

JOURNAL

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SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

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 WRIGHT, JAMES A., Man. Federal Telephone Co., Montreal, Canada.

MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council met on the 13th of June and on the 11th of July. Mr. Walter Leaf was in the chair on the first occasion, and the President on the second. The following Members were also present at one or both of the Meetings:—Professor F. W. Barrett, Rev. A. T. Fryer, Dr. A. T. Myers, Messrs. T. Barkworth, W. Crookes, F. W. H. Myers, F. Podmore, H. Arthur Smith, R. Pearsall Smith, and H. E. Wingfield.

At the Meeting on the 13th of June Sir Frederick Leighton, Bart., P.R.A., was elected an Honorary Member.

At the two Meetings four new Members and ten new Associates, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected. The election of thirty-one new Associates of the American Branch was also recorded.

Thanks were accorded to the donors for two books, presents to the Library.

At the June Meeting it was, after full discussion, agreed that Dr. A. T. Myers and Mr. F. Podmore should prepare a circular under the title of "Hypnotism: Its Conditions and Safeguards," for the con-

sideration of the Council at its next Meeting, with the view of its being circulated among the Members of the Society. It was carefully gone through at the July Meeting of the Council, and with some slight alterations adopted, and ordered to be printed and sent out with the July No. of the *Journal*.

Various matters of routine business having been attended to, the Council agreed to meet again at 4.30 p.m. on Friday, the 3rd of October.

GENERAL MEETING.

A General Meeting of the Society was held at the Westminster Town Hall, on Friday, July 11th, the President, Professor Sidgwick, in the chair.

The PRESIDENT gave some account of the progress of the census of hallucinations. He expressed a certain disappointment at the small amount of interest shown in the work by Members of the Society. Out of 700 Members and Associates only about 74 had so far given any help, and if it had not been for the great efforts made by some of these, which he gratefully acknowledged, and for help received from persons outside the Society, the present modest number of answers, 6,450, would not have been attained—a number not sufficient to make it possible to calculate with accuracy the proportion of seemingly veridical to non-veridical experiences. He went on to say that of the 6,450 answers about 11 per cent. were affirmative, and might be divided into 467 cases where the sense of sight was affected, 218 where voices were heard without any accompanying visual impression, and 58 tactile cases. Out of these 743 cases 99, or 13 per cent., might be called *prima facie* coincidental, though some of them were of the kind classed in *Phantasms of the Living* as “ambiguous.” On the other hand, among cases classed as non-coincidental, were some which there was reason to regard as not purely subjective. Thus there were 7 cases where the figure or voice of dead persons was phantasmally seen or heard, when the percipient was unaware of the death; there were 9 cases (7 of an unrecognised figure, 1 of a recognised living person, and 1 of a recognised dead person) where apparently the same figure was independently seen by more than one person on different occasions; and finally there were 55 cases in which the experience communicated was “collective,”—*i.e.*, shared by more than one person,—besides 10 similarly collective experiences already counted with coincidental ones. In a certain number of the experiences, however, the figure taken for a phantasmal one was probably a real person, and the fact that a disproportionately large number of collective experiences took place out of doors made it specially probable—for reasons explained by the speaker—that a good

many of these were real. Some collective experiences, however, seemed to be clearly hallucinations, and this being so they were, of course, of great theoretical importance in considering the nature and origin of hallucinations generally. The President went on to discuss some possible explanations of collective hallucinations, illustrating his remarks by cases communicated by persons answering the census question, and concluding with an account of an experiment in collective hallucinations recently made with hypnotised persons.

MR. F. W. H. MYERS then read the first part of a Provisional Report "On alleged movements of objects, without contact, occurring not in the presence of a paid medium." He reminded the meeting that the late President of the Society for Psychical Research, Professor Balfour Stewart, had in 1887 formed a committee to consider a report on the phenomena commonly called Spiritualistic. That committee had now collected and discussed a certain number of narratives of movements of the nature above described. They did not, however, think that the time had come for any collective expression of opinion, and had requested the speaker to prepare an *ad interim* account of evidence received, with the object rather of explaining the points at issue, and of inviting fresh testimony, than of pronouncing on the true meaning of the testimony already received. When this Society was founded in 1882, some of its active members had already had a long experience of paid mediums, with very mixed results. They hoped that the formation of the Society might lead persons obtaining phenomena in private circles to allow an opportunity of witnessing them. This hope, however, had been to a great extent disappointed. It appeared, in fact, that very few of such private circles now existed, while those which did still exist seldom reported their results even in the Spiritualistic Press. The amount of effort and experiment now going forward in this direction was much smaller than some had supposed. Apart from paid mediums, little fresh evidence had been adduced by Spiritualists since 1882.

