries. The results when summarized show that the successes are conclusively greater than is mathematically possible by the operation of chance alone.

Recent experiments have not generally been of the simple type in which the operation of chance can be numerically estimated. They have principally been directed towards elucidating the conditions most favourable to the operation of telepathy, and other matters connected with its mode of action which are still obscure. Hence these experiments have usually taken the form of the transmission of ideas and mental pictures. In such cases an exact numerical computation of the possibilities of chance cannot be

made. It is obvious, however, that in these cases, when the subject thought of by the agent may be anything in the universe, or a purely imaginery concept, the chance of but one correct *guess* even in a series of great length is almost infinitely small.

For these later experiments the reader is referred to the following papers in the *Proc.* S.P.R., Vols. XXI. and XXVII., *Experiments in Thought Transference*, Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden. Vol. XXVII. *Thought Transference—Experimental*, Dr. J. E. Coover and *Some Recent Experiments in Thought Transference*, Miss Verrall (Mrs. Salter). Vol. XXIX. *Report on a Series of Experiments in Guessing*, Mrs. Verrall.

The results of the Miles-Ramsden experiments may be the most convincing to some readers, since agent and percipient were always separated by a considerable distance. Space does not allow the consideration of the whole of the experiments, but the first series (*vide Proc.* S.P.R., Vol. XXI., pp. 60-70) may be briefly summarized.

The agent, Miss Miles was in London, the percipient, Miss Ramsden, at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, twenty miles from London. Fifteen experiments were made. The ideas selected by the agent were not restricted in any way.

No less than three of the percepts were absolutely correct. ("Spectacles," "Hands," "Sunset over Brompton Oratory"), the agent's idea emerging at once in the percipient's imagination. In six cases the agent's idea emerged amongst other impressions. Three cases were doubtful, and there were only three complete failures, *i.e.*, cases where the percepts had

no connection whatever with the idea selected for transmission.

It will be agreed that the proportion of correct results obtained cannot possibly be referred to the operation of chance.

In regard to spontaneous telepathy the diversity of the occurrences to an agent, which may initiate a transmission, is obviously so great that, as in the last mentioned experimental cases, no numerical applications can be made. In the case, however, of one occurrence to the agent, namely death, which is the most fruitful cause of telepathic transmissions, numerical methods of considerable accuracy can be applied. We know from the Registrar General's returns the exact proportion of deaths in any year. Starting from this fact the authors of "*Phantasms of the Living*," demonstrated that the number of cases where a percept of, or relating to, an agent, coincided with the death of that agent, was vastly greater than could be accounted for by chance coincidence. The method adopted is given at length in Cap. XIII. of the above book. It may be briefly summarized as follows :—

A period of twelve years (from 1874-1885 inclusive) was taken. A census of hallucinations during that period was made by addressing to a large number of persons, selected at random, a clearly and simply worded question as to whether or no they had experienced a hallucination, visual, auditory, or tactile, during that period. Some 5,700 replies were received, of which twenty-three only were in the affirmative. This number of persons was amply large enough and sufficiently varied to be considered a fair

sample of the adult population of the country; (many everyday statistics are based on smaller groups). The assumption was therefore justified that such hallucinations are experienced by about twenty-three persons in 5,700, *i.e.*, one in 248, or four tenths of one per cent. approximately. This figure, incidentally, disposes of the oft-made statement that hallucinations are a common occurrence.

The probability that any person, taken at random, would during the period of twelve years experience a hallucination was therefore $\frac{1}{248} = \cdot 00403$.

The Registrar General's returns for the above period gave the average death rate as twenty-two per thousand. The probability that any particular person would die within twelve hours of an assigned point in time during the selected period was therefore $\frac{22}{1000} \times \frac{1}{365} = \cdot 0000603$. The probability that, during this period, a hallucination of a person and the death of that person, would coincide in time (within a limit of twelve hours plus or minus) was, therefore, $\cdot 00403 \times \cdot 0000603 = \cdot 000000243$, *i.e.*, one in 4,110,000. Chance alone could therefore produce but one coincidental hallucination in over four million adults.

The authors, however, found that no less than twenty-one perfectly attested cases had occurred during that period amongst a circle of adults, selected at random, which could not possibly have exceeded 300,000 and had, indeed, been very inadequately canvassed, the limit of time being twelve hours, before or after, the ascertained death of the agent.

The reasons which justify the assumption that the circle from which the coincident cases were drawn

could not have exceeded 300,000 and was probably much smaller, are quite convincing, but too lengthy to quote here (vide *Phantasms of the Living*, pp. 382-3).

By appropriate calculation it will be found that "the odds against the occurrence by accident of as many coincidences as the twenty-one which the circle (300,000) produced, are about forty million billion trillions to one." In very truth a probability amounting to certainty that these coincidental hallucinations were due to telepathy and not to chance.

In the earlier days of psychic research the criticism was sometimes made that the percipients in the cases recorded only *thought* that they had a hallucination connected with the agent *before* they heard of the occurrence (death, accident and so forth) by normal means. That although they felt certain that they experienced the hallucination *before* they heard of the occurrence, yet in fact they had nothing but a vague feeling which at the time they did not connect with the agent, but only made the connection after they had heard by normal means of the occurence (*e.g.* death) to the agent. We have no evidence that such tricks of memory are anything but extremely rare but in any case the precautions adopted by the authors of *Phantasms of the Living* and subsequently applied to all cases admitted by the S.P.R. as evidential, eliminate this possibility.

No case is admitted as evidential unless it can be proved either by a dated entry, in a diary or other authenticated document, or by the attestation of independent witnesses that the percipient had either recorded in writing, or related verbally, his hallucination, before he had, or could have, heard of the

occurrence to the agent by normal means. The standard of evidence required in this point is at least as high as that called for in a Court of Law.

No impartial person who has perused the records of the subject can, I think, logically refuse to accept Telepathy as a proved fact.

In regard to those who do still refuse Mr. Constable (*Personality and Telepathy* p. 118) eliminates them from further consideration gently yet effectively.

> "The cumulative weight of the evidence for telepathy is now so great . . . that many marked men of science accept it as, practically, proving the fact. It is true also that many scientific men are said to reject the evidence as unreliable, but I think they must be held to *ignore* rather than to *reject*. For scientific rejection implies a decision arrived at after full investigation and criticism of the evidence, and I can find no report of any such full investigation and criticism, by any marked man of science, followed by rejection.
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> • • • •
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> We have then on the one hand many scientific and thoughtful men who after *full investigation and criticism* . . . have come to the conclusion that it is practically proved to be a fact. We have on the other hand many scientific and thoughtful men who without any full investigation and criticism of the evidence . . . declare that telepathy is but the creation of fraud, a fantasy of human imagination or the result of self-deception. To the ordinary individual

the former class of scientific men offer a conclusion based on *reason*. The latter a conclusion based on *dogmatic assertion*."

In addition to the proof of Telepathy we need to obtain some idea of how it works. For the complete theory of the subject I must refer the reader to the above-quoted work.

It has been powerfully worked out in full detail by Mr. Constable and the best thing which the writer can do is to try to give an abstract thereof; though he is fully aware that an attempt adequately to summarise in a few sentences the results of Mr. Constable's lengthy analysis is rash. However, the attempt must be made and if the result is unsatisfying, the reader must be referred to Mr. Constable's own works for a full and adequate exposition.

The theory is that telepathic communications take place *not* directly between human brains but indirectly between the intuitive, or sub-liminal, selves of agent and percipient. Communication is in *impression* and is itself spaceless and timeless but is manifested in space and time in *idea*. The emergent idea results from the operation of the *understanding* of the percipient. The understanding being, so to speak, set to work by the sub-liminal intelligence which is itself affected by the telepathic impulse.

The agent does not transmit a full mental picture directly to the brain of the percipient. He transmits but an impression, and the percipient, from his own storage of ideas, externalizes, or, may we say, clothes, the impression so that it becomes a percept referable to ordinary physical dimensions.

The operations at either end of the transmission are dimensioned and physical, the transmission itself is undimensioned and psychical.

Hence for such a transmission "near and far" must have no meaning, which is precisely what we find in the records of telepathy, where space is found to be no barrier, and the law of inverse squares ceases to apply.

It seems to the writer that it is only by a theory, which postulates that the affect on the percipient is in intuition, that we can account for the variety of the percepts on various percipients caused by one type of occurrence to the agents, namely death. Perhaps the most common percept is a phantasm representing the agent as he usually appeared to the percipient in ordinary life.

As an example, among many, of the "ordinary life" phantasms Case 28 (*Phantasms of the Living*) might be quoted as typical.

This was a case of two old friends and colleagues in a certain office: N.J.S. and F.L.

The latter had been absent from his office for a day or two owing to, what was then thought to be, only a slight indisposition. The narrative proceeds:

> "On Saturday evening, March 24th, N.J.S. who was sitting at home . . . . . saw his friend F.L. standing before him dressed in his usual manner.
>
> N.J.S. noticed the details of his dress—his hat with a black band, his overcoat unbuttoned and a stick in his hand. He (the phantasm) looked with fixed regard at N.J.S. and then passed away . . . He (the percipient) turned

to his wife and asked the time. She said twelve minutes to nine. He then said. The reason I ask you is that F.L. is dead, and I have just seen him."

The following day the percipient received news of his friend's death, which had taken place at almost exactly the same time the previous evening, as that at which the phantasm had appeared to him.

There are, however, a substantial number of cases where the agent does not appear in his normal condition, or appears only partially, and also where the percipient's vision is not affected but where hearing or touch are the senses on which the percept falls.

A few cases, among many, may be quoted from the collection in *Phantasms of the Living*.

CASE 161. The death of the agent took place in Canada, the coincident precept in England is recorded by the percipient as follows :—

> "I saw the curtain at the side of the bed slightly pulled aside and a hand with the back towards me appearing round the curtain. I recognised the ring on the hand as that of my cousin and dear friend, Captain C.M."

CASE 205. Lady Chatterton saw a phantasm of a Father Hewitt, O.S.B., for whom she had a great regard, dressed in a Benedictine Habit of dazzling whiteness. He seemed "high above me in the air." The next morning's post brought her news that he died at the same time that she saw the phantasm.

CASE 207. The percipient saw above her "thousands of angels and, in front of them all, my friend." It was subsequently found that the friend died at the time of this vision

In another case dated 1882 (*loc cit.* pp. 327-8) the Percipient (Miss Summerbell) had been for many years on terms of close intimacy with the family of a Dutch Nobleman who resided in Holland. She stated " I was staying at Tunbridge Wells (on July 17th) and suffering from neuralgia and lying unable to sleep . . . It was beginning to be light, and I distinctly saw every object in the room. I do not know if it is necessary to say that in Holland when a person of distinction dies a ' prieur d'enterrement ' is employed. This man is dressed in black with dress-coat, knee-breeches and cocked hat with bands of crape hanging from the corners. It is his office to go to all the houses where the deceased was known, and announce the death. On the morning of which I speak I saw, a ' prieur d'enterrement ' enter. He said nothing but stood with a long paper in his hand . . . . I looked at my watch, it was nearly five o'clock. I looked towards the man but he was gone.

It is nearly six years since I lived in Holland and I had almost forgotten this custom of announcing deaths."

Subsequently news was received that the friend had died about one-and-a-half hours before the phantasm appeared to Miss Summerbell.

Gurney appends to the above the following instructive note :—

> " We may note here how curiously the idea of death, in working itself out, availed itself of materials that had long been dormant—the slumbering memories which associated Dutch Customs with Dutch friends in the percipient's mind "

The above cases, which are only a few among many of the same sort, seem to show, quite clearly, that the transmitted impression is clothed from the percipient's own storage of ideas.

In case 205 the Percipient sees the Agent, illuminated and elevated from the ground as conventional theology might depict the flight of a holy soul from this earth.

In case 207, where the percipient was a devout domestic servant, we get a replica of that not uncommon religious picture which shows the soul of the departed maiden being borne through the air by angelic figures.

In the last quoted case the externalization is not even that of the agent at all but of a circumstance which would naturally accompany the death of the agent, which circumstance was obviously dug out of a deeply submerged portion of the percipient's storage of ideas.

The impulse being the same the percipients clothe it differently. In the first case (No. 161) the "clothing" is incomplete and extends to no more than a phantasm of a small portion of the agent.

Auditory cases are numerous and it is hardly necessary to quote any example as they all appear to take the same general form, namely, that a voice is heard.

Tactile cases are rare, and, by themselves, generally non-evidential, as it is easy to suppose that the sensation may be caused by involuntary muscular movement and not by any telepathic impulse.

They are sometimes, however, combined with auditory cases there being a coincident effect on

both senses, in which case they may become evidential.

Thus in Case 293 the percipient, a railway man, when on night duty felt "a hand placed on his shoulder and a voice say distinctly, "Joe your mother wants you." The next day he received news of his mother's death.

The variety in the nature of the percept in spontaneous telepathy, the great extent of which can only be appreciated by a careful perusal of the numerous cases in *Phantasms of the Living*, seems strongly to support the theory ennunciated above. The theory does not rest on Mr. Constable's authority alone although he is undoubtedly responsible for the full development thereof. Thus Gurney (*Phantasms of the Living*, p. 348) says "The embodiment of the idea (Gurney's *idea*=Constable's *impression*) implies a creative process carried out by the percipient's own mind."

Although the reader may feel satisfied that the theory propounded fits the records of spontaneous telepathy, he may be doubtful as to how far the experimental cases can be brought under the same roof.

It is true that the simpler experimental cases such as the transmission of numbers and diagrams might be explained by a theory of direct transmission from brain to brain, by hypothetical brain waves. The more complex experimental cases, such as the later Miles—Ramsden experiments, shade into the elementary spontaneous cases. Hence there seems to be no adequate reason for assuming more than one general mode of transmission in both departments of Telepathy.

The importance of Mr. Constable's theory lies in its implications on the question of Communication with the disembodied which have been referred to on page 14 above. Its bearing both in the positive and negative direction must not be lost sight of when considering the evidential value of such communications. For this reason I have thought it necessary to devote some little space to it.

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

UNDER this heading may be grouped all those phenomena in which the alleged spirit operators manifest themselves by the movement or modification of animate or inanimate objects, excluding materialization which will be dealt with separately.

"Physical" phenomena of a kind similar to those manifested by professed spiritualists, have, indeed, been recorded long before spiritualism as a system had begun to take shape at all. Some of the marvels which tradition has attributed to the early and mediæval saints are not dissimilar to the modern manifestations of "physical" mediumship. Levitations for example were recorded in the case of St. Teresa and others, and immunity from the effects of fire was claimed for many saints, centuries before it figured in the program of Daniel Douglas Home. Also at a later era, in the middle of the seventeenth century, those eccentric manifestations called "*Poltergeists*" consisting of mysterious knockings and rappings, ringing of bells, throwing of furniture and crockery, claimed public attention. Although probably due to no more supernormal causes than the desire of mischievous children to mistify their parents or malicious servants to frighten their employers, yet at the time some of these occurrences obtained highly respectable attestation.

Thus the disturbances at Epworth parsonage which were of the usual description (1716–17) are vouched for by Samuel Wesley and his family, and an earlier case, "The Drummer of Tedworth" is vouched for by the learned Dr. Joseph Glanvil, F.R.S., in the oft-quoted *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1688). The manifestations connected with the "Drummer" were of the usual order with one or two additions which gave artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. The afflicted house was that of a Justice of the Peace who had sentenced the drummer to imprisonment as a rogue and a vagabond. In addition to the knockings, thumpings, and drummings the Justice's butler was terrified by the vision of a "Great body with two red and glaring eyes" and a horse in his stable was found one morning "with a hind leg so firmly fixed in its mouth" that it required the strength of several men to remove it. Such a remarkable contortion must indeed have seemed evidence of supernatural power of no mean order. These "Poltergeist" performances, amongst which the Cock Lane and Stockwell Ghosts have a prominent place, are, though often most amusing, only of serious value to the historical student who is tracing the connection between ancient superstition and modern credulity. From an evidential point of view they are valueless. Those who recorded them had no knowledge of the far-reaching powers of self-deception, suggestion and illusion. Nor as Mr. Podmore has shown, is the documentary evidence of any value. They need, therefore, detain us no longer. We should, however, note that Sir William

the table projecting into the doorway. The medium, Mr. Gordon, was seated about midway of the tables, on the left, the other seats being occupied by the rest of the company.