In considering the facts before the committee, it seemed desirable to make in some sense a new departure by investigating the phenomena as they stood, without taking into account the still more contentious matter connected with the theories by which they were commonly bound together. Thus in our present inquiry into physical phenomena we could classify the alleged cases, not according to the medium through whom they occur, nor to the spirit supposed to originate them, but according to the special group of otherwise attested phenomena, occurring apart from regular mediumship,—such as automatism, telepathy, post-mortem apparitions, and the like,—with which each alleged case of physical movements bore some apparent connection.

If there were any truth in Spiritualism it must surely (the speaker urged) be in some sense *continuous* with other truth. The evoked phenomena must be a development or a systematisation of the spontaneous phenomena, rather than a wholly new manifestation.

We should do well to divide our cases roughly into three main groups, determined by their analogies with other evidence.

- A. Physical movements connected with automatism; or not definitely pointing to the operation of other intelligences than those of the persons present.
- B. Physical movements connected with telepathy between living persons, or near the moment of death.
- C. Physical movements associated with phantasms of the dead; or phantasms of that obscure class with which cases of "haunting" had made us familiar.

There were also certain cases of sporadic and apparently motiveless movements, which, if not due to some ordinary but overlooked cause, nevertheless afforded us no definite indication of the nature of their supernatural source.

The speaker appealed for further experiment and more exact records, and concluding by asking

PROFESSOR BARRETT to read an account of a very interesting series of phenomena which occurred in a private circle.

Some discussion followed, and Mr. X., the gentleman who had furnished the account read by Professor Barrett, kindly answered several questions asked by different persons present.

MR. MONEY questioned the appropriateness of the word "hallucination" as used in the publications of the Society and in the President's address, and suggested "appearance" as a substitute.

The PRESIDENT, in replying, referred to his previous address on the present census of hallucinations, in which the use of the term was explained and justified, and also to Chapter X. of *Phantasms of the Living*. If, however, some other term equally appropriate and more generally acceptable than "hallucination" could be suggested he would be quite willing to adopt it in any new investigation. "Appearance" was, he thought, clearly too general a word.

PROFESSOR BARRETT pointed out that "appearance" was also inappropriate in the case of auditory and tactile experiences.

A GENTLEMAN who described himself as a disbeliever in Spiritualism and in the researches of the Society told very graphically a story illustrating the way in which unconscious exaggeration may cause often-repeated stories to grow, and thought that this was a source of error overlooked by the Society. He also gave a brief account of some subjective hallucinations of his own, and thought the word a good one.

The PRESIDENT remarked that if the speaker had been familiar with the publications of the Society he would know that possible exaggeration had always been taken account of where there was any probability that it had occurred.

CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

L. 842 Collective.—Visual.

The percipients in the following case are sons of Mr. Ellwood, a chemist residing at Leominster. From an account previously sent to us by Mr. Ellwood, sen., we learn that the percipients are respectively 19 and 23 years of age. The brothers were sleeping together, and the elder of the two is the writer of the account we print. The first experience occurred on December 20th, 1889.

Leominster. *February 12th, 1890.*

The following is just a short account of what I saw on the first occasion mentioned. It was, I think, about 6 a.m., just getting light. I had been *awake* a short time and I suddenly heard the door open (the door was on the jar all night), and saw a short figure in a nightshirt walk in and stand looking at me by the side of the bed. I distinctly heard a sound of breathing or rustling of the nightshirt, and I thought at first that it was my father walking in his sleep. Then I thought it might be a burglar (although why a burglar should be dressed in a nightshirt I don't know), so I said, "What is it?" then I jumped out of bed and rushed to catch hold of the figure, when it vanished. My brother also saw the figure standing at the bedside, and after I jumped out of bed he saw the figure glide round towards the foot of the bed and then vanish. I did not see it after I jumped out of bed. We both searched well but could find nothing.

On the second occasion it was about the same hour in the morning and on the same day of the week. The bedroom door was shut all night on this occasion, and I was lying awake when I saw the door open and some one peep round. I thought it was one of our assistants come for a lark to pull me out of bed (as we do those kind of tricks sometimes); however, I lay still, and then the door seemed to open wide, so I leaned out of bed to give it a hard push and everything vanished, and I nearly fell out of bed, for the door was shut as when I went to bed. My brother was asleep this time and saw nothing.

I can positively swear that this is as correct an account as I can give, and I distinctly saw what I have mentioned. I was awake both times (not dozing, but distinctly awake). I was also in good health and had not been up late, &c., the night before. I may add that before this occasion I did not believe in ghosts, or anything in that way. I really and truly thought a man was in the room, and I intended collaring him when I rushed at him.

W. M. ELLWOOD.

P.S.—I only saw the head of the second figure, but it was, as near as I could tell, like the first figure.—W. E.

To this account the younger Mr. Ellwood adds :—

I also saw and heard all my brother did.

(Signed) M. J. ELLWOOD, JUN.

It occurred to Mr. Ellwood, senior, that the figure might be connected with his landlord, who was lying ill at the time and has since died. This gentleman was an intimate friend and had a special affection for Mr. Ellwood's younger son. He is also known to have interested himself in the place during his last illness. But no definite coincidence can be made out.

Mr. Ellwood also informs us that his house has the reputation of being haunted, but the only phenomena observed appear to have been unexplained noises before the deaths of several of Mrs. Ellwood's relatives.

L. 843 Collective.—Visual.

The following is from the Rev. Canon Underwood. Mrs. Underwood is dead, so that her evidence cannot be obtained.

Histon Vicarage. *January 21st, 1889.*

MY DEAR MR. MYERS,—I very willingly comply with your request, though it seems to me a very unimportant contribution to the research of the Society.

About 30 years ago, one morning in the late spring of the year, between 2 and 3 a.m., I awoke and, contrary to my habit, turned in my bed on to my left side, which brought me facing the light, and face to face with the figure of my brother-in-law, who appeared standing at the bedside, full dressed, wearing a well-known (to me) white hat and top coat. He seemed to be looking intent, with his hands upon the bedclothes. It was his usual mien, and nothing unusual marked the expression of his countenance. I was about to rise when the vision passed away ; it was the affair of only a few moments.

For fear of disturbing my wife, I kept silence, and soon went again into slumber. At 6 o'clock we were both awake and preparing to rise for the day, when my wife asked me, "Did you see anything unusual this morning, early?" I tried at first to evade the question, but she said again, "I saw something. It was the appearance of Mr. G. He was standing by my bedside. He was dressed as usual, but as though he had been out for a walk."

I found that in every particular our experience coincided. She, too, for fear of disturbing me (for I had not been well) restrained her alarm.

We expected, of course, to have had some distressing news by the morning, or midday post, but there was nothing then or afterwards, to supply a connecting link between the real and visionary. We were living at Liverpool, and our friend at Richmond, in Surrey. He lived for 20 years after that occurrence. Though an honourable man, he was narrow-minded and somewhat of a puritan, and consequently I did not investigate the matter further. I have, however, tried to date back for circumstances, and the only one that I now remember is, that about that time my brother had an unpleasant affair with the subject of our waking moments [? vision], indeed a quarrel of some

continuance, and I partly favoured my brother, and incurred something short of an anathema from the other. My wife, one of the gentlest and most peace-loving of women, was of course anxiously concerned, but I do not remember that she interfered in any decided manner as to entitle her to such consideration. Perhaps, however, it might have been a visit of different character to me. At any rate the account here given of the matter is perfectly true, and accords with my views of the connection between the physical and psychical in man.

The other matter I mentioned to you is too trifling to take account of.

About three weeks since, about 6 a.m., I was wide awake, and expecting every minute the housekeeper to come to my door for the plate-basket and keys. While musing, all at once, I distinctly heard the well-known voice of my wife (who died last April), clear and distinct, call out apparently from my side—"Emma" (the Christian name of her maid, the housekeeper). This is only curious in that my departed wife knew how strict I am in enforcing punctuality in every one and thing domestic.

C. W. UNDERWOOD.

G. 194 Collective. Visual.

From a lady who does not wish her name to be printed.