After a variety of manifestations had occurred, the medium was raised from his seat by an invisible power, and, after some apparent resistance on his part, was carried through the doorway between the parlours, directly over my head, and his head being bumped along the ceiling, he passed to the further end of the back room, in which there was no one beside himself.

Although all the individuals present had not equally good opportunity of ascertaining the facts in this case, the room having been somewhat darkened, still his transit over the end of the table at which I was seated, and the utter impossibility of the medium passing out in other way than over our heads, his continued conversation while thus suspended, and his position, as indicated by the sound, with other facts in the case, leave no reasonable doubt of the performance of the feat.

In England, although there had previously been a few minor manifestations of physical phenomena, notably the performances of Mrs. Hayden which were vouched for by no less a celebrity then Professor De Morgan, physical mediumship may be said to date from 1860, when what Podmore (*loc. cit.* Book III. cap 3) calls the American Invasion commenced. Apart from D.D. Home, whose fame justly entitles him to separate consideration, a suc-

cession of American mediums, amongst whom the Davenport Brothers, Squire, Redman, and Foster were conspicuous, visited this country. Squire's speciality was table turning on a hitherto unparalleled scale. One of his performances was described by Dr. Lockhart Robertson in the Spiritual Magazine April 1860, as follows :—

> "A heavy circular table, made of birch and strongly constructed, was lifted a somersault in the air and thrown on the bed, the left hand only of Mr. Squire being placed on the surface, his other hand held, and his legs tied to the chair on which he sat. The table was afterwards twice lifted on to the head of the writer and of Mr. Squire. Only a strong force applied at the further side of the circular top could have produced this result. This force Mr. Squire, as is evident from his position (standing close to the writer at one point of the circle with his hands tied), could not have exerted. The efforts of the writer to prevent this lifting of the table had no influence on the strange unseen force applied to lift the table thus against his wish and force.

Foster specialized in spirit writing. An account of a typical performance was given by Mr. H. Spicer in his book *Strange Things Among Us*. The sitting took place at the medium's residence.

> Mr. Foster then said he was about to leave the room, and desired me, when left alone, to tear off some ten or twelve slips of paper, write upon each of them the name of some deceased friend, roll each slip up so tightly

as to be a mere shapeless lump of paper; then roll up as many more as I pleased, in the same manner, but blank, and mix the whole together in a heap on the table. Having given these instructions, he left the room, closing the door, and went upstairs . . . . I then wrote down the names of six or seven deceased friends or acquaintances, purposely including one or two with whom the lapse of years had made my thoughts of late but little familar, rolled up the strips with at least thirty others (blank) and flung the whole in a confused heap on the table so as to be completely indistinguishable, even to myself. Mr. F., presently returning, handed me the pencil and alphabet, and, after a little "spirit" jargon, the written slips were selected from the rest, and the names they bore spelled out (*i.e.* by the raps) with unfailing precision . . . In reality I myself was not aware of the name contained in the slip under consideration until spelled out. Mr. F. afterwards varied his experiments by exhibiting the several names written in large rosy characters, as though scratched with a bramble, on his arm, but these may be set aside as easily producible by chemical means; and, indeed, I have heard of an accomplished young lady who has declared that they can, with a little practice, be produced at pleasure upon any arm, and who proved it by writing them on her own. Mr. F.'s remarks upon the spiritual agency were of the usual character and not worth recording. But to revert, for a moment, to the only point really

deserving attention, the clairvoyant reading, I confess I am at a loss to suggest any explanation of this complete and clever mystery, or mystification, excepting that it is clairvoyance.

Before very long a number of British mediums, both professional and amateur, were following in the footsteps of the American invaders.

It will serve no useful purpose to devote space to a description of their manifestations since the documentary evidence for these is generally of the most unsatisfactory description. A short space must, however, be given to the famous Mrs. Guppy and to an account of her most remarkable manifestation which latter, if not instructive, will at least be amusing.

Mrs. Guppy, who before her marriage was a Miss Nichol, first exhibited phenomena in the year 1866. She was then living with a sister of the famous naturalist, Dr. A. R. Wallace, who lent the weight of his authority to her earlier manifestations. Later Mrs. Guppy became associated with two well-known professional mediums, Messrs. Herne and Williams, and it was at one of their seances that the famous "Transit of Guppy" occurred. Mrs. Guppy it should be remarked was an exceedingly bulky lady.

The account given in *The Echo*, June 8th, 1871, is as follows :—

> I attended a circle at the house of the Mediums, Messrs. Herne and Williams (at Hackney) last Saturday. The Company consisted of three ladies and seven gentlemen. The room we entered was on the first floor, separated

from a smaller room at the back, by folding doors which were now thrown open so that we could examine the inner room.

The only articles of furniture were a table with a musical box on it, and a few chairs.

Upon our sitting round the table all the doors were closed and locked.

The seance began by one of the mediums saying the Lord's Prayer. Next the musical box, which only played sacred music, was wound up.

Almost immediately we saw lights floating about the room. We then heard voices said to be those of the "spirits" John and Katie King,

John's voice was a very deep one. Katie's was more like a whisper but still perfectly distinct.

When Katie was asked if she would bring us something she said "Yes, yes." One of the visitors remarked in a joking way "I wish she would bring Mrs. Guppy." Upon which another said "good gracious, I hope not! She is one of the biggest women in London."

Katie's voice at once said "I will, I will," but John's deep voice shouted out "you can't do it Katie."

We were all laughing at the absurdity of the idea when John's voice called out "Keep still can't you." In an instant some one cried "Good God, there's something on my head." Simultaneously there came a heavy bump on the table. A match was instantly struck and there was Mrs. Guppy standing on the table,

the whole of us being seated round it, closely packed together, as we had sat since the beginning of the seance. Both doors were still locked.

Mrs. Guppy had one arm over her eyes with a pen in her hand and an account book in her other hand which hung by her side. She told us that the last thing she could remember was that she was sitting at home (at Highbury, three miles away) making up her weekly household accounts, her friend Miss Neyland being in the room with her reading the newspaper.

The ink in Mrs. Guppy's pen was still wet and the last word in the account book, "onions" was scarcely dry. Three minutes did not elapse between the remark about bringing her, and the time she was found on the table.

At the conclusion of the seance several of the party escorted Mrs. Guppy to her home.

There they learned from Miss Neyland, a friend and fellow medium of Mrs. Guppy, that an hour or two previously she had been sitting with her reading, when suddenly looking up, she found that her companion had disappeared leaving a "slight haze near the ceiling."

Mrs. Guppy's husband, an aged gentleman, on being told of the disappearance of his wife remarked with perfect calm that "no doubt the spirits had taken her," and shortly afterwards sat down to his supper.

The story is so delightful, especially this latter touch, that comment would spoil it.

The year 1866 saw the appearance of David Duguid, a carpenter by trade, who was apparently the first

person to produce "spirit paintings." Mr. Podmore (*loc. cit.* Vol. II, p. 86) describes one of his manifestations which he himself witnessed.

> Some ordinary photographer's cards, carte-de-visite size, were produced by the medium. The sitters were not allowed to touch these cards, lest they should interfere with the personal magnetism with which the cards were saturated. But in order that the visitor might be satisfied that no substitution was practised, a small corner was torn off each of the two cards selected for the experiment and the fragments were handed to me. I placed them securely in my pocket. Duguid then was fastened hands, arms, and legs to the chair by silk handkerchiefs, with adhesive paper on the ends. The lights were then extinguished, so that the only light came through a ground-glass panel in the door from a small gas-jet some distance off. The illumination was so faint that I, sitting in the circle four or five feet from the medium, could just make out against the background of the door the dark outline of his head, which, apparently, did not move throughout the experiment. I could see no gleam of white from the cards which lay on the table. After a quarter of an hour the lights were turned up, and two small oil-paintings, one circular, about the size of a penny, the other oval and slightly larger, were found on the two cards. The colours were still moist and the fragments in my pocket fitted the torn corners of the cards. The two pictures, which lie before me as I

write, represent respectively a small upland stream dashing over rocks, and a mountain lake with its shores bathed in a sunset glow. The paintings, though obviously executed with some haste, were hardly such as one can imagine to have been done in such a short interval and in almost complete darkness. For many years I was quite at a loss to understand how the feat could have been accomplished by normal means. The explanation, which I have no doubt to be correct, is an extremely simple one. Duguid, it has been seen, would not suffer profane hands to touch the cards; and, when he had torn off the corner of a card, he no doubt dropped into the sitters hand, not the piece torn from the blank card on the table, but a piece previously torn from a card on which a picture had already been painted.

Spirit painting has also been produced by other mediums. A fairly recent case (1905) is quoted by the Ref. Prof. Henslow (*Proofs of the Truths of Spiritualism*, pp. 172-4, Kegan Paul). The account is given by Dr. T. d'Aute Hooper who was the automatist.

Near the end of June she (a control named "Violetta," purporting to be the daughter of a nobleman of feudal times) very much astonished me by requesting me to procure some painting materials as she "wanted to paint a picture." I remonstrated with her and told her I could not paint and never had painted anything; but she insisted that I was to do so.

At our next seance, when she controlled her

medium, the first words she uttered were: "So, 'College' (the nickname she gave to Dr. Hooper), you have not done as I asked you," to which I replied "It was useless as I could not paint." There was a good deal of argument. For the sake of peace I promised when next in town to procure some paints and cardboard.

I bought a few tubes of colour and a sheet of cardboard and some brushes. At our next seance she greeted me with the words. "So, College, you've kept your promise." To which I replied "Yes, but I could not see the utility of so doing." She gave me directions that I was to prepare the colours, etc., upon a certain evening, and that I would paint a picture. I followed the advice more for the sake of peace than anything; and the picture was the outcome. Of course it is full of faults, but I was smug enough to think it was good for a first attempt.

Now for the sequel. When the picture was dry I locked it away where no one could see it, and told Mrs. Hooper not to mention it to anyone but await what would happen at our next seance.

We met as usual, when Violetta controlled her medium, she remarked: "So, College, most wonderful of artists, you have done my picture." I replied, "what picture?" To which she said, "Why! the picture of our moated castle with the Peacock, Raven, Lion, Pecky and Violet." I replied, "You are correct except on one point, that Pecky was not in the

picture. She gave a hearty laugh and asked, "What is pecking the violets?" I replied, "A hen." "Well, College," she replied, "that is 'Pecky.'"

I was very much surprised to think that the picture should be described through the lips of a medium who had never seen it.

A short reference must be made to "Slate Writing" which was for some little time held to be a genuine manifestation of extra-terrene intelligence. Slade and Eglinton were its most famous professors. Mr. C. C. Massey gave the following account of one of the latter's performances (Proc. S.P.R. Vol. IV., p. 77), corroborated by the Hon. Roden Noel, who was also present at the sitting.

"Mr. Eglinton now laid one of two equi-sized slates (10¾ inches by 7⅝) flat upon the other, the usual scrap of pencil being enclosed. Both slates were then, as I carefully assured myself, perfectly clean on both surfaces. He then forthwith, and without any previous dealing with them, presented one end of the two slates, held together by himself at the other end, for me to hold with my left hand, on which he placed his own right. I clasped the slates, my thumb on the frame of the one (¾ inch), and three of my fingers, reaching about four inches, forcing up the lower slate against the upper one. We did not hold the slates underneath the table, but at the other side a little below the level. Mr. Noel was thus able to observe the position. Mr. Eglinton held the slates firmly together at his end, as I can assert, because I particularly observed that there was no gap at his end. I also noticed his thumb

on the top of the slates, and can say that it rested quite quietly throughout the writing, which we heard almost immediately, and continuously, except when Mr. Eglinton once raised his hand from mine, when the sound ceased till contact was resumed.

"We heard the sound of writing distinctly, yet it was not, I think quite so loudly audible as I remember with Slade. When the three raps came, denoting that the 'message' was finished, Eglinton simply removed his hand from the slates, leaving them in my left hand, also quitting contact of his other hand with my left. I took off the upper slate, and we saw that the inner surface of one of them was covered with writing, 20 lines (118 words), from end to end written from the medium, and one line along the side by the frame, and 'good-bye' on the other side. The writing was in straight lines across the slate, all the lines slanting from left to right."

For some little time slate writing was an inexplicable puzzle to even shrewd observers.

The riddle was, however, solved by an amateur conjurer, Mr. S. J. Davey. Mr. Davey had himself been at first much impressed by Eglinton's performances. Sustained observation, led him, however, to suspect trickery and he set himself to produce, by simple conjuring, effects similar to those of Eglinton and Slade. After considerable practice he succeeded in equalling and even surpassing their performances. Davey, indeed, worked under more difficult conditions than the alleged mediums, since his observers were already aware that they were to witness mere conjuring.

The account of Davey's sitting with Mr. A. Podmore may be quoted.

Mr. A. Podmore wrote in 1886 (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. IV., p. 416) :—

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

Mr. F. Podmore remarks on the above (*loc. cit.* Vol. II., pp. 217-8).

"Mr. Davey allowed me to see exactly what was done, and this is what I saw. The 'almost immediately' in the above account covered an interval of some minutes. During this interval, and indeed, throughout the seance, Davey kept up a constant stream of chatter, on matters more or less germane to the business in hand. Mr. A. Podmore, absorbed by the conjurer's patter, fixed his eyes on Davey's face, and the latter took advantage of the opportunity to remove the locked slate under cover of a duster from under my brother's nose, to the far end of the room, and there exchange it for a similar slate, with a previously prepared message, which was then placed, by means of the same manœuvre with the duster, in the position originally occupied by the first slate. Then, and only then, the stream of talk slackened, and Mr. A. Podmore's attention became concentrated upon the slate, from which the sound of spirit writing was now heard to proceed. To me the most surprising thing in the whole episode was Mr. A. Podmore's incredulity when told that his attention had been diverted from the slate for an appreciable period."

Dr. Hereward Carrington, another amateur conjurer with great experience of the "tricks of the trade" of professional "physical" mediums, describes in his instructive book *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism, fradulent and genuine*, another method by which writing is produced between a pair of slates which after being carefully cleaned are screwed and glued together and sealed by the sitter.

In this case there is no substitution of a prepared pair of slates with the "spirit writing" already upon them. The slates are held under the seance table as usual and after a minute or so they are handed to the sitter who, after breaking the seals and taking the slates apart, finds a message written on the inner face of one of them.

The explanation given by Mr. Carrington is that the small piece of chalk, which is placed between the slates before they are fixed together, for the use of the ostensible spirit writer, is not ordinary chalk at all but a compound of powdered chalk, glue and iron filings. When the slates are placed under the table the medium secretly extracts a magnet from his sleeve and traces a few words on the outside of the slate. The iron filings in the lump of chalk cause it to follow the movements of the magnet and writing on the inside of the slate is the result.

A whole volume could be filled with descriptions of earlier manifestations of physical phenomena and would form entertaining reading. This book, however, is concerned with the strictly practical aspect of the subject. Hence after noting the general nature and developments of these phenomena, no more attention need be devoted to them, not because the fact that some professional mediums were exposed, necessarily proves that all such phenomena were fraudulent, but simply because the earlier evidence is quite inadequate to enable any reasoned decision to be arrived at. As Podmore has shown the observers of earlier phenomena had little conception of the need for accurate recording or really

scientific investigation. The documentary evidence is poor and conflicting.

The only possible policy for the practical man is simply to say that the evidence for these earlier phenomena is inadequate to enable any decision to be arrived at.

If we had no more evidence than that available in support of the earlier physical phenomena, there can be no doubt that any impartial person would be justified in saying that these phenomena were not worthy of serious consideration.

We have, however, a few cases where these phenomena have been investigated by men of science and others of authority, where proper experimental methods have been employed, and where immediate and careful records have been made of all occurrences, so that the effects of the unreliability of human memory are, as far as possible, avoided.

Although in order of date Home is amongst the earlier exhibitors of "physical" phenomena, since he commenced operation in England in 1855, yet the fact that his performances were investigated and vouched for by many eminent men, who placed their attestation on record in writing, does not permit us to dismiss Home's manifestations in the same way as those which we have just been considering.

The most important evidence, in view of the high scientific standing of the witness, was that furnished by Sir Wm. Crookes in his book *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, 1874, and in *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. VI., pp. 98-127. We have also written testimony from the Earl of Dunraven (then Viscount

Adare) in his *Experiences in Spiritualism*; Dr. J. G. Wilkinson, *Evenings with Mr. Home and the Spirits*, 1855; Sergt. Cox in *The Mechanism of Man*, 1876, and other documentary evidence in the periodical literature of the time and in the *Journal* of the S.P.R., July, 1889, and May, 1890.

In Sir Wm. Crookes' experiments the attempt was undoubtedly made adequately to control and observe all the movements of the medium, and, in addition, apparatus was employed for measuring the weight, etc., of the medium during manifestations, somewhat similar though less complete than that used by Dr. Crawford in his recent experiments described below.

It is quite impossible, within the confines of the present book, to give an example of each kind of manifestation produced by Home. His repertoire vastly exceeded both in quality and quantity that of his predecessors, and he introduced certain phenomena hitherto apparently unknown.

Sir Wm. Crookes' account of a remarkable manifestation which occurred at a sitting on June 21st, 1871, may be quoted :—

> "Just in front of Mr. Home and on the table was a thin wooden lath 23½ inches long, 1½ inches wide and ⅜ inch thick, covered with white paper. It was plainly visible to us all and was one foot from the edge of the table. Presently the end of the lath, pointing towards Mr. Walter Crookes, rose up in the air to the height of about ten inches. The other end then rose up to a height of about five inches, and the lath then floated about for more than

a minute in this position suspended in the air, with no visible means of support. It moved sideways and waved gently up and down, just like a piece of wood on the top of small waves of the sea. The lower end then gently sank till it touched the table and the other end followed.

Whilst we were speaking about this wonderful exhibition of force, the lath began to move again, and, rising up as it did at first, it waved about in a somewhat similar manner. The startling novelty of the movement having now worn off, we were all enabled to follow its motions with more accuracy. Mr. Home was sitting away from the table at least three feet from the lath all this time; he was apparently quite motionless, and his hands were tightly grasped, his right by Mrs. Walter Crookes and his left by Mrs. William Crookes. Any movement by his feet was impossible as, owing to the large cage being under the table his legs were not able to be put beneath but were visible to those on each side of him. All the others had hold of hands."

Mr. Podmore (*loc. cit.* p. 243) does not consider it necessary to look for any more supernormal explanation than a loop of black thread passed over the frame of the hanging lamp over the table attached at the one end to the centre of the lath and at the other to the medium's knees. He points out that, since all the sitters hands were joined, there was no risk of an inquisitive hand being passed over the lath whereby the thread would be detected. He

also states that in a subdued light and against a dark background a fine black thread is invisible.

The most familiar example of Home's manifestations is that which took place at 5 Buckingham Gate, on December 16th, 1868, in the presence of the then Earls of Crawford and Dunraven and Captain Wynne. This has been often quoted and was a stock subject for arguments, especially with the upholders of the hallucination theory as an explanation of the seemingly inexplicable. Briefly, the alleged levitation consisted in Home leaving one room by the window floating through the air and entering horizontally into the adjoining room through the window, the windows being on the fifth floor of the building. For an analysis of this phenomenon the reader must again be referred to the indispensible Mr. Podmore (*loc. cit.* Vol. II., pp. 257-8) who finds the explanation both in illusion and malobservation.

Home's elongations were also famous. One, described by Lord Lindsay in a paper before the Dialectical Society July 6th, 1869, may be quoted as typical :—

> " On another occasion I saw Mr. Home in a trance, elongated eleven inches. I measured him standing up against the wall, and marked the place ; not being satisfied with that, I put him in the middle of the room and placed a candle in front of him, so as to throw a shadow on the wall, which I also marked. When he awoke I measured him again in his natural size, both directly and by the shadow, and the results were equal. I can swear that he was not

off the ground or standing on tiptoe, as I had full view of his feet, and moreover, a gentleman present had one of his feet placed over Home's insteps, one hand on his shoulder, and the other on his side where the false ribs come near the hip-bone."

Later, in answer to questions, Lord Lindsay supplemented his evidence as follows :—

"The top of the hip-bone and the short ribs separate. In Home they were unusually close together. There was no separation of the vertebræ of the spine ; nor were the elongations at all like those resulting from expanding the chest with air ; the shoulders did not move. Home looked as if he was pulled up by the neck ; the muscles seemed in a state of tension. He stood firmly upright in the middle of the room, and before the elongation commenced I placed my foot on his instep. I will swear he never moved his heels from the ground. When Home was elongated against the wall, Lord Adare placed his foot on Home's instep, and I marked the place on the wall. I once saw him elongated horizontally on the ground ; Lord Adare was present. Home seemed to grow at both ends, and pushed myself and Adare away."

Perhaps the most striking and certainly not the worst authenticated of Home's phenomena was the power which he exhibited of handling red-hot coals and other hot articles, and even of conferring this power to others.

A well-known solicitor, Mr. W M. Wilkinson,

testified to one of Home's remarkable manifestations of immunity from fire (Barrett: *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 76).

"I saw Mr. Home take out of our drawing-room fire a red-hot coal a little less in size than a cricket ball and carry it up and down the room. He said to Lord Adare (Earl Dunraven)—who was present —"will you take it from me? It will not hurt you." Lord Adare took it and held it in his hand for about half a minute. Before he threw it back into the fire I put my hand close to it and felt the heat like that of a live coal."

On another occasion Home placed a glowing coal on the head of the well-known art critic, Mr. Samuel Carter Hall.

This gentleman had long and very thick white hair and it is stated that the hair was drawn up in a pyramid over the bright red mass. In this case at any rate the explanation that the coal was only alight in one portion (a coal in this condition may be red-hot at one end and moderately cool at the other) does not apply. That there really was a coal of some sort there, seems to be proved by the fact that when Mr. Hall brushed his hair at night he found in it a quantity of cinder dust.

On several other occasions Home handed to various reputable witnesses red-hot coals which they held without hurt.

Podmore, to whom one instinctively, and generally profitably, turns for a natural explanation of physical phenomena, is hardly satisfying here. He refers to the obvious fact that a partly burnt coal may be red-hot at one end and cool at the other. This

might explain the carrying of coal on the hand but cannot explain the experiment with Mr. S. C. Hall whose hair, which was of remarkable thickness, must have surrounded the coal on all sides.

Hallucination is difficult to accept as we need to assume a double illusion since a red-hot coal affects both the visual and tactile senses.

If we agree with Podmore that we are entitled to assume that Home was a practised conjuror it is simplest to explain the occurrence by presuming that Home substituted a dead coal for a live coal a difficult piece of legerdemain but not impossible. Alternatively we can fall back on the convenient hypothesis of misreporting.

As Count Solovovo says (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXI., p. 461) :—

> "How can we logically admit the strange mixture of fact and fancy if we adopt the illusion hypothesis ? Scores of people believing that they are handling hot coals when they are in fact touching something quite different or nothing at all. Scores of other people who believe themselves to be witnesses to the same fact. Persons becoming victims to this extraordinary illusion instantaneously and in succession ? . . . To adopt such a theory seems to me to strain incredulity (should it not rather be called credulity the other way) to the uttermost."

In regard to the manifestation of spirit hands, not by any means a performance exclusive to Home, Mr. Barr's account is at least startling :—

> "The hand, white as marble and not visibly

attached to any arm, reached out to my hand and shook hands with me; a hearty human shake. Then the hand sought to withdraw from mine. I would not let it. Then it pulled to get away with a good deal of strength. But I held it firmly, resolved to see what it was . . . When the hand found it could not get away it yielded itself up to me for my examination; turned itself over and back, shut up its fingers and opened them, let me examine the finger-nails, the joints, the creases. It was a perfect human hand, but white as snow, and ended at the wrist. I was not satisfied with the sense of sight to prove this—I wanted the concurrent testimony of other senses; and I swung my arm up and down where the arm belonging to this hand should have been . . . but no arm was there. Even then I was not satisfied. Turning this strange hand palm towards me, I pushed my right forefinger entirely through the palm till it came out an inch or more visibly from the back of the hand. In other words I pushed my finger clear through that mysterious hand. When I withdrew it, the place closed up, such as a piece of putty would close under such circumstances—leaving a visible mark or scar where the wound was, but not a hole.

While I was still looking at it, the hand vanished quick as a lightning-flash. It was gone."

The other great non-professional medium of the latter part of the last century was the Rev. Stainton

Moses. He produced divers physical phenomena. Most of these were similar to those of Home and were also vouched for by many reputable witnesses.

Examples thereof are perhaps hardly necessary, nor does space permit. Mr. Stainton Moses, moreover, is famous rather for his inspirational writings.

As Mr. Moses was a man of more culture than Home, and, for many years a hard-working parish priest and thereafter a not unsuccessful master at University College School, he might, without any reflection on Home, be considered as the more inately trustworthy of the two. Yet for the present purpose there will, I think, be no great impropriety in grouping them together for the purpose of considering the evidence for their phenomena.

We have presented to us two gentlemen producing, for no mercenary object, an extensive series of phenomena, impossible according to our present known laws of nature but yet vouched for by a large number of most reputable witnesses. We must also give weight to the fact that there is no record of either Home or Moses having been detected in trickery. Home's seances were so numerous and his sitters drawn from so wide a circle that (making every allowance for the fact that his non-professional position gave him consideration which would not be accorded to a professional practitioner) it is difficult to believe that if there had been trickery it would not have been detected, and if detected published abroad. On the other hand it must be remembered that, as the host or guest, and not the servant, of his sitters, he was able to a very great

extent to impose his own conditions and, by the simple expedient of doing nothing, when a too critical observer was among the sitters, or the light or environment was unfavourable, might have been able to restrict his more difficult performances to times and places where detection of any artifices was impossible.

It must also be remembered that in those earlier days of psychic research even such eminent scientists as Sir W. Crookes were novices at the business. It is certain that Home's phenomena were never investigated in anything like the detail and with the care that, for example those of Eusapia Palladino were by the S.P.R. commission at Naples in 1908 (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIII., pp. 309-569), or by M. Courtier and his colleagues (*Bulletin de l'Institut General Psychologique*, Nos. 5 and 6, 1908).

Finally, it may be well to repeat that the hypothesis of illusion cannot possibly cover all the facts on record.

Illusion is a good enough theory when the point at issue is the appearance of some extra-terrene phenomena. When, however, it is called in to explain the movement of some ordinary objective thing it breaks down. A sitter may see a spirit hand move a vase of flowers across a room. He may be hallucinated as to the hand, but he cannot be hallucinated as to movement having taken place, when he finds the vase in a different position to that it originally occupied.

The only verdict for the practical man on the Home and Moses phenomena standing by themselves, must be not-proven.

But as will shortly be shown, confirmation of some of the simpler manifestations seems to be now available by evidence of a quality which it is difficult to refute. It is, therefore, not impossible that we may shortly have to reconsider our verdict on the manifestations of Home and Moses.

I think it may fairly be said that up to the present date (August, 1919) there have been only three "physical" mediums whose performances have been investigated with real care and accuracy, namely, an American lady Mrs. Williams, Eusapia Palladino and Miss Kathleen Goliger and her circle at Belfast.

The manifestations of Mrs. Williams, the wife of a Doctor and in no way financially or sentimentally interested in obtaining results, were personally investigated with great care by Miss Johnson assisted by Doctor Gower (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXI., pp. 94-135). The phenomena obtained were not numerous, but the evidence is clear that raps and movements and levitations of a table were obtained in good light, when the positions of the sitters were such that these phenomena could not have been produced by hands, feet, or any other normal means.

The manifestations were, however, so very few that they only make a small contribution to the evidence. That contribution is, however, unimpeachable as, a perusal of Miss Johnson's paper will show.

The name of Eusapia Palladino has become as wearisome to the student of psychic research as that of Sally Beauchamp to the psychologist. Nevertheless it cannot be omitted even from the most superficial survey of the evidence for "physical"

phenomena. There is certainly no other "physical" medium whose performances have been studied with so much detail and by so many competent observers, over so long a period of time.

Eusapia was first investigated in 1891 by the eminent criminologist, Prof. Lombroso, who published his opinion of the genuine nature of the phenomena (*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1891—2). The interest evoked by Lombroso's pronouncement caused a group of Scientists to undertake further experiments at Milan in 1892 when seventeen sittings in all were held. Among the group of investigators were Prof. Richet, Professor of Physiology in Paris, Prof. Schiaparelli, Director of the Milan Observatory, Dr. Carl du Prel, of Munich, and several well-known physicists (*vide Annales des Sciences Psychiques* 1893, pp. 39-64). The phenomena were of the kind familiar in Eusapia's seances, table levitations, movements of objects, spirit hands, etc., many of the manifestations being obtained in good light. In regard to these, the investigators came to the general conclusion that they could not have been produced by trickery.

The first investigation in which any English scientists took part was in 1894 at Prof. Richet's residence on the Ile Rouband. Sir O. Lodge, Mr. Myers, Prof. and Mrs. Sidgwick were the English representatives. For most of the sittings Sir O. Lodge was in general charge of the seance room and arranged the experiments. He and Mr. Myers were convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, while Prof. and Mrs. Sidgwick supported this view with certain important reservations. Sir O. Lodge's

full report (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vo. VI.), gave rise to some controversy and criticism as to the control of the hands and feet of the medium, notably from Dr. Hodgson (*Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. VII., pp. 36-55).

With a view to arriving at a definite conclusion, Eusapia was brought to Cambridge where twenty-one sittings were held in 1895. At the end of the sittings the investigators came to the unanimous conclusion that fraud had been used in many cases and that there was no adequate reason for concluding in favour of any supernormal agency having been at work during the course of the sittings (*Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. VII., pp. 131-5 and 148-159).

In spite of the above negative result Continental investigators were not prepared to accept the result of the Cambridge sittings as conclusive. Further investigations were numerous, and several scientists of international reputation such as M. Camille Flammarion and Prof. Enrico Morselli stated that after making every possible allowance for fraud (conscious or unconscious), there was still a substantial residuum of phenomena which could not have been effected by ordinary physical and mechanical means. Special attention must, however, be given to the experiments undertaken by M. Courtier which extended over three years and were witnessed by many distinguished scientists such as Prof. and Madame Curie, M. d'Arsonval, M. Henri Bergson and others. A copious report was given by M. Courtier (*Bulletin de l'Institut Psychologique*, Nos. 5 and 6, 1908).