June 13th, 1890,

Many years ago I saw at my father's house a grey shadow, which I have never ceased to wonder about, nor been able to explain. I was in the drawing-room with my mother and sister. The fire was brightly burning, and the lights full up. We were about to retire for the night, and as we rose my mother called my attention to some defect in the make of my sister's dress and asked her to turn round so that I might see it. This she did with her face towards the fire and away from the door. While my mother and I stood each side of her looking interestedly at the dress I heard a slight sound and we both looked towards the door, which was a little way open, and I saw standing there a tall grey figure, with one hand on the handle of the door. My mother, like myself, looked at it for some time, speechless, and she at last sat down which diverted my attention, and when I looked again the figure had vanished. It was very tall and had on a long grey dressing-gown; the face was clean shaven and the hair raised high on the head. The collar was loose, pointed, and turned down, leaving the throat (which was finely formed) open. I particularly noticed also the beautifully-shaped hand and wrist that rested on the handle of the door, and the loose rather short cuff. Altogether, the generally distinguished and gentle air of this most singularly distinct yet shadowy presence was remarkable.

All the servants had gone to bed, and only my father besides ourselves were in the house, and he was reading in his study.

I lived some time in the house after seeing this shadow, but never saw it again, nor have I ever since seen anything anywhere of the kind.

L. F.

The next account is from Mrs. E.'s mother.

June, 1890.

I have a very vivid recollection of the grey shadow of No. 14, and have

often thought about it, but have never been able to account for it. We were just preparing to go up to bed when I was startled by the shadow in the doorway, apparently holding by the handle of the door. I looked at it until I was almost frightened, and sat down again in my chair, and when I next got up the thing had vanished and I never saw it again. This is all I can tell you about the grey shadow.

A much more astonishing case than the grey shadow, which I don't think I ever mentioned to you, happened to me that very summer. It was just as I went down to the kitchen to speak to one of the servants, and in coming upstairs again at the very top, outside the door, stood a man of middle size, which for the moment I took to be your brother. He was wiping his face with a white handkerchief; the evening was very warm and bright, and the moon was at the full, and shone on the figure so that I could see it quite distinctly, so much so that I particularly noticed the peculiar coat he wore—it was a drab cutaway, and that caused me to look again, for I said to myself I never saw my son in a coat like that; however, he vanished into the back garden somehow or other, and I never saw or heard anything more of him. Some years afterwards I was talking to a gentleman, and he told me he knew the owner of the house; he was a Quaker gentleman, and lived in the house himself, and owned the property round about. He said my description was wonderfully like him.

In giving an account of this incident to Mrs. Sidgwick *viva voce*, Mrs. E. stated that footsteps which could not be accounted for were often heard in the house where it occurred. The date of the experience must have been some 30 years ago.

The narrative which follows also describes a collective experience, but a less clearly hallucinatory one than the three already given, since the possibility of the sounds having been real sounds misinterpreted is, from the nature of the case, difficult altogether to exclude. In this case, on the other hand, there is a marked coincidence, which would have afforded a probability that the experience was a veridical hallucination if the supposed agent had been a human being. Whether it ought to be so interpreted in the present instance must depend on the answer to be given to the general question whether thought-transference between animals and human beings is possible:—a very interesting question, but one which it would be rash to answer in the affirmative without a good deal more evidence than we have at present obtained.

L. 844 A^e P^a Collective Auditory. Animal Agent. ?

The following is part of a letter from Mrs. Beauchamp, of Hunt Lodge, Twyford, to Mrs. Wood, Colchester.

Here is a sort of dream presentiment story! Last night—Megatherium [a small Indian dog] sleeping with [my daughter]—I woke, hearing him run round my bedroom. I know his step so well. [My husband] woke too. I said "Listen." He said, "It is Meg." We lighted a candle, looked well, there was

nothing and the door was shut. Then I had a feeling something was wrong with the dog—it came into my head he had died at this minute, and I looked for my watch to see the time, and then I thought I must go up and see about him. It was so cold, and it seemed so silly, and while I was thinking I fell asleep. It must have been some little time after, someone knocked at the door, and it was [my daughter] in agony. “Oh! mamma, Meg is dying.” We flew upstairs. He was lying on his side like dead—his legs stretched straight out like a dead thing’s. [My husband] picked him up, and for a while couldn’t see what was wrong, for he was *not* dead. Then we found he had nearly strangled himself—got the strap of his coat somehow from under his stomach and round his neck. He soon revived and recovered when we got it off, and he could breathe freely. I shall always in future go and see, if I have such a distinct feeling about any one. I could swear I heard his patter so distinctly round the room, and so did [my husband].

In answer to inquiries made some months later, Mrs. Beauchamp writes :—

Colonel Beauchamp paid so little attention to the circumstance at the time that he says he could not undertake to write an independent account. I cannot recollect any other experience of any hallucination of such a distinct sort. It made a great impression on me. . . . There was no other dog in the house that night and I could not possibly have heard Meg from the room where he was, on another floor, and at another end of our large rambling house, with both doors closed. My bedroom door was closed so that no animal could have come in to the room and left it before my search.