The outstanding merit of these experiments is that they prove quite definitely and finally, that the

levitations, etc., were actual objective phenomena and not, as is so often said, with more haste than knowledge, mere illusions. For example each leg of the table to be levitated was fitted with an electric contact which only operated when the leg left the ground. Each contact closed a circuit to an indicating stylus which made a mark on a revolving drum (the whole arrangement was similar to the familiar laboratory apparatus used for chronographic measurements). When all four indicators simultaneously marked the drum it was positive proof that the whole table had actually left the floor.

Automatic records of the muscular effort exerted by the medium, variations in her weight, etc., were also made. Space does not permit of a description of the elaborate apparatus employed. It is important to note that the registering apparatus was not located in the seance room but in the room adjoining, the electric leads and pneumatic tubes operating the registering apparatus, being led through holes in the intervening wall. This eliminates the possibility, which has been often assumed, that the medium surreptitiously, operates the indicating apparatus.

As far, therefore, as the objectivity of levitation, etc., is concerned M. Courtier's experiments give a definite affirmative decision.

The degree of lighting and the completeness of the supervision of the mediums limbs varied. Sufficient experiments, however, were made in adequate light and with full control and observation of the medium's movements, to enable the distinguished investigators to state that certain of the phenomena could not have been produced by normal means.

As previously stated the great value of M. Courtier's experiments was that he definitely proved the objectivity of the movements in question. Although the supervision of the medium's movements was in many cases adequate yet this important point is not perhaps, dealt with in sufficient detail to carry conviction to the reader. On this point we have strong affirmative evidence in the records of the investigations of the S.P.R. commission at Naples in November and December, 1908. The Commissioners were Messrs. Fielding, Baggalay and Carrington. All of whom had had many years experience in the investigation of "physical" phenomena, while the last two gentlemen were skilful amateur conjurors. Mr. Carrington, in particular, had devoted many years to the exposure, and the repetition, by mere legerdemain, of the tricks of American "physical" mediums. It is also most important to note that all three commissioners had, before the Naples investigations, definitely expressed their opinion that they had never seen any "physical" phenomena which were not to be accounted for by fraud (conscious or unconscious).

The *personnel* of the Commission was, therefore, from the sceptical point of view, unimpeachable, and removes the objection so often made that fraudulent physical mediums can deceive eminent scientists, but not skilled prestidigitators.

The Commission directed their attention specially to providing adequate and continuous control of the medium's person. Accurately to record this control, all actions and observations in the seance room were noted by a stenographer who was present at all the

sittings. The complete record will be found in the *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vo. XXIII., pp. 306-569. The Commissioners introduction may well be quoted :—

> "We decided to furnish as complete a record as possible of the conduct of our seances, and while it is true that a report consisting, mainly, as does the present of mere details of hand-holding, foot-holding and conditions of light, is intolerably wearisome and unreadable, a report of this kind is necessary for those who are prepared to take the trouble of following, at least a part of it, with attention, if anything more than the mere *ipse dixit* of an observer as to the adequacy of the control is to be provided."

A perusal of the detailed report of the eleven sittings which covers some 110 large octavo pages, largely transcribed from the original shorthand notes, must carry conviction as to its inherent accuracy. The fact that the observations of the sitters were taken down as they were spoken, eliminates the possibility of misreporting, which is always present when records are made some little time after the events, thus leaving loopholes for inaccurate recollection. The report, if it be wearisome as its authors describe it, is so from its length alone and not from its manner or matter. It cannot but prove interesting to the serious reader.

It is quite clear, from the report and from the diagrams which accompany it, that certain phenomena could not possibly have been effected by normal means. Thus, for example, in full light (a sixteen candle power Electric Lamp) there occurred, in

response to gestures by the medium, a series of raps on the further side of the room a distance of over six feet from where she was seated. Also objects were moved which were quite out of the reach of the medium.

The phenomena concerning which the commissioners expressed a definite opinion were mostly of the familiar sort, raps, blows, levitations, movements of articles, etc. Some other phenomena "spirit" lights, hands, etc., were produced but they are not relied upon, as the illumination of the seance room was very low when they were produced.

To give a full report of even one sitting would demand far more space than is here available. While to attempt an abridgement thereof is likely, indeed certain, to give a distorted view. The reader is, therefore, referred to the original report which is, like all the other proceedings of the S.P.R., available to the public.

Each of the commissioners submitted a separate report. These reports agree in substance and the result is well summed up in Mr. Fielding's final note (*loc. cit.* p. 568) :—

> "My colleagues, having come to the deliberate opinion that a large proportion of the manifestations of which we were the witnesses in Naples, were clearly beyond the possibilities of any conceivable form of conjuring, entertain no difficulty in saying so in precise terms and, so far as my own position as a layman (*i.e.*, not a conjuror) entitles me to it, I associate myself entirely with their conclusions."

Subsequently Eusapia Palladino gave a number of

sittings in America the result of which was distinctly unfavourable, the medium being detected in trickery on several occasions (*Journal American S.P.R.*, Aug., 1910). Thereafter another series of sittings were held at Naples in November and December, 1910. The investigators being the Count and Countess Solovovo, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Marriott (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXV., pp. 57-69). These sittings were only five in number and were attended with no manifestations which could definitely be considered as evidential. The sitters were unanimous that with one possible exception the whole of the phenomena was fraudulent.

It should be noted that Mr. Baggalay who was one of the 1908 Commission lays particular stress on the fact that these latter sittings were materially different to those held in 1908. He says (*loc. sit.* p. 69) :—

> "It was the phenomena under . . . test conditions, which we obtained at our seances in December, 1908, that greatly impressed me and I laid particular stress on them (and gave some examples) in my final note in the Report of our Naples sittings. So far I have not met with any satisfactory explanation of how Eusapia could have produced these phenomena by normal means. It is certain that no accomplice was present and we had satisfied ourselves by examination that no apparatus was being used."

Possibly the reader may take the objection that because Eusapia had, during her numerous tests, been several times detected in fraudulent practices, therefore *all* records of her phenomena are evidentially

valueless. Such an objection is hardly logical. Because a person has on some occasions been detected in lying we do not conclude that every statement he makes must necessarily be untrue, even if independently verified.

We can, indeed, place no reliance whatever on Eusapia's *bona fides* (whether the deception was conscious or unconscious does not affect the question). But we are not, on the ground of the medium's unreliability, to refuse to accept phenomena which, on reputable testimony, could not possibly have been effected by normal means. To take a simple analogy. We are rightly sceptical of marvellous rounds of golf played by a solitary golfer of exaggerative tendencies, but we do not refuse to believe the evidence of his card signed by his partner in a medal round, however much above the player's normal form it may be.

Of course it would be better if we could entirely discard *all* evidence from sources which are in the slightest degree tainted. But as the human beings who can manifest physical phenomena are so exceedingly rare we cannot afford to do this. Our eggs of evidence are very few and not all fresh, most are like the Curate's egg " excellent in parts " only. Owing to scarcity we cannot throw away the tainted ones but must use such parts as are passable in our omelette.

With these remarks I think we can leave the unpleasant but necessary proximity of Eusapia (what must not the S.P.R. commissioners have suffered from that proximity ?) and pass on to the far more pleasing atmosphere of the Belfast circle.

The manifestations of the Belfast circle have been examined with great care and accuracy by Prof. W. J. Crawford, D.Sc., of Queen's University and The Technical Institute, Belfast. His results are described in his book *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena* (John Watkins, 1919), which is a cold practical investigation by a mechanical engineer, who has made careful observations and quantitative measurements of the forces and reactions exhibited in the levitation of articles, and has propounded a theory to account for the phenomena which, though necessarily speculative, has the merit of consistence with the experimental results obtained. The outstanding importance of Dr. Crawford's work is such that an attempt must be made to give an abstract thereof, though the full weight of the evidence afforded by his lengthy series of experiments, eighty-seven in number, can only be appreciated by a perusal of the whole book, in which, it should be mentioned, that technicalities are few, and the whole matter so clearly and simply set forth as to be easily understood by the non-mechanical reader.

The circle with which Dr. Crawford made his investigations consisted of a Mr. Goligher, his son, four daughters, and a son-in-law. All the members appear to have had some pyschic power, but this is possessed far more strongly, than in the case of the rest of the family, by Miss Kathleen Goligher, a young lady twenty-one years of age. Dr. Crawford gives, (*loc. cit.*, pp. 10-16) a number of excellent reasons why the hypothesis of fraud is untenable. Some of the reasons, such as the great respectability of the family, and Dr. Crawford's personal knowledge of

them for some years, the fact that they look upon the sittings as religious observances, the absence of any financial or social inducement to give fraudulent manifestations, will not carry conviction to the sceptic, though in testimony on any ordinary subject they would be considered adequate. It can hardly be necessary to discuss the *bona fides* of Dr. Crawford himself, or of the others who assisted him as observers from time to time, such as Sir Wm. Barrett or Mr. Whatley Smith (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 306-333).

Far stronger evidence lies in the following facts :— None of these manifestations were carried on in the dark. The source of light was an ordinary gas flame in a red glass lantern. The visibility was quite sufficient to enable the movements of the sitters and the positions of their hands to be readily seen. Furthermore, Dr. Crawford was at times assisted by one or even two independent observers. The members of the family constituting the circle sat at some distance from the table, sufficient space being, indeed, left to enable the observer to walk between the sitters and the table. Finally, and I think conclusively, the magnitude of the forces in some experiments was such that the sitters could not possibly have exerted them even if they had deliberately tried to do so.

In this latter connection Dr. Crawford (*loc. cit.*, pp. 14-15) says :—

> "The magnitude of the actions applied to the table must be seen to be believed. Often a force approximating to a hundredweight is exerted. A visitor is invited to enter the circle,

as already explained, to lay hold of the table, and to try to prevent its motion. I have never yet seen this successfully accomplished. Now, the only way such movements could be given normally to the table is by the feet of the medium, for all hands and bodies of sitters and medium are quite plainly seen, and the only part that may be in shadow is near the feet of the medium. It can be proved conclusively by direct experiment that even if the medium were to lie back in her chair, spread her feet so that they were under the surface of the table, eighteen inches or more away, and endeavour to levitate it or move it about, such motion of her body would be immediately detected, and that a man pressing immediately over the table could prevent even the slightest motion by a ridiculously small effort, whereas, as already mentioned, the strongest man cannot in reality do so The leverage from the medium's feet to her body is so great that a very small force only is required to prevent motion."

It will be observed, therefore, that the conditions are totally different to those of most seances, when the circle sits close to the table in darkness or a very dim light so that the movements of the knees or feet of the medium cannot be properly observed.

Thus, for example, in the experiment given on p. 22, a small stool weighing 2lbs. 12oz., and having a rectangular top 12¾ by 13¾ inches was placed in the centre of the circle of sitters which was 5 feet diameter. The medium herself was seated on a

weighing-machine, the nearest part of the table being 3 feet distant from her knees. There were two observers besides Dr. Crawford. Under these conditions the table was, at the latter's request, lifted steadily to a height of at least 4 feet from the ground, and retained there for some two minutes level with the heads of the sitters.

It must surely be obvious, to the most sceptical, that the sitters could not possibly have carried out the levitation with their feet (their hands were all accounted for). If not convinced, I suggest that the objector and a few friends form a circle of 5 feet diameter around a small stool and see if, while sitting upright and motionless on their chairs, they can lift (let alone *steadily* lift) the stool with their feet to the height of their own heads. A circle of professional contortionists might make an attempt at it, but a circle of ordinary individuals would find it quite impossible, especially when, as in the case in question, four out of the seven sitters were ladies.

Two other equally convincing, though more spectacular experiments, which have often been repeated are as follows :—

EXPERIMENT No. 24. Table on floor upside down. Visitor invited to raise it.

> The ordinary seance-table, weight 10⅜lbs. was used. It was placed on the floor upside down, and a muscular visitor to the circle was asked to catch hold of the legs and to raise it. He was unable to do so. I do not think I have seen anybody yet succeed in this attempt, and I have watched many try. The table seems to be glued to the floor.

EXPERIMENT No. 25. Movements of table with experimenter sitting on it.

> The table was standing on the floor. I sat upon it. The table was slid and jerked about the floor apparently with considerable ease, against obviously fairly large friction forces. I have seen many people other than myself sit upon the table and be thus moved about. A favourite experiment is to ask the visitor to sit steadily upon the table and to wait calmly what shall happen. In a short time, usually inside a minute, the table gently rises on two legs and slides him off to the floor.

A number of experiments were also made to determine whether there was any reaction on the floor under the table when the latter was levitated. At first Dr. Crawford expected to find that the reaction of the floor would be equal to the weight of the table, as would, of course, be the case if it was supported in the air by any sort of pillar or strut.

He finally used a small weighing-machine, whose platform could be adjusted to various heights above the floor level. The results obtained are very remarkable. At 1 inch from the floor there was no reaction whatever registered on the dial of the spring balance. At 3 inches the reading was only ¾ lb. At 5 inches it had enormously increased and was 26 lbs. increasing with height, but not regularly, to a maximum of 38 lbs., when the platform was at 11 inches from the ground. The weight of the table itself was 10 lbs. The maximum steady pressure was therefore more than 3½ times the weight of the table. Space does not permit us to enter into Dr. Crawford's

ingenious and logical explanation of the reason for this great difference. The point which I wish to emphasize, is that here again we have a considerable force exerted on the platform of a weighing-machine, in a position where that force could not possibly have been exerted by normal mechanical means. No one will, I think, have the hardihood to contend that the movements of a pointer on the dial of a weighing-machine, or spring balance, can be an illusion.

The evidence for the objective nature of these phenomena and for their occurrence otherwise than by ordinary physical forces, is so strong, that in spite of our common experience that tables are *not* lifted, or spring balances compressed or extended, without the application of physical force, we are driven towards the conclusion that under certain rare conditions the ordinary laws of gravity are indeed inhibited.

The only logical alternative attitude is to state that results of such wide importance, of such a revolutionary nature, cannot be accepted by the cautious enquirer on the results of one series of experiments however careful and accurate. It must, however, be pointed out that the experiments with Mrs. Williams and Eusapia Pallodino and, in some measure, the records of the results obtained with Home and Stainton Moses, though of very mixed value do yet, in their several degrees, contribute items to the total of evidence so that the cumulative effect is very strong.

In asking for the application of the test of repetition *ad libitum*, the sceptic asks for an impossibility. It is very clear that persons capable of producing

pronounced manifestations of psychic force are very few. Even rarer and more difficult must it be to find persons thus endowed, who are prepared to submit to the inconvenience and strain of lengthy tests without pecuniary recompense. The rarity of a phenomenon is not *per se* any evidence against its occurrence (*vide* p. 4 above).

It may not be out of place to suggest to those who dismiss all "physical" phenomena as fraudulent, that this is hardly a logical action until they have examined, at any rate some portion, of the published records of the investigation of these phenomena.

In this matter as in the case of the evidence for communication with the disembodied or even for telepathy, those who deny these things invariably seem to base their conclusions on the *a priori* grounds of their improbability. Such critics seem to be too impatient to study the very careful and lengthy published reports. Some even go so far as to say, that the "physical" phenomena are so trivial and useless in their objective manifestations, that they do not merit serious consideration. They forget that so trivial a thing as the fall of an apple led Newton to his great generalization and similarly if so trivial a thing as a common table can be lifted without normal physical means, the general truth of such movements as a fact is proved. A fact which may lead to a generalization hardly less profound and cogent than that of the Law of Gravity.

To sum up, we are, I think, justified in accepting two conclusions:

(*a*) That the levitations, movements of articles, etc., are objective and not illusory.

(*b*) That, in some cases, these phenomena are not due to ordinary physical causes but take place in contradiction to the *present* known laws of nature.

Beyond the above acceptances the practical man cannot yet safely go.

Dr. Crawford himself is satisfied that the phenomena are due to " operators " who " are the spirits of human beings which have passed into the Beyond." Certainly, his book gives a vivid impression of a real group of invisible beings who are sensibly and rationally co-operating with the experimenter, and who appear intelligently to understand his requests. In view, however, of present knowledge of the vast potentialities of the subliminal self of a developed sensitive, caution demands that we withhold for the present our acceptance of these disembodied intelligencies.

This is the more necessary since the possibilities of direct psycho-physical interaction have not yet been sufficiently explored. Although this hypothesis was considered and rejected by Prof. Lombroso, yet it can hardly be said that this rejection is final. The power of mind to influence matter without the intervention of muscle is not yet a proved impossibility, Until it is so we can hardly come to a final conclusion as to the existence of these extra-terrene operators.

Since the above was written some evidence has been published by Dr. Hereward Carrington (*Modern Psychical Phenomena*, Cap. 10, Kegan Paul, 1919), summarizing the experiments of Drs. Matla and Zaalburg van Zelst of the Hague. These experiments seem to show that " psychic operators " can indeed affect very delicate apparatus directly without the intervention of a " sensitive." This, if confirmed, will lead to conclusions of the most profound importance.

CHAPTER IV

MATERIALIZATION AND SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

MATERIALIZATION is defined by a well-known spiritualist, Mr. Hewat McKenzie, in his interesting book *Spirit Intercourse*, as the creation of forms representing in appearance the departed, which are used by the departed for the purpose of manifesting themselves on earth and obtaining recognition by their living friends.

The material used for these creations is stated to be psycho-plastic matter, which is drawn from the body of a materializing medium and shaped by spirit operators into a more or less perfect reproduction of the normal earthly appearance of the spirit who is temporarily to inhabit and employ the psycho-plastic creation. Total darkness is essential for these phenomena as light has a rapidly disintegrating effect on the material. If conditions are favourable, and adequate time and care have been given by the "operators," the creations may last without collapsing for some little time.

They are also said to have been photographed, though this is a little difficult to reconcile with the statement that the figures disintegrate in light. Presumably disintegration is not instantaneous, and, if a very rapid exposure is taken by flash-light, the figures will, so to speak, be caught before they have melted much.

alleged materializing mediums have apparently been known in spiritualistic circles, it is significant that there has been only one case in recent years which the S.P.R. have considered sufficiently well vouched for to justify a consideration in its *Proceedings*. This case is that of Marthe Béraud, discussed by Miss Verrall (Mrs. Salter) in (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVII., pp. 333-369). Mlle. Béraud first exhibited these phenomena at the early age of seventeen, in the house of her friend Madame Noel, at Algiers. Prof. Richet investigated these in 1905. His conclusions, which were generally favourable, were the subject of considerable controversy, and in view, both of the fact that full test conditions were not imposed, and also that some circumstantial allegations of fraud were made and never satisfactorily refuted, these earlier experiments cannot be considered evidential.

In 1909 the medium came to Paris and gave sittings to a small private circle under the auspices of M. Alexandre Bisson, a well-known French playwright. Prolonged and careful observations were here carried out by Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing of Munich, who published his results in considerable detail in his *Materialisation Phanomene* (Munich, 1914). The excerpts from this work given in the above-quoted paper show that the test conditions were very rigorous (*loc. cit.*, pp. 347-8, 351-3 and 367). The materialization cabinet, and its only contents, a chair, were thoroughly searched before each sitting. The chair cover even being opened to avoid the possibility of any accessories being therein secreted. The medium was also carefully examined. This examination was of the

most searching nature, carried out by the learned Doctor, assisted on some occasions, by other physicians. The full details cannot be quoted here, but it will suffice to say that concealment of any material on the medium's person was apparently impossible. Further, to dispose of the possibility that the material used in the apparent materializations was concealed in the stomach and produced by "regurgitation," a faculty possessed by some, though very few, persons, an obvious medical test was applied at the conclusion of certain of the sittings, which showed that no foreign matter had been thus concealed. The learned Doctor's tests, though hardly delicate were certainly thorough. After the above-mentioned examination, the medium was clothed in a special close-fitting garment, which was *sewn up* after she had put it on. Finally her head was completely enclosed in a veil of small mesh which was sewn to the neck of the above-mentioned garment. These elaborate precautions must have definitely assured that the medium could not obtain access to any part of her person without breaking the threads by which the garments had been sewn together.

In spite of these precautions, portions of materialized matter, spirit hands and even spirit faces were exhibited. Hallucination of the observers is refuted by the fact that flash-light photographs were taken on many occasions, which confirmed the objectivity of the phenomena.

Mme. Bisson published a complete account of the experiments in her book "*Les Phenomenes dits de Materialization*," (Paris, 1914), which is copiously illustrated with reproductions of these photographs.

The experienced and highly critical authoress of the paper from which I have quoted, finds herself unable to conclude that the phenomena are wholly fraudulent, and, I think, the unbiassed reader must give the same verdict.

If we had a few more records of experiments under similar stringent conditions, we should be driven provisionally to accept " materialization," at any rate in its elementary forms, as a fact. Unfortunately, we have no such records. Accounts of materializations and their cognate phenomena, are, indeed, numerous in the publications of avowed spiritualists, but they are almost invariably valueless as evidence. To any impartial person, who does not permit the " outrageousness " of these phenomena to exclude them from his consideration, this is regrettable. The establishment of materialization, as a fact, would be of such vast importance, not only intrinsically, but by its implications on other departments of psychic research, that it is very disappointing when examining a case, which, on the face of it may have " something in it " to find that its evidential value is nil, owing to the fact that the recorders have omitted such essential particulars as dates, measurements, conditions of light and control, etc. This is as reprehensible as if a physicist were to publish the results of some delicate experiment and omit to record the atmospheric temperature and barometric pressure. Thus, the Ven. Archdeacon Colley recorded a vast number of ostensible marvels in materialization which are perfectly useless as evidence, owing to the omission to note the conditions of the experiments.

We have, therefore, to pass such accounts over as non-evidential, and are not concerned to discuss the *bona fides* of his medium "Dr." Monck. In this connection, I would like to emphasise the fact that our first consideration of any alleged phenomena, should be directed to the evidential value of the phenomena themselves, and not to the reputation, past or present, of the medium producing them. The fact that "Dr." Monck was sentenced to three months imprisonment as a rogue and a vagabond need not concern us.

This method of dealing with the subject of both materialization and physical phenomena, has at least the value of simplicity by avoiding interminable and inconclusive discussions of the *bona fides* of this or that medium. The safe plan is to assume that all manifestations are the result of fraud (conscious or unconscious), unless the records give reasonable proof that the phenomena *could not have been fraudulently produced, even if the medium had tried to do so*, owing to the stringency of the control and the competence of the observers.

It is, perhaps, improbable that we shall ever obtain satisfactory evidential records of advanced materialization phenomena. Spiritualists claim that full psycho-plastic materialization can only take place in darkness. That light should have a disintegrating effect on such formations does not seem unreasonable. Darkness, however, offers an almost insuperable barrier to the application of stringent test conditions. Sir W. Crookes' reports of experiments with Miss Cook (Mrs. Corner) exemplify this.

In regard to "spirit" photography with a camera,

the case is different. The actual phenomenon, the exposure of the plate, necessarily take place in full light. The observations required are simple, namely, thorough examination of the camera, slides, and plates, and continuous supervision in the studio and developing room. It should not be difficult to impose conditions which would render substitution of plates, double exposure, or trickery in development impossible. We do not, however, find any evidence of spirit photography which is supported by records of satisfactory and decisive precautions.

These precautions are even easier to carry out in the case of photographs purporting to be obtained, not by exposure in a camera, but by direct impression on one or more plates in an unopened packet. In such cases, it should be a very simple matter to obtain ample independent verification of the fact that the packet had never been opened from the time it left the shop where it was purchased, to the time when it was opened in the developing-room.

The Rev. Prof. Henslow (*Proofs of the Truths of Spiritualism*, 1919), records several cases of "direct impression" For one case the evidence is, as far as it goes, so good that it is a thousand pities that the Rev. Professor did not make it conclusive by taking a little more trouble. He describes (*loc. cit.*, p. 228-9) how he sent an unopened packet of plates to a seance, and received it back, apparently unopened, with a psychograph (given in facsimile in Fig. 48 of the above work) impressed upon it.

> "Not being able to attend the seance at Crewe, I sent the packet just as it was bought, but with tape wrapped round it, and sealed on the end

and sides. After a week Mr. Hope returned it intact; for I found it exactly as I had sent it. There was not the slightest indication of the seals having been tampered with, etc. I at once took it to a professional photographer and asked him if the packet had been opened. He was good enough to write me the following certificate.—'I am quite satisfied that these plates have not been opened or tampered with in any way. H.L.Y.'—(This was subsequently corroborated by the manager of a leading firm of photographers in London). He allowed me to accompany him to his dark chamber, and I there informed him all about it. He procured fresh materials for development. I cut the cover across the middle and so could remove the two ends. Taking out the first parcel of four slides, I developed the third plate only. The message was on it.

A letter from Mr. Hope on returning the unopened packet of plates to me, was as follows:—

Dear Sir,—We are sending you the packet and hope there is something on the plates, although we have to chance it. Please send word as soon as you can as we are anxious about it.

Our guide says they have tried to impress the third plate from the top."

If only the Rev. Professor had submitted the packet for examination by the same two independent witnesses *before* he despatched it and had caused it to be sealed and marked by them in such a manner that to have opened and reclosed the packet, or to

have substituted another packet for it, would have been impossible, and if he had put his own and his witnesses' attestations on records in writing *before* despatch, the evidence would have been unimpeachable. As it is, a good ship is lost for a ha'porth of tar. The proof of the power of some external influence thus to impress a message—an impossibility by any present known form of radiation—would carry us some way towards the acceptance of psychoplastic materialization as a fact.

No suggestion is made that the application of rigorous tests and adequate verification has been avoided by Prof. Henslow or by other Spiritualists who have vouched for such phenomena. It is, however, submitted that some carelessness is exhibited in this failure both to apply, and to record in full detail, all necessary precautions. Convinced Spiritualists appear to exhibit a certain impatience at the demand for purely mundane, and to them trifling, details of verification. They should not, however, allow their own implicit faith in the reality of these phenomena to cause them to omit tests and verifications which (though for themselves unnecessary) may both strengthen the feeble knees of the weaker brethren and confound the sceptical. Let them remember that in psychical research, as in science in general, *paroles d'honneur* have, as G. H. Lewes said, no appreciable weight.

I think there can be little doubt, that the only reasonable conclusion which can be reached in regard to Materialization and its cognate phenomena, is that the present evidence is inadequate to permit of their acceptance as proved facts. Further,

that the great part of the so-called evidence which is put forward for these phenomena is of no serious value. It is, however, permissible to hope that other materializing mediums may before long be investigated with the same care as in the case of Marthe Béraud. Even a definitely negative conclusion would be of great value as it would clear the ground. The path of psychical research is undoubtedly impeded by the presence of these unproved, but yet not definitely disproved, phenomena.

It must be noted that Dr. Hereward Carrington, a most cautious and experienced investigator, gives (*Modern Psychical Phenomena* Cap. 8, Kegan Paul, 1919) some examples of "spirit" and "thought" photographs for which the evidence is of considerable strength. Although Dr. Carrington does not commit himself to any definite theory of their origin, he is obviously satisfied that they are not to be explained away by fraud, carelessness, or any similar simple cause.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNICATION WITH THE DISEMBODIED. THE METHODS

Before considering the evidence for Communication with the disembodied, it is necessary, briefly, to enumerate the means and agencies by, or through which the alleged communications are received.

These agencies are human. The alleged communications are translated by human beings, with or without some simple mechanism.

Human agents have, obviously, the power—consciously or unconsciously—to fabricate certain communications.

If it can be shown that the communications are, throughout of such a nature that they could have been thus fabricated, or if, *a fortiori*, there is a reasonable suspicion that the agents have had, not only the power, but the will, to deceive; the case for communication with the disembodied through such channels, must fail.

If on the other hand, it is found that there are verifiable records which cannot be explained by conscious or unconscious deception, or by telepathic communication from the embodied, we have, thereby, evidence pointing towards proof of veridical communications. Evidence which is cumulative, increasing in value with the increase in number of such records.

The methods by which all the records, which are worthy of serious attention, have been received fall into two groups.

Firstly, those which have been obtained through the operation of the physiological mechanism of persons in a general state of normal consciousness employing some rudimentary apparatus, to which apparatus the appropriate name of *Autoscopes* has been given.

Secondly, those received through persons, "Mediums," not in a state of normal consciousness, but to a greater or less degree in a state of trance. The communications being given by word of mouth or by automatic writing.

The former division includes several methods which, although the same as to the general mechanism of translation, yet differ in detail. They are as follows:—

AUTOMATIC WRITING. The percipient writes in the ordinary manner, but the motion of his hand is not normally controlled by him. He exercises no conscious volition as to what is being written. Sometimes this absence of conscious control—which must otherwise be accepted chiefly on the Automatist's own statements—receives striking and positive confirmation. Thus the writing may come "upside down" starting at the bottom right-hand corner of the page, as if the pencil was being worked by someone sitting *opposite* to the writer, Or in the other cases, the words are actually inverted and "looking-glass writing" which can only be deciphered by reflection in a mirror, is obtained (C.F. Barrett *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 191).

These latter phenomena, coupled with the fact that the great majority of these automatic records

are not the products of professional mediums, but of persons, of some consideration, who could have had no ulterior motives to lead them to embark on a course of deliberate deception, justify us in accepting them as being, as they purpose to be, the result of no *conscious* effort of the Automatists' will.

THE PLANCHETTE. We have next writing produced by this well-known apparatus. Its general form is a small three-legged platform. Two legs are provided with small rollers or otherwise so arranged as to move with a minimum of friction. The third leg carries a pencil which traces the movements of the apparatus over a large sheet of paper. The Planchette is, in effect, only a pencil so arranged that it can be simultaneously controlled by the fingers of several persons.

THE OUIJA BOARD. This is a similar but superior piece of apparatus. The moveable portion is similar to the Planchette except that the pencil is replaced by a plain indicating point. It traverses over a sheet of glass, or other smooth surface, to, or under, which are fixed the various letters of the Alphabet. Communications are spelt out by recording the various letters at which the indicator pauses in its peregrinations. The record is taken down by some other person than the operators, who in many cases, as in the experiments recorded by Sir Wm. Barrett (*op. cit.*, p. 177-180), are blindfolded and, in addition, in some trials, an opaque screen was held over the board. If, as in these experiments, the operators cannot follow with their eyes the movements of the indicator, it seems certain that there can be no conscious guidance by them. Especially

is this the case when, as in some of these trials, the positions of the various letters under the glass sheet were, from time to time, changed so that the operators could have derived no help from a mental picture of the positions of the letters (as a blindfolded chess expert can retain in his mind the position of the pieces on a chess-board).

TABLE TILTING. This is a crude, but apparently effective method for the translation of short and simple communications. It is, in effect, an adaption of the long familiar phenomenon of " table turning " to the transmission of intelligible and coherent messages.

The method is quite simple. The Alphabet is called over letter by letter. The table is observed to tilt as certain letters are called. These letters are noted down and connected words and sentences are often found to result.

Questions are also asked by the sitters which admit of a direct reply " yes," or " no." This reply is received by a predetermined number of tilts or movements of the table for " yes " or " no." A conversation can, therefore, be carried on much as one might communicate with a dumb, and partially paralysed man, who could but nod or shake his head when questions were put to him, or letters of the alphabet called over.

Contact between the hands of the medium and the table is generally maintained during these communications but there are apparently cases where movements resulting in connected messages have taken place without physical contact.