Mrs. Beauchamp further informs us that she is exceptionally fond of dogs, that her own particular dogs have been like friends to her, and that she had had this one for eight years. It is not possible to ascertain whether the dog’s distress had begun at the time of Mrs. Beauchamp’s experience.

L. 845 Experimental thought-transference. Visual.

The following account is from the Dowager Marchioness of Downshire. She is unable to recall the date but says that it happened possibly 40 years ago. The account was written in the winter of 1889-90.

Our readers will remember that other instances of Mr. H. S. Thompson’s experiments are quoted in *Phantasms of the Living*. Vol. I. Chap. III.

Several years ago I was suffering from brow ague, and Mr. Thompson (of Yorkshire, a well-known and very powerful mesmeriser) mesmerised me several times. Apparently it had no effect, beyond taking away the pain. We went to Calais and as I was very much knocked up from various causes I went to bed when it was still twilight. After a little while I saw distinctly, at the foot of my bed, Mr. Thompson’s *head*. I don’t believe I had been thinking of him, and I had not been to sleep. The head remained for a short

time and then disappeared. The next day I wrote to Mr. Thompson, and asked him what he was doing exactly at the hour I saw his head, but did not mention what I had seen. His answer was: "I went to the theatre with my daughter, and between the acts I *willed* you to think of me. I wanted to see what effect my mesmerism had had upon you."

C. DOWNSHIRE.

L. 846 Experimental Thought-transference.

The following case was obtained for us by Miss Bertha Porter, from her friend Madame Lancia. It is much to be desired that Members of the Society for Psychical Research should try similar experiments, and record the result.

June 20th, 1889.

In the beginning of a very precious friendship, which has now lasted nearly 20 years, I unexpectedly found I had an afternoon and evening free, so I determined to spend it with my friend. She lived at Brixton, I in Devonshire-street, Portland-place—a long journey to take on the chance of finding her at home. Suddenly I thought, "I will test the power of our sympathy," and I opened the window that looked out towards Brixton, and, calling her by name (mentally), I said with conscious intensity, and a conviction, too, that she would *feel* what I was saying, "Don't go out this afternoon, for I am coming to spend it with you."

Directly after luncheon I went, and as I opened the gate of the garden in front of her house she herself came to the door, saying, "I *knew* you were coming, and was watching for you." I asked her how did she know I was coming? "Oh!" she answered, "I seemed to hear you tell me not to go out, and I *was* going out with the girls (her daughters), but have put it off, so sure did I feel you would come." The girls went out alone. I think my friend quoted the very words I had myself said at the open window.

FLORENCE LANCIA.

The next is Mrs. Baker's account:—

17, Baldry-gardens, Streatham Common.

June 21st [1889].

It is about 17 years ago, when very intimate with my friend Madame Lancia, I, one afternoon, was going out with my children, and suddenly something seemed to say to me, "No, don't go; she is coming" ("she" being my friend Madame). I yielded to the intense impression and to my full belief that she *would* come, and stayed in. She did come over. I immediately said, "Well, how strange; something said to me you would come." Then she told me how she had opened her window and breathed, "I am coming, little mother." I don't suppose my children would remember my having said she would come, but the coincidence was often talked of by us all as being very remarkable.

ANNIE W. BAKER.

Madame Lancia and Mrs. Baker are unable at this distance of time to feel sure that they compared the time of the former's willing and

the latter's impression. All that Madame Lancia can now say with certainty on this point is:—

I know that the "willing" and the change of plans of the "willed" came within the space of a couple of hours.

P. 133 Monition. Auditory.

Communicated by Mr. D. Fraser Harris, B.Sc., Lond., who is acquainted with the percipient, Mrs. Edwards. Mr. Fraser Harris says:—

Mrs. Edwards is a widow lady, and an American, but of English extraction; she describes herself as being . . . not imaginative, not credulous, not eccentric, not hysterical, and is not of a neurotic constitution.

She has had one or two "low nervous fevers," but neither in the feverish condition nor in that of convalescence has she had any hallucinations.