In regard to the possibility of conscious deception,

the table method is certainly less satisfactory than either of the two autoscopes above referred to. In the hands of a single professional operator the possibility of deliberate fraud cannot be eliminated. When, however, as in many cases, for example the table sittings reported in *Raymond*, or in *The Great Beyond and its Inhabitants* (Kegan Paul, 1919), the movements of the table are under the joint control of several persons of integrity, any imputation of conscious fraud would be unreasonable.

It will be observed that by the above classification the phenomenon of "direct writing," *i.e.*, the reception of written messages by other means than the hands of human beings is excluded.

This exclusion is justified by the fact that such communications are distinctly suspect.

The principal "direct" method was slate writing referred to in a previous chapter.

There is one interesting record of an attempt at writing by a pencil not held in any human hand (*vide* Sir W. Barrett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 84).

The medium was the famous Daniel Douglas Home and the recorder Sir W. Crookes, who says :—

> "A pencil and some pieces of paper were lying on the table. Presently the pencil rose, on its point and after advancing by hesitating jerks to the paper, fell down. It then rose and again fell, and tried a third time with no better result. After this a small wooden lath, which was lying on the table slid towards the pencil and rose a few inches from the table. The pencil rose again, and propping itself against the lath, the two together made an

effort to mark the paper. It fell and then a joint effort was again made. After a third trial they gave it up and an alphabet message told us 'We have tried to do as you asked but our power is exhausted.'"

The reader will probably agree that, here also, the conjuror's art will account for everything (*vide* p. 52 above).

Enough has, I think, been said to warrant the conclusion that we can, in general, accept the communications received by automatic writing or by the autoscopes above described, as being free from the imputation of conscious fraud.

Many people would say that no such assumption can safely be made in the case of communications received through professional trance mediumship, but that, on the contrary, it can be safely assumed that conscious fraud is, to a greater or less degree, invariably to be imputed to "paid mediums."

Such an opinion is natural. We have seen in the previous chapters that professional mediumship has been prominently associated with many dubious manifestations of the physical phenomena of spiritualism. We have also seen that many of the men and women who have purported to exhibit such phenomena have been detected in the employment of nothing more transcendental than the methods of the ordinary conjuror or illusionist.

Present day professional mediumship has to suffer for the sins of its predecessors and the rain of suspicion falls both on the just and the unjust.

The stigma attaching to the word "paid" is also not entirely groundless.

There is, no doubt, no intrinsic reason why a medium should not receive payment for his, or her, services. If spiritualism is, as is sometimes, though erroneously, claimed "A New Gospel," it is in accordance with precedent that "they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

The evil of payment in mediumship lies in the fact that the payer expects to receive tangible and immediate value for his money. The power of mediumship, whatever it may, or may not be, is most certainly erratic and largely spontaneous. Physical and psychical atmosphere appear to have an enormous influence.

In Automatic Writing, for example, Mrs. Verrall and other automatists, of careful observation, have invariably told us that the impulse to write is not in their control, that they cannot write "to order" but only when they receive an affect from the external constraining them so to do.

It is clear, therefore, that even if a professional medium is, at times, able to achieve genuine communication with the disembodied, the nature and time of communication will be largely outside his control. He cannot get *en rapport* to order. Meanwhile there is a prospective sitter with a fee, and the medium has either to turn him away, both losing the fee, and also imparing his reputation as a ready practitioner of the occult, or else he has to take the fee and give value for it by a communication which is merely a fraudulent concoction. What wonder that he sometimes chooses the latter course of action.

A discussion of the *bona fides* of professional mediums could lead to no positive result, but by the

almost interminable process of exhaustively considering the credentials of each medium separately. A simple and safe solution of the question is to exclude altogether, as suspect, any records giving information which could reasonably have been obtained by the medium through normal channels of information.

For example :—A sitter is known to a medium either by previous visits, or in virtue of his being a person more or less well-known in public, or spiritualist circles. The sitter receives a communication purporting to emanate from a recently deceased relative. The communication states accurately many ordinary facts regarding the deceased, his name, place of previous residence and interment, age, cause and date of death, and so forth. It is a reasonable assumption that such particulars, which could have been readily obtained from an obituary notice in the Press, have been thus obtained, and, hence, that the communication is nothing more than a *rechauffe* of information obtained through normal channels.

If, on the other hand, the sitter is really unknown to the medium, if the communication purports to come from a long deceased relative who had died abroad, or concerning whose life and decease information would obviously be inaccessible, if the information given is approximately correct, the assumption is justified that the trance consciousness of the medium is really at work and is giving a *bona fide* translation of the affects received upon it.

It must, however, be again repeated that this does not necessarily imply that the communication emanates from the intelligence who purports to communicate.

If, as generally must be the case, the information given is within the knowledge of the sitter the hypothesis of telepathy cannot be passed over.

The application of the criterion suggested above effects a large reduction in the material to be examined. Such a line of demarcation may indeed exclude some veridical matter. The fact that information may have been accessible to a medium through normal channels, does not necessarily prove that he has, in fact, employed these channels to obtain it. It is, however, obviously the safer course to cut away all dead wood even though in the process, some live shoots may also be severed.

We need, however, to exercise some restraint in our decision as to whether information is, or is not, likely to have been accessible to the medium through normal channels.

It would be unreasonable to credit any medium with access to a body of information approaching in magnitude and detail the records of, say, the Criminal Investigation Department, or a modern Commercial Information Bureau, in their respective spheres.

Reference is, indeed, often made to a supposititious International Information Bureau for Mediums. It has been freely premised that such an organization exists for the collection and dissemination of information regarding those who consult, or who are likely to consult, professional mediums.

The probability of the existence of such an organization has, however, been greatly discounted by the existence of the Censorship during the past War, and to the well-known fact that the police, during

that period, undoubtedly kept a special surveillance over those practising professional mediumship owing to the often cosmopolitan connections of such practitioners. If, therefore, any such Central Clearing House for information existed it is a reasonable assumption that its activities would have been greatly restricted, if not reduced to nothingness, during the past War.

We find, however, that never during any period of the history of spiritualism was there such activity.

The cause of that activity has been the exceptional desire for communication with the dead, owing to the appalling loss of life among all classes of the community. It would seem that, if the professional practitioners of mediumship were dependent for their information upon a central clearing house, the activities of which owing to the War conditions were suspended, they would have been in a very poor position to satisfy the desires of their clients. We find, however, that never before have so many persons stated that they have received satisfactory assurance of messages from the departed, as during the last two years of the War.

How far such assurance is the result of receptive anticipation is another matter. The point now taken is simply that the experiences of the last two or three years seem decidedly to negative the likelihood of the existence of any "Central Information Bureau."

We have, I hope, arrived at an approximate criterion for the elimination of information acquired through ordinary channels by a medium *before* a sitting. This does not, however, dispose of all openings for conscious fraud.

There are means by which a medium can obtain considerable information from the sitter, or sitters, during the progress of a voice sitting (I refer entirely to information obtained by the exercise of the normal senses, and not by telepathy).

It is always difficult to be sure that the supposed trance condition of a medium is genuine and, further, some practitioners do not even profess to be entranced. The medium has, therefore, obvious facilities for using his or her wits. The study of the expression of the sitter, muscle reading, and that kind of progressive guessing appropriately termed "fishing," are all ready means for obtaining information. Especially if the sitter is likely to repeat his visit to the medium, information acquired at one sitting can be produced at the next, as if entirely spontaneous, with great effect, as the sitter will generally have forgotten that the information had been previously obtained from him.

Several good examples of "fishing" will be found in an account by Mr. Rogers (*Evening Standard*, March 13th, 1919), of a sitting with "Mrs. B." a medium strongly recommended to him by Sir A. Conan Doyle.

When trying to give the name of a deceased friend lately passed away she tried successively "Elizabeth, Eliza, Bessie, Tess, Nell, Nellie." All of which were wrong.

Later on, after describing with only moderate accuracy a deceased brother of the sitter, she ran through an even longer catalogue of names. Edgar, Eddie, Teddie, Jeff, Jack, Harold, Donald, Ronald, Walter, Walters, Harry. There is a fair possibility

that a list of this length may contain the right name, or something like it. If so, most people, unless they have an exceptional command of their expression, are likely to give some faint, but appreciable, intimation when the correct name is called out.

Where as in some cases the medium holds the hand of the sitter "Muscle reading" is a powerful aid. The performances which Mr. Capper and Mr. Stewart Cumberland have rendered familiar, show how definite are the indications which an expert in the matter can detect by unconscious muscular movements. The absolutely unconsciousness of such muscular direction will be shown by an enquiry from anyone who has assisted at one of these demonstrations. The answer received will always be that no conscious indication whatever was given to the performer.

The possibilities of unconscious indications are considerable. As Podmore says (*Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 300):—"The effort to concentrate thought on a concrete object tends constantly to produce some form of muscular activity . . . or movement in the direction of the object."

Enough has now been said to show that, without going beyond the ordinary laws of nature, an explanation can be offered for many of the alleged communications with the disembodied.

The above remarks do not apply to communications received through mediums such as Mrs. Piper, where the observers have been persons of wide experiences with a full knowledge of the possible errors and so situated that they could guard against them.

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CHAPTER VI

COMMUNICATION WITH THE DISEMBODIED. THE EVIDENCE

The amount of published matter, evidential or otherwise, bearing on the weighty question of communication with the departed is enormous and apparently still increasing. It is, obviously, impossible within the confines of available space to deal with the evidence in any detail. All that can be attempted is to give a summary and an estimate of the value of the evidence for communication as it now stands. In this department of psychic research events move not slowly. It is therefore possible that conclusions which, to-day, are justified, may become, to-morrow, unduly timid owing to new evidence.

The communications may be divided into two classes.

Firstly, the very large number of messages which have been received by some automatic means, generally writing, and which have been copiously published during the last few years. Such communications purport to describe, often in great detail, the experiences of those who have passed over. They seldom contain anything in the nature of tests and are hence, intrinsically, not evidential. They are, however, interesting in themselves, and the general correspondence in the accounts of life in

"The Beyond" received through the hands of various perfectly independent automatists is striking. I venture to think that it is well that such communications should attain publicity, as far as may be convenient, in the form in which they are received. The winnowing of the chaff from the wheat, the discrimination between what has emanated from the subliminal of the automatist, and what may have been originated by extra-terrene intelligences, is a matter for experts, certainly not for the automatists themselves. The comparison and analysis of these numerous records will be a labour for some future Hercules of the S.P.R.

Although these records may not provide direct evidence they do undoubtedly, and not improperly, create a general atmosphere in favour of the possibility of communication from the dead, as Prof. William James said (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVII., p. 35):—

> "The notion that such an immense current of experience, complex in so many ways, should spell out absolutely nothing but the words "intentional humbug" appears very unlikely. The notion that so many men and women, in all other respects honest enough, should have this preposterous monkeying self annexed to their personality, seems to me so weird that the spirit theory immediately takes on a more probable appearance. The spirits, if spirits there be, must indeeed work under incredible complications and falsifications, but at least, if they are present, some honesty is left in a whole department of the universe, which, otherwise, is run

by pure deception. The more I realise the quantitative massiveness of the phenomenon and its complexity, the more incredible it seems to me that in a world all of whose vaster features we are in the habit of considering to be *sincere* at least, however brutal, this feature should be wholly constituted of insincerity."

Although it may be anticipated that comparison and analysis of these records may ultimately contribute to the proof of communication with the disembodied, yet in their present "unsorted" condition, they do not furnish definite evidence of a kind which can be brought forward in the practical discussion of the subject which is herein attempted.

For this we must turn to the smaller but yet considerable number of communications which have been submitted to searching analysis and detailed comparison by various highly critical and fully qualified members of the S.P.R., both in England and America.

The reader who wishes to arrive at a reasoned conclusion on the subject, and who is prepared to devote some little time and trouble to achieve this end, must be referred to the original papers, notably, amongst recent contributions, those by Mrs. Sidgwick, Mrs. Verrall, Miss Johnson, The Rt. Hon. G. W. Balfour, Sir O. Lodge, Sir Wm. Barrett, Mr. Piddington and Prof. William James, which will be found in the *S.P.R. Proceedings* from Vol. XX. up to the present date.

He will not fail to be impressed by the impartiality of the analysis and the absence of anything in the nature of special pleading or the straining of facts to fit an extra-normal hypothesis.

The first need is to arrive at a clear idea as to the kind of communications which can be considered as evidential. Assuming that there is a disembodied intelligence desirous of communicating with a living person, how can he afford proof of the authenticity of the communications received by the latter? Here, I think, there is much popular misconception. The casual thinker would tell us that if the departed can communicate, it would be easy for them to do so in a manner which would admit of no ambiguity. Further reflection will show that this is by no means the case.

If a dead person can communicate with us in the present time he must obviously exist in the present time, therefore he must give proof of his existence at the time when he sends his message. How is any communication to give a proof that it does as it purports, emanate *in present time* from a definite person who has once lived on this earth? He can tell us of his past or his present life. He can also foretell as to the future. Foretellings are not evidence at the time as they obviously cannot be checked. A good deal of prophesying, of a mild description, has been done through some mediums. The predictions, however, have generally proved to be wrong. Further, many communicators state that they have no power to foretell the future, and, at most, they are but able to give a slightly better prognosis of coming events owing to the fact that in their disembodied condition they can discern the motives and tendencies leading to events somewhat more clearly than we can.

In regard to the *present*, communicators have given lengthy descriptions of their present existence.

These also are non-evidential as we on earth cannot obviously in any way verify the correctness of these descriptions. In regard to the descriptions of the After-life of which so many have recently appeared, it is necessary to point out that, although they are non-evidential, they must not be permitted to induce an *a priori* antagonism against the consideration of messages which are. Much prejudice has been imported into the discussion of this matter because so many of these descriptions of the life beyond are both so different from the traditional ideas of the After-life, and also contain matter which appears essentially mundane. It should always be remembered that any such communication is an endeavour to describe the transcendental in finite terms, and in language which is drawn from the storage of ideas of the automatist or medium who is transmitting the message. If the future life as depicted, for example, through the trance mediumship of Mrs. Piper is vastly different from that described in the Apocalypse, it is permissable to speculate that the latter is confined exclusively to the highest plans of the After-life, (as St. Paul specificially calls it, in regard to his visions, the "third heaven") while the former are the experiences of those who are very far from having reached a state of spiritual development fitting them for entry to the highest Heavens. There must be few, even amongst the most orthodox Christians, who have not reached a belief that there is progress and development on the other side of "the veil," and that the After-life is a life of action not of coma. For a careful and definitely scriptual discussion of the subject from the Anglo-Catholic

point of view, the reader may be confidently referred to the works of the Rev. Arthur Chambers, notably "*Ourself After Death*" (Chas. Taylor, 1916).

It is, therefore, to be hoped that no reader will adopt the illogical attitude that because the descriptions of the After-life received through a certain medium are apparently ridiculous, therefore all communications received through the same or similar channels are unworthy of serious consideration.

This attitude is, however, not uncommon. How often was it remarked in regard to "*Raymond*" that it must be "all rubbish," because the descriptions received through the "Feda" control were so trivial, frivolous and even irreverent. How often did one see the famous "whiskey and soda" episode (*Loc. Cit.*, p. 198) quoted by reviewers, who should have known better, as justifying the wholesale dismissal of the book as a mass of useless rubbish.

Objection might, indeed, have properly been taken to the inclusion of such unverifiable matter in a book which would obviously be widely read by the general public to many of whom, it may have been their first introduction to the subject. Sir O. Lodge was careful to point out that he did not regard much of this matter as being any more than the creation of the medium's subconscious mentality, based on what she had read elsewhere in spiritualist literature. Unfortunately many people do not seem, as is so often the case, to have paid attention to these qualifying remarks.

It was remarked above that the sifting of such communications was a matter for an expert. In the case of so experienced an investigator as Sir O. Lodge

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knowledge and hence inadequate evidence, while the description of some trivial and personal matter such a message as " I am ' B ' who used to be so fond of gooseberry jam," would, if verified, be almost convincing evidence, as it would neither be common knowledge nor would it be accessible to anyone in America, who had obtained the correspondence or diary of " B," and was, for his own ends, simulating him.

Perhaps this crude illustration may serve to show that the triviality that is so often alleged as a reproach against the communication is, in reality, a feature which strengthens them from the evidential point of view.

Most of us, if placed in a similar situation to the above, would, I think, have no little difficulty in selecting from our past experience, as known to our distant friend, some item of unimpeachable evidential value. It is not, therefore, surprising that disembodied communicators, who must be working under great difficulty and confusion, should not find it easy to give direct and convincing authentication of the messages which they endeavour to transmit.

Before proceeding further, it may be well to explain, for the benefit of any reader new to the subject, some matters which may not be familiar.

In the usual communication through a medium in a state of trance the *modus operandi* appears to be as follows :—

We have first the disembodied intelligence who originates the message, called the *communicator*. He does not generally actually operate the voice or hand of the medium. This work is the function of the

control, also a disembodied intelligence, who receives the message from the communicator and impresses it on the *medium* by whom it is given out, either by word of mouth or by automatic writing. Sometimes the communicator himself controls, but the usual arrangement seems to be that the medium, often called by the disembodied the "light" or the "machine," is worked by the control, since he is supposed to have more skill and experience in manipulating the machine than the ordinary spirit.

The communicator on the other side has, therefore, to use an intermediary much as the sitter on this side has to employ a medium or sensitive. The control does not appear to be in any other respect analagous to the medium. He is in effect the operator who works the machine when its consciousness is withdrawn. The controls of Mrs. Piper, whose mediumship is dealt with below, give circumstantial descriptions of the method in which she is, so to speak, removed entirely from her own body when in trance, the controls stepping into her place and working her physiological mechanism.

In this connection the records of Mrs. Piper's return to consciousness after trance are significant. Mrs. Sidgwick attached considerable importance to this "waking stage" and devoted some little space to its analysis (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVIII., pp. 205-255).

A convenient abbreviation has been adopted to indicate a certain communicator using a certain automatist Thus we indicate Myers communicating through Mrs. Piper as Myers_{P}, Gurney through Mrs. Holland as Gurney_{H}.

This is not the place to discuss at length whether the controls are really what they purport to be, or whether they are creations of the subliminal of the medium, in effect multiple personalities. The reader of the detailed records of Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship, will, however, certainly be struck with the distinction and consistency of the various controls.

During the many years that "Phinuit" controlled, he was always consistent with himself and never mixed in personality with others. "George Pelham" was the same. "Rector" (said to be the spirit of a deceased clergyman who controlled the hand of Stainton Moses and was the ostensible author of most of the "Spirit teachings") had a distinct and definitely religious personality. Hodgson, Myers, Gurney, and Sidgwick, who have all purported to communicate, and control, since their decease, were also most lifelike and distinct impersonations, if impersonations they were. So shrewd an observer as Prof. William James was strongly impressed with the personality of the Hodgson control. The characteristics, mannerisms, tricks of speech, etc., with which, as a very old friend of Hodgson, he had been so familiar when the latter was living, were frequently reproduced in the communications. The reader of the written record, cannot, of course, get any idea of this intangible, yet cogent, atmosphere. We are, however, if impartial, constrained to attach some weight to the considered opinion of so eminently cautious a thinker as Prof. James (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIII., pp. 1-121).

Even when, as in Mrs. Piper's later trances, communications were received not by word of mouth but

of the message. If, on the other hand, the subject matter of the message was unknown, and could not have been known, to the medium it is *prima facie* evidential.

Numerous messages which comply with the above conditions have been recorded by many independent and critical observers.

The records of Mrs. Piper's mediumship alone contain examples which are quantitively and qualitively sufficient to take us no little way towards proof. The outstanding importance of the Piper records lies in the fact that this medium has been under the continuous observation of numerous independent skilled investigators for many years, most of whom were initially definitely sceptical.

This fact gives special evidential value to these records for the following reasons :—

FIRSTLY. The records are very considerable in extent, *e.g.*, in the Proceedings of the (English) S.P.R. alone large portions of Vols. VI., VII., XIII., XIV., XV., XVI., XXII., XXIII., XXIV., and the whole of Vol. XXVIII., are devoted to them. Their comparison and analysis has been carried out with immense care. Thus treated, the great extent of these records both in length and time, does undoubtedly assist the reader towards a balanced view of the subject, somewhat as the continuous observation of the growth of a rare specimen would be more valuable to a botanist than isolated and discontinuous observations by various persons on various specimens.

SECONDLY. The possibility of conscious and deliberate fraud is eliminated. It would be absurd to

suppose that, during so many years of observation by competent and often sceptical investigators, such fraud, if it existed, would not have been soon detected. The hypothesis of fraud is not one which any reasonable person, even after a casual perusal of the records, can support.

THIRDLY. Continuous observation (and it should be remembered that practically all Mrs. Piper's sittings were supervised by some member of the S.P.R. in England or America), makes it comparatively easy definitely to decide whether any information communicated could, or could not, have been within the medium's normal knowledge. In cases where mediums are employed more or less casually, the extent of their normal knowledge must be uncertain. In the case of Mrs. Piper, however, where her " goings out and comings in " were practically under continuous observation, the boundaries of her normal knowledge could be fairly accurately defined.

The history of Mrs. Piper's mediumship has been briefly as follows :—

Her first trance experience was in June, 1884.

Her earliest and chief control was the famous " Phinuit " who purported to be a deceased French physician.

Prof. W. James came across Mrs. Piper in 1885, and brought her to Dr. Hodgson's notice in 1887. From that date up to Hodgson's death in December, 1905, she was under almost continuous observation by the S.P.R. American Branch, represented, for most of the period, by Hodgson himself, who arranged Mrs. Piper's sittings, and was present as recorder

at most of them. Professors Romaine Newbold, James, and Hyslop took part, or recorded, in a substantial number of sittings. These records were of the most careful and detailed description. During the above period Mrs. Piper visited England in 1889-90. Here she held nearly a hundred sittings, arranged by the English S.P.R., in which various leading members took part, notably: Mrs. Sidgwick, Sir O. Lodge, Mr. Myers and Mr. Walter Leaf.

After Hodgson's death the detailed observations which he had carried out came to a close, though a number of sittings were arranged and recorded by Prof. James and to a less degree by Prof. Newbold.

Mrs. Piper visited England twice more, in 1906-7 and 1910-11. It was during the latter visit that her trance mediumship came to an end (July 31st, 1911). The account of this last trance is impressive (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVIII., pp. 514-7).

In regard to the *modus operandi* of the communications, Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship may be divided into two parts. In the earlier period up to about 1897, communication was by word of mouth, the chief control being "Phinuit." Under his control the going into trance was a rather unpleasant proceeding, there was often much muscular effort and facial contortion. In 1897 the chief control passed from "Phinuit" to the "Imperator Band," ostensibly the same entities as those who had inspired Stainton Moses. The Band consisted of four spirits: "Imperator" (the chief), "Rector," who was almost invariably the actual control and carried out the necessary executive functions on "the other side" at the sittings, "Doctor" and "Prudens," who

played subordinate parts. On the advent of the new controls the process of passing into trance lost its disagreeable features and resembled only falling into a deep sleep. A more important change was, that instead of communication being made by the voice, automatic writing became the regular method, although a few "voice" sittings were interpolated. This change certainly facilitated investigation. The possibility of misreporting, always a factor at a voice sitting if a stenographer is not employed, was eliminated and the original script was always available for comparison with the transcriptions, if required.

Space does not permit me to quote any of the Piper records in full. It is, however, necessary to give brief abstracts of those typical evidential records which by means of their simplicity can be thus dealt with. These are by no means the best from an evidential point of view, but the longer records are generally complicated so that no abridgement of reasonable length can present them fairly. The impressiveness of the evidence certainly loses much by compression. I hope therefore, that the interested reader may be led to turn to the original sources which are easily accessible. Three messages from the Hodgson control might first be taken.

Richard Hodgson died on December 20th, 1905. He had for many years before his death been actively engaged in psychical research and for a long time had been the mainspring of the American Branch of the S.P.R.

The first message came through Mrs. Piper, eight days after his death, on December 28th, 1905. The incident now to be related occurred at a sitting

a month later on January 29th, 1906. The sitter was a very old friend of Hodgson's, a Mrs. "Lyman," who some years previously had given him a signet ring of somewhat unusual design. After Hodgson's death the donor had made enquiries of his executors in regard to the ring, but it could not be found amongst his effects. The gift of the ring was otherwise unknown to anyone except the donor and the recipient.

At this sitting the Hodgson control described the ring accurately and gave the date when he received it (quite unknown to the medium). The sitter told the control that the ring could not be found. At a subsequent sitting the control gave the following message by the hand of Mrs. Piper. [Hodgson died of heart failure when playing tennis at the Club.]

> "I had the ring on my finger when I started for the club. I recall putting it in my waistcoat pocket, I did so because it hurt my finger when playing."

The ring was actually found later in the very same waistcoat. (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIII., pp. 13-16).

Another incident also of the "gooseberry jam" description, but highly evidential, was as follows :—

The sitter was Mrs. W. James, on June 12th, 1906. The sitter asked :—

> "Do you remember what happened in our library one night when you were arguing with Margie (Mrs. James' sister)?" At once the medium's fist was shaken threateningly and these words came.
>
> "Yes, I did this in her face. I could not help it. She was so impossible to move. It was wrong of me, but I couldn't help it."

The incident was absolutely correct. Hodgson had become exasperated with the lady in an argument, and had at length shaken his fist at her.

The incident could not have been known to Mrs. Piper. Furthermore, it is valuable evidentially, because the answer was so completely unusual. It is certainly a very uncommon incident for a gentleman to shake his fist in a lady's face, at least in the class of society to which the persons in question belonged. A medium guessing at a reply would have thought of something less improbable (*loc. cit.*, p. 109).

Another incident is short enough to be quoted. It occurred on February 7th, 1906, a Miss Pope being the sitter (*loc. cit.*, p. 111).

> Hodgson: Do you remember a story I told you about my old friend, Sidgwick? Don't you remember how I imitated him?
>
> Miss P.: What about Sidgwick?
>
> H.: I imitated him.
>
> Miss P.: What did you do?
>
> H.: I said s-s-s-should-be i-n th-e ter-i-c-k.
>
> Miss P.: I remember perfectly, that's fine.
>
> H.: No one living could know this but yourself and Mary Bergman.
>
> (It was most interesting to see the hand write these words, to imitate stuttering, and then for the first time it flashed over me what he had some time ago told Mary Bergman and me about Sidgwick, imitating at the same time Sidgwick's stammer. "H-Hodgson, if you b-b-believe in it, you'll b-be said to be in the t-trick." I cannot quote the exact words, but this is nearly right.

Sidgwick referred to Hodgson's belief that he was actually communicating, through Mrs. Piper, with spirits. He meant that people not only would not believe what Hodgson gave as evidence. but would think he was in collusion with Mrs. Piper.—T.P.)

Another spoonful of "gooseberry jam," but good evidence, being an incident quite unknown to the medium.

I may also quote a portion of what is known as the "Isaac Thompson" case (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 162-198). The quotation is but an abstract of one episode and must be understood as such, the whole case is highly evidential but, as will be appreciated, far too long for quotation.

Mr. Isaac Thompson, F.L.S., was head of a large firm of wholesale druggists at Liverpool, he died on November 6th, 1903. His son, Edwin Thompson, had occasion to visit America on business in December, 1905. He took with him an introduction to Dr. Hodgson. The latter arranged for him to sit with Mrs. Piper on December 11th, 1905, introducing him as a stranger. It will be obvious that Mrs. Piper could have no normal knowledge of the family of a man paying a short business visit to America for the first time. Nor had Dr. Hodgson any knowledge of Mr. Edwin Thompson's family or affairs. The sitting held on the above date was evidentially a failure. No further sitting was attended by Edwin Thompson, as he had to sail for England immediately.

At the next sitting held by Dr. Hodgson, two days later, the deceased Isaac Thompson purported to

communicate and gave some authentic details as described below. The value of the evidence is greatly increased by the fact that Edwin Thompson was not present, since the information could not have been acquired by telepathy from the sitters. The communicator gave a number of facts about his life. Thus he stated, in Mrs. Piper's script, that his business was in Drugs at Liverpool. That he had one son and three daughters, one named Agnes. That his wife wore spectacles, and other details. When the record of the sittings was sent to England all these statements were found to be correct. In fact, there was nothing in the record which was wrong.

Possibly a reader new to the subject may think that there is "too much Piper" in the S.P.R. records, that a case which rests so largely on the results obtained with one medium must be a bad one.

It may be answered, Firstly, that the number of genuine and developed trance mediums is obviously small. Secondly, that among such it is very difficult to find any who, if professional, are prepared to devote their gifts to the service of psychical research for a remuneration smaller than they would obtain as "general practitioners," or if non-professional can give the time needed. Thirdly, that it is even more difficult to obtain competent and skilled observers to undertake the lengthy and tedious business of continuously supervising the sittings of a medium.

Psychical research will not readily find another Hodgson who is prepared to devote the best years of his life to such an exacting and thankless task.

As above explained, continuous supervision by one competent observer renders the records far more valuable than those of discontinuous observations by different, though equally skilled investigators.

It should, however, be mentioned, that Dr. Hyslop conducted, after Hodgson's death, a connected series of experiments with a medium (non-professional) known as Mrs. "Chenoweth," through whom some very evidential records have been obtained. The "Tausch" case is among these, and may be briefly summarized.

Dr. Hyslop received a letter from a lady in Germany unknown to him, who had recently lost her husband, asking him to recommend a medium in Germany. Dr. Hyslop knew of no suitable person in that country, but stated that, if she could visit America, he could arrange sittings for her with a thoroughly trustworthy psychic. His correspondent could not leave home, but she gave the name (different to her own) and address of a sister in America, who might take her place.

Dr. Hyslop arranged accordingly, introducing the sister as a sitter under an assumed name.

A number of correct items of information as to the deceased Herr Tausch were received (neither Dr. Hyslop nor the medium knew anything about him). Furthermore—a striking point—Dr. Hyslop addressed the communicator in German and received numerous replies in that language, although the medium knew no German (for a full description of the case see Sir W. Barrett *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, Kegan Paul, 1917, pp. 225-8).

A recent example (1914-15) of Automatic writing,

providing strong evidence of the identity of the communicators, was received by the hand of Mrs. Willett, and is described in Mr. Gerald Balfour's paper "The Ear of Dionysius" (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIX., pp. 197-243). The communication is in the nature of a classical conundrum received in four different scripts at various dates, the key to which is only given in the last script. The various classical allusions could not have been within the knowledge of Mrs. Willett who, as Mr. Balfour tells us, has no more classical knowledge than the ordinary educated Englishwoman. The ostensible communicators were the late Professors Verrall and Henry Butcher, and the various allusions are specially characteristic of these two scholars. For example, we have a clear reference to the latter's work on Aristotle's *Poetics*. It is unfortunately impossible to abridge this case to a length which renders quotation possible.

The reader is, therefore, recommended to study Mr. Balfour's above-quoted paper. Apart from the evidential value of the case, it will be found most interesting reading, owing to the extraordinary ingenuity of the puzzle and the dramatic way in which the various allusions and quotations all fit together when the key piece is found. In this as in other, cases, it seems impossible to believe that the subliminal of the Automatist can have fabricated so elaborate and consistent a problem, involving subjects far beyond her knowledge. We must, therefore, find it difficult to resist the conclusion that these scripts give definite evidence of design and control by extra-terrene intelligencies.

and simplest method would be to entrust to each of them a number of isolated words or phrases, which were meaningless in themselves, so that it would only be, when all these disjointed portions were collected and put together, that the message would be intelligible.