Throughout her entire life she has been "haunted" with presentiments (being able to foretell future events both in her own life and in other persons' lives), as well as being tormented by "voices" and "visions." . . . She describes both the "voices" and "visions" as being invariably of the nature of *intruders*, bursting in upon and disturbing the current of thoughts at the moment. . . . All the hallucinations were most vivid and apparently "real." . . . Mrs. E.'s only daughter is the subject of similar hallucinations. Mrs. E. yet hears voices, often daily for some time.

The very earliest occurred when she was quite a girl. On this occasion, when she was in a crowd, a voice by her side (apparently) said, quite distinctly, "That man will be your husband." The person whom she was looking at at the moment did, years after, become her husband. At the time of the announcement she did not know him; the "spell" of this shaped her course when she ultimately did make his acquaintance.

Once, when asleep, Mrs. E. was awakened in the middle of the night by a loud voice, telling her that a particular white dress (which should have been in a trunk that was being packed) had been stolen. She rose, lit a light, and searched the trunk to find the dress was not there.

After giving four instances of vivid and interesting visual hallucinations of human figures,* probably purely subjective, Mr. Harris continues:—

Auditory hallucination with sequel.

This occurred in the year 1845. Mrs. E. was in good health, and had, at this time, had none of the before-mentioned fevers, which came on between the ages of 30 and 50.

Mrs. E. had slept well, and was in the act of getting up, when, apparently, the quiet was broken in upon by an announcement being made as though someone had come in at the bedroom door and said, in a loud voice, these words: "To-day, at six o'clock, you will die." There was nothing more, but these words seemed to resound throughout the room.

Mrs. E. resolved to tell no one of the announcement, and also not to brood

* One of these appeared to be reflected in a looking-glass.

over it, if possible, at all. To accomplish this she went, in the course of the afternoon, to the house of a married sister of hers, where there would be sure to be something more or less stirring going on.

This had the effect of distracting the attention from the certainly very distressing prophecy, and Mrs. E. had the benefit of her sister's society till six o'clock began to be struck by the clock. As it commenced sounding Mrs. E. said to herself, "There now, it's six o'clock already, and nothing has happened;" but the statement was premature, for before the chime ceased blood was gushing out of both nostrils in a copious stream. The alarm was raised, and the whole household flocked round and applied the usual remedies of cold keys, &c., but quite without success. This profuse and alarming hæmorrhage did not cease till bucketfuls of cold water were poured on the head and down the spine. When the doctor arrived he said a very large quantity of blood had been lost, and life only just saved and no more.

As might be well expected, Mrs. E. was very weak for days after this occurrence. Though this was the first in point of time of the more important hallucinations of Mrs. E.'s life, it is, in certain respects, quite the most extraordinary by reason of the striking sequel to and almost complete fulfilment of the prophecy.

D. F. H.

Mrs. Edwards adds:—

I certify that this report is correct.

ISABELLA S. EDWARDS.

Mrs. Edwards' sister, Mrs. Coleman, at whose house the hæmorrhage occurred, writes corroborating her sister's account.

P. 134 Monition.

From a lady known to F. W. H. M., received June 3rd, 1890.

In the summer of 1888, I was living in the little mining camp of R—, in the Rocky Mountains. Our house, a frame building, was some little distance from any other, at the top of a steep hill; the only disadvantage of this being the additional difficulty of getting water, which was an expensive commodity in R— as the adjacent mines had drained most of the wells, and we had either to carry it a long way, or buy it in barrels at 50 cents each.

The house contained six rooms, all opening one out of another, my own room, with a dressing closet beyond, where my child slept, being at one extremity, and the front porch, which overlooked the valley, at the other.

One evening, after my little girl was asleep, I lit a tiny night-lamp, always left burning on a bracket in her room; and, leaving all doors and windows open, on account of the intense heat, went to sit in the front porch. I may have sat there half an hour, when my attention was caught by a great blazing light in the direction of the furthest houses. It appeared evident that one at least had taken fire, and the difficulty of getting water, and the hope that no children were in danger, flashed through my mind. While watching the rapidly growing glare, I heard a faint crackling sound in my own house. It would not have disturbed me at any other time, as I only supposed that some smouldering piece of cedar in the kitchen stove had blazed up. But, with the present thought of fire in my mind I went into

the kitchen to look, and, glancing through the open doors as I passed saw a volume of flame and smoke pouring from the child's room into mine. Thank God, it was still possible to rush through and save her, and I carried her back in a blanket to prevent the scorch, for the room was only burning at one end; the side where the bed stood, though fearfully hot and suffocating was not yet on fire, and, thanks to the timely warning, we had just enough water left in the barrels to extinguish the flames before very much was destroyed, though they were making headway terribly fast on the dry lumber. After all was quiet I went back to the porch to look at that other burning house, feeling so thankful that my child was safe, and wondering anxiously if others were also. But all was dark, and when I came to make inquiry next day, nothing was known in R— of any such fire. And had it not been for my strange vision of it, which must have lasted fully 10 minutes, I feel sure that my little girl would have been burned to death.