This is precisely what we find in the recent evidence. Between 1900 and 1905 Prof. Sidgwick, Mr. Myers and Dr. Hodgson passed over. All, especially the last two, were intimately acquainted with the "incredible falsifications" to which these communications were open. There appeared, about this time, a series of systematic attempts to transmit messages on the above-mentioned lines. Thus, we find an automatist receiving words or phrases, in themselves unintelligible, until they are compared with the script of other automatists obtained independently, at different times and often, as in the case of Mrs. Holland's Indian scripts, at far distant places. When thus compared the various fragments are found to fit together like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle and a connected message is the result.

To these messages the names of "cross correspondences" and "concordant automatisms" have been given.

The analogy given above may convey the impression that the scripts constituting cross correspondences are necessarily dissociated in their matter from the automatists supra-liminal or sub-liminal storage of ideas. In some cases, specially in the case of trance communications this may be so, but, in the majority of scripts the communicator appears to be exercising a process of selection from the storage of ideas of

the automatists. From this storehouse he selects the ideas he needs, often in the form of literary quotations, and causes the automatist to write these (*vide* Miss Johnson's remarks, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIV., pp. 254-263, and Vol. XXV., pp. 282-290).

It does not seem unreasonable that a communicator might find it easier thus to use already existing ideas and to mould them to his own ends, rather than to impress he sensitive with a new idea entirely disconnected with anything in his or her own storage.

The Gurney-Willett control gives a circumstantial reason for this. The attempt had been made to transmit the word "Dorr." The nearest which could be achieved by the above methods were certain quotations containing the word "door" which were not understood by the investigators.

Finally the required word was transmitted by what Gurney describes as the telergic method. The control goes on to say: (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXV., p. 219).

> "The word had to be given that way after efforts had been made to convey it telepathically (*i.e.*, by the use of the automatist's own storage of ideas) without success. It (the telergic method) was a great strain on both sides. We don't want to move any atoms in the brain directly."

Mrs. Willett's description of the sensations which preceded and followed the communication, show that she was subjected to considerable mental stress (quite different to her usual experience when writing automatically) (*Loc cit.*, p. 128).

It will be conceded that if the cross-correspondences are of such quantity and quality as to be

inexplicable on any hypothesis other than that they are originated and shaped by disembodied intelligences, the fact that these intelligences use terrene mental material does not invalidate the evidence. In effect they may have to use human "thought stuff" just as they have to use human hands for the process of writing.

The cross correspondences which are, apparently, of undeniable evidential value are now numerous.

It is unfortunately, impossible, adequately to summarize any of them. It is only by a consideration of the complete analysis of the evidence that any reasoned opinion can be reached. The cross correspondences are certainly complex, but this complexity is one of their most evidential features and is, of course, destroyed if an attempt is made to compress them within limits suitable for quotation.

An outline of one known as "Hope, Star and Browning" (these being the chief ideas of which it was composed) may, however, be given to show the kind of thing that a cross correspondence is. Four automatists were involved. Mrs. Piper, who wrote in trance as previously described, Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Verrall and Miss Verrall (Mrs. Salter) who write under normal conditions and not in trance (for detailed description and analysis see *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vols. XXII. and XXVII.).

The matter started with a request to the Myers—Piper control, at the end of December, 1906, that he would impress three different automatists with interconnected messages.

The request was given at Mrs. Piper's sittings in Latin, a language of which the medium had no

knowledge. An incidental reason for so doing was to test whether the ostensible communicator was capable of understanding a language which the medium did not know. It was, furthermore, suggested by Mr. Piddington to $Myers_P$ that he should endeavour to cause the automatists to add to their script an identifying geometrical symbol, a triangle within a circle. The control acknowledged the message and after an interval said that he had impressed the ideas "Hope, Star and Browning" on the scripts of the Automatists.

Soon after this, Mrs. Verrall's script began to give the specified ideas in a manner somewhat complex, but yet not doubtful. While the desired symbol was accurately transmitted. Thus in her script of January 28th, 1907 (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVII., pp. 36-39), a fortnight after the suggestion had been made, we get all the three ideas definitely transmitted. The script starts with the word "aster" (a star). Then several passages appear introducing the idea of "hope," some contained in quotations from Browning's poems and then a definite reference to one of these poems by the words "*Abt Vogler*," and finally an unmistakable drawing of a triangle within a circle. Miss Verrall (Mrs. Salter), in a script of February 7th, 1907 (written in ignorance of Mrs. Verrall's scripts and also of the fact that any experiments were being attempted), gives a clear drawing of a Star, also the word itself in the form of an anagram, together with more Browning quotations and other passages containing the idea of hope (*loc. cit.*, pp. 40-41).

Mrs. Holland's scripts written in India also con-

tain unmistakable references to the three ideas of the message. The geometrical symbol does not emerge in her case but a description of it is given (*loc. cit.*, pp. 42-46).

The cross correspondences are elaborately, yet clearly set forth in the following papers: in the Proceedings of the S.P.R., Vol. XXI., Miss Johnson *On the Automatic Writing of Mrs. Holland*; Vol. XXII., Mr. Piddington *A Series of Concordant Automatisms*. The whole of part 50 of Vol. XXIII. which contains supplementary papers by the above two authors and also further matter by Mrs. Sidgwick and Mrs. Verrall. Vol XXV. which contains some general remarks by Mr. Gerald Balfour; a paper *Evidence of Classical Scholarship and of Cross Correspondence*, by Sir O. Lodge; notes on Mrs. Willett's scripts and on a special cross correspondence by Mrs. Verrall; and a third report on Mrs. Holland's script by Miss Johnson. Vol. XXVI. contains further contributions to the subject by Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Sidgwick together with a contribution on the negative side from Dr. Joseph Maxwell. Vol. XXVII. contains Miss Johnson's comprehensive study, *A Reconstruction of some Concordant Automatisms*, and papers by Mr. Gerald Balfour on the Willett scripts and Miss Verrall (Mrs. Salter); also some notes and discussions on Mr. Balfour's paper by the Rev. M. A. Bayfield, Mr. Carrington and Dr. Tuckett. Vol. XXIX. contains a short but most instructive paper by Mrs. Sidgwick *On the Development of Different types of evidence for survival.*

If it is permissible to select where all is of value and merit, the inquirer might be recommended to commence with a perusal of Mrs. Sidgwick's paper

in Vol. XXIX. which will give a clear idea of the general aspect of the problem. Next to read Miss Johnson's paper in Vol. XXVII. which gives a synopsis of the chief cross correspondences up to the date of its compilation, and to follow with Mr. Piddington's contributions. To anyone possessed of ample time, a first-class library, and a wide knowledge of ancient and modern literature, cross-correspondence hunting must indeed be a fascinating pursuit.

The evidential value of the cross correspondences must, primarily, stand or fall on the correctness of the interpretations of the various literary allusions which the commentators of the S.P.R. have given. If we found that any critics had produced equally, or almost equally, plausible interpretations which changed sense into nonsense, our confidence in the cross correspondences as revealing a definite extra-terrene origin would be rudely shaken. We do not however, find this. During the sufficiently long period that these records have been before the public, we do not find that, the still not inconsiderable number of men of science who reject any supernormal explanation, have ever endeavoured to demolish the evidence in the only way in which it can be demolished, namely, by showing that the above interpretations are wrong, or at least doubtful. This is a case where generalities will not serve the opposition. The structure of the evidence must be attacked in detail by pulling out the very stones of which it is constructed. No flourishes of trumpets will bring down these walls of Jericho. Until, therefore, those who deny the extra-normal origin of these communications are able to produce a case for the negative as thorough and as careful as that which has been

presented for the positive, the practical man must incline towards the positive conclusion.

Let us briefly restate the position in regard to the evidence furnished by the cross correspondences. We have a number of isolated and intrinsically unintelligible fragments, received through divers independent channels, in different places at different times. When the fragments are collected they are found to form a consistent and intelligible whole. How are we to explain this? We must have some provisional hypothesis to offer, for it has occurrred so often that we cannot treat it as a mere sport, or attribute the concordances to chance coincidence.

Let us first consider the hypothesis that the correspondence between the scripts of the various automatists can be accounted for by purely normal means.

Granting, in view of what has just been said, that the published interpretations of the scripts are accurate, the only normal means are obviously collusion and chance-coincidence. The former, is surely unthinkable, in view of the repute of the automatists concerned. It may be admitted at once that it cannot be definitely disproved. If the critic is of opinion that a number of men and women, with no ulterior motives to serve, many of them of no little position in the literary and scientific world, have united in a conspiracy to deceive, no argument can refute him. Post-marks, dates, and signed statements will not move him, since the moral obliquity which would thus sport with the deepest feelings of humanity, would not boggle at such minor sins as the fabrication of post-marks, or the forgery of documents.

In regard to chance coincidence, this hypothesis

is not capable of refutation by mere arithmetic, as in the case of simple Telepathic experiments, where the mathematical probability of chance can be definitely evaluated. Anyone, however, who will peruse the records above cited cannot deny that the coincidences in the cross correspondences are enormously greater than can be attributed to chance.

It is clear, therefore, that there is no purely normal hypothesis that will account for these correspondences.

We have next to consider the telepathic hypothesis. This is a far more complex subject for the reasons that the limitations of telepathy are by no means definitely understood.

Let us see what this hypothesis involves. It implies the power of one automatist as agent, unconsciously and without volition, to start a train of thought in other automatists which shall induce them to write, not what happened to be in the mind of the agent at the time, but passages or words having a connection with the pseudo-agent's impressions but by no means a replica thereof. If one automatist wrote a word or sentence and that word or sentence was reproduced at, or about, the same time in the script of another automatist, Telepathy is a possible explanation. This, as has been already said, is by no means the case in the cross correspondences. It is going beyond the powers of Telepathy, as far as observation and experiment have yet defined them, to say that a telepathic impulse may cause an affect on one or more percipients which emerges, not as a replica of the ideas transmitted, but as other ideas parallel and complimentary to the agent's idea.

It would be idle to deny that there is a real difficulty in deciding how far the Telepathic hypothesis can be applied. Mr. Constable's theory of Telepathy (*vide* Cap 2 above), as action between the intuitive selves of agent and percipient, in which the clothing or externalization of the affect is the work of the percipient alone, accommodates a transmission in which the percept is parallel but not coincident with the agent's ideas. For example, one automatist's script contains a passage from a certain poet dealing, say, with the virtues of patience. The effect received by some other automatist in *rapport* with the agent *might* cause the emergence in his script of some parallel passage dealing with the same subject in some other poetical or prose work.

This becomes more difficult to imagine, when as in the case of most of the cross correspondences, more than two automatists are concerned. We have no experimental proof whatever of the possibility of a network of agent-percipients. All observations go to show that telepathy is most certainly directional. The telepathic impulse is not, so to speak, radiated in all directions to be picked up by anyone, at any point of the compass.

This difficulty is admittedly based on purely theoretical grounds but it should not for that reason be overlooked. Each case must, I think, be treated on its merits. As a general rule the possibility of the telepathic explanation will vary inversely with the complexity of the cross correspondence.

It is, perhaps, necessary to state that even if the evidence for the extra-terrene origin of these communications is considered sufficient, it does not logically follow that because they are extra-terrene

they aré necessarily authentic. They may be due to some disembodied intelligence other than the ostensible communicators. If we hypothecate that "spirits" have powers of telepathy and clairvoyance similar to, but far more developed than those of earthly psychics, it is theoretically possible that some "lying spirits" might be able thus to extract from the storage of memory of the departed, enough matter to enable them to simulate the ostensible communicators with sufficient accuracy to deceive the sitters. Such a hypothesis cannot be disproved but, I think, that to most people who accept the supernormal origin of these communications, it will be far more difficult of acceptance than the more simple one that the communications are authentic in their origin.

I think enough has been said to justify the statement that the evidence for communication with the disembodied is very strong. The practical man is confronted with a large number of consistent and reliable observations of a phenomenon for which no reasonable explanation can yet be found, except that the disembodied do originate communications to us embodied. This hypothesis has, therefore, to be accepted provisionally. Alternately, he may say, that although the present evidence is good he requires more of it before he can consider proof as complete. No impartial investigator can quarrel with this conclusion. The quarrel is with those who Prof. James called "Bosh philosophers." Those who will accept nothing that smacks of the supernatural, however strong may be the proof, who "will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Three subjects which are generally considered to fall within the circle of psychic phenomena have been omitted for want of space.

The phenomenon of *Dowsing*, the faculty which some persons possess of locating water and minerals, apparently by some affect causing unconscious muscular action, is definitely established as a fact.

It is generally agreed that the rod or twig used by the dowser is nothing more than a rough and ready apparatus for indicating these movements. Sir W. Barrett (*vide Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII., pp. 1-281 and Vol. XV., pp. 130-315) has devoted considerable attention to this subject. The cause of the action is still obscure.

Psychometry is a term used, not very appropriately, for the power, possessed by some psychics of extracting information referring to a person, living or dead, when they are holding an article belonging to that person

In Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship, communication appeared to be faciliated when some object belonging to the communicator was held by the medium. There are also cases where an Automatist has been given an article, of which the previous ownership and history were completely unknown to er, and correct information on matter connected

with that article has been given (cf. Mrs. Verrall's paper *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XX.).

Here, as in the case of Dowsing, we seem to find some power in inanimate matter to cause affects on human personalities. The theory that articles retain, in some measure the impress of previous owners does not seem to fit the facts such as they are. (cf. Constable, *loc. cit.*, pp. 298-300).

The evidence for *Hauntings* is respectable in age and quantity. In quality it is less satisfactory. If we accept hauntings of houses and places, as a fact, we have to assume that certain disembodied intelligencies are, so to speak, chained to places which they inhabited when last on earth and that when, and only when, sensitives come within the radius of the chain they receive affects from the disembodied intelligence which cause the emergence of anything from a vague noise to a full-fledged ghost. The mere fact that a " spirit " should thus communicate is not inconsistent with the evidence given in the previous chapter. The difficulty lies in the fact that a disembodied intelligence who is, we might say, by definition, not limited by physical dimensions, should be able to exercise this power only within an area of a few square yards.

The whole matter is so obscure, that I do not think much apology is needed for omitting its detailed consideration from a book which attempts to be practical.

A recent example of a haunting which, by reason of the considerable experience of the narrator in psychic research is worthy of attention, is given by Miss Miles (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVII., pp. 293-301).

In conclusion, I hope that the reader, who has followed me thus far, will have appreciated that the chief point which I have been endeavouring to drive home is that no reasoned opinion on psychic phenomena is possible until the evidence for these phenomena has been first considered. A truism, no doubt, but we find on all sides people who are prepared to pronounce on these weighty matters with no uncertain voice, but yet have never examined the evidence and are often, indeed, ignorant of its existence.

The ordinary layman does not pronounce opinions on facts in physics, chemistry, or astronomy, because he has not studied these subjects. In regard to psychic phenomena, however, he is ready with his opinion. The same thing was observable in the latter half of the nineteenth century when many, otherwise intelligent people, condemned "Darwin and his Gospel of Dirt," who had never read even the *Origin of Species*.

The man who says "I have perused the evidence but consider it inadequate for the following reasons . . ." is one with whom we can argue with mutual profit.

The man who says "These phenomena are contrary to the laws of nature, therefore, any evidence for them is unworthy of consideration" is beyond argument. He is as irrational as the ecclesiastics who opposed the Mosaic cosmology to the doctrine of Evolution. If this book may lead some readers to pass from the latter to the former class it will not have been written in vain.

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