On the night of May 21st, 1890, I was staying at F—, in England. I always burned a nightlight in the bedroom I shared with my little girl. It stood in a saucer of water upon a wooden corner bracket, and I had never had any accident with it. At about a quarter to two I was waked suddenly, and very much startled by hearing myself called—not only the *impression* but the actual sound of the voice ringing in my ears as I jumped up in bed. The name called was an abbreviation of my own, not used by anyone in England. When I found that all was quiet in the house, I lay down, thinking how strange it was that this particular form of my name, which I had not heard for many months, should have been used. Half a minute later, not only the paper case, but the grease, of which at that hour my nightlight was full, caught fire, making a blaze which threatened the bracket, and might have set fire to the wall also, but that, thanks to having been waked, I was able to jump out of bed, and extinguish it directly.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF POST-MORTEM APPARITIONS.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

SIR,—Although it seems difficult to assert that apparitions are external realities in the sense of having an objective basis, it still cannot be said that the opposite theory is free from difficulties. Probably no one would maintain that it was.

Let it be granted that an apparition is veridical, *i. e.*, that it corresponds to facts in the condition or history of the agent, and that it has no objective basis. Then it must originate in one of two ways; either as a creation of the percipient's mind in response to a telepathic stimulus, or as a complete projection from the mind of the agent, directly upon the sensory centres of the brain. In the first case it would correspond to a suggested hallucination during hypnosis. The whole question is elaborately discussed in *Phantasms of the Living*, Chap. XII., where the first of these two aspects of the subjective genesis of a phantasm is upheld. But—in the case of an apparition to

whom some abnormal appearance is veridically attributed (*e.g.*, a drowning man dripping with water, or one whom we have known in younger days as bald, or grey, or wearing a beard) it is open to this objection—that this feature of his case, not being known to the percipient, cannot be the creation of his own mind in response to a telepathic impression of the mere personality of the agent. In that case the latter would externalise itself as the percipient was accustomed to think of it, including such elements as apparent age, dress, &c. The authors of *Phantasms* attempt to escape the dilemma by supposing that the general aspect of the apparition is self-evolved, and the peculiar aspects projected (Vol. I., pages 554, 555), an opinion which, however convenient for their argument, seems to me too Procrustean to satisfy an independent inquirer.

On the other hand the second view rests on no certain analogy to the facts of hypnotism, and has little to recommend it beyond its obvious convenience. It is, moreover, open to the objection that phantasms of the dead appear, as far as I know invariably, with the symptoms of age, decrepitude, or deformity, which they were subject to in life. The theory of projection would require us to believe that these symptoms were carried over in permanence to the disembodied state—a view as improbable as it is depressing.

But once more; whichever variety of the subjective hypothesis we adopt may be subdivided into central and centrifugal. That is, it may begin and end as a mental concept externalised by mere force of suggestion, or it may be a sensory impression, either originating, or taking shape, in the visual centre, and thence propagated downwards to the retina. There is a remarkable experiment on record at the Salpêtrière which bears on this question, and which does not seem to me to have attracted as much attention as it deserves. A hypnotised woman was shown a white card, which she was told was, and accordingly saw to be, red. Afterwards, being shown another white card without any suggestion, she said it was green. Another woman who had lost the perception of violet in both eyes, and to whom it always looked black, obtained the after-image of black upon an hallucination of yellow (the complementary colour of violet). These were very ignorant women of the lowest class, who cannot be supposed to have ever heard of complementary colours, much less to have been *au fait* with them.* Now complementary colours are produced, as is well known, by retinal fatigue. “The red image has in fact fatigued the part of the retina on which it fell for red light, but has left it sensitive to the remaining coloured rays of which white light is composed. But we know that if from the variously coloured rays which make up the spectrum of white light we take away all the red rays, the remaining rays together make up a sort of green.” †

Here, then, is a positive demonstration of the reversal of the ordinary current of sensation. The word “red” spoken to the ear must have first been idealised as sensation by the mind, and thus impressed upon the visual centre, whence it was propagated downwards to the retina. This is, in fact, an object-lesson in hallucination.

But we are still far from the end of our difficulties. If apparitions have

* *Animal Magnetism*, p. 253. Binet and Féré. Eng. Trans.

† *Elementary Physiology*, p. 221. Huxley.

a subjective origin, whence the cold *aura* which is so generally testified to by those who have seen phantasms of the dead, though scarcely ever in the case of phantasms of the living? Whence, again, the preference for certain localities, so often observed in phantasms of the dead, but not at all in those of the living?

The case of General Barter and the spectral syces and pony of Lieutenant B. has been cited as disposing of the objective basis of apparitions. But we are confronted at once by a precisely similar difficulty on the other side. One of the most commonly reported incidents connected with a post-mortem phantasm is the evident terror shown by dogs and other domestic animals, present at the time; * a feature which, again, is absent, so far as I know, in phantasms of the living. If the origin of the phantasm is subjective, *i.e.*, if it originates in the brain of the percipient, how are we to account for the perception extending to animals who have no sort of interest in the matter? To set up thought-transference from the percipient in such a case would be to press that hypothesis almost to absurdity, and certainly far beyond anything we have experimental warrant for.

The old difficulty about the clothes of the ghost, always brought up against the objective theory of post-mortem apparitions might, I think, be turned in this way. If we assume an objective basis, we must admit that, considering the rarity and evanescence of the appearance, it is something taken on by the disembodied spirit at a certain time and place. But if the spirit can thus take on the semblance of the human form (either voluntarily, or, as seems more probable, automatically), there is no reason why it should not take that semblance clothed as easily as unclothed. It would naturally, in fact, wear the appearance to which it had been most accustomed.

Persons who talk glibly of "spirit" and "matter" sometimes forget that of the former we know absolutely nothing, and that the latter is known to us only as representation, and not as the thing in itself. Pure spirit is in fact unthinkable. For either it must be infinite and omnipresent, or it must possess form, extension, and locality, all of which are properties of matter. Is "spirit" simply "matter" in a condition of indefinite tenuity? or are the two combined in an organic body like an acid with a base forming a chemical compound equally unlike either? (For what can be more unlike a living body than the dead elements of which protoplasm is composed?) Is electricity "matter"? † Is a shadow "matter"? If not, then that which is not matter may yet be objective, or at least may be objectively apprehended. I ask these questions with no expectation of an answer. But I conceive it possible that we may ultimately, in the words of Professor Tyndall, "discern in that matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all . . . life." ‡

But I have no theory to uphold. Rather would I urge upon all who are investigating this most deeply interesting of all human problems—the

* In this very case it will be remembered that the living dogs present with General Barter evinced fear and whimpered when he saw the apparition.

† Cf. W. H. Preec, Address to the British Association, 1888.

‡ Belfast Address, 1874.

evidences of a future state—to content themselves with the patient and conscientious observation and accumulation of facts, obtained at first hand, and rigorously sifted.

In the meantime there is plenty of work for the experimental student. We cannot indeed capture a ghost, whenever we want, and take him into the laboratories for analysis or vivisection. But we can, by more than one method, investigate the nature and laws of our own psychic constitution, and from these build up a knowledge of what to expect in, and how to test the evidences for, a psychical existence in a future state. And this not by dubious and ever contradictory systems of metaphysics, but by the sure methods of inductive research. In the first place we have, in hypnotism, a process which has already revealed to us the wholly unexpected fact of a secondary passive personality (or, as some hold, many more besides), lying below our active consciousness, wrapped up as it were like the moth in the chrysalis, a discovery destined, I believe, to modify, if not to revolutionise, all pre-existing metaphysical systems. But the field of hypnotic research has already been so fully covered that, just for the present, it is difficult to see what more can be done in it. Automatic or planchette writing, on the other hand, has scarcely gone beyond a drawing-room amusement (except as a mode of Spiritualistic communication which is not now under consideration). Those who are willing to pursue this method of psychical research with a scientific aim, free from Spiritualistic or other prepossessions, and to take the pains of making every experiment with a definite aim, may be able to throw a greater light upon the constitution of the human spirit than by most other means I know of. But it is essential that the experiments (which may be made by any child for whom the instrument will act) should be conducted by some person who has given attention to the subject, or knows what is to be attempted. I shall be very happy to offer any suggestions of this sort in my power to anyone who may do me the compliment to ask for them.

THOMAS BARKWORTH.

Chigwell, Essex.

P.S.—Since the above letter was written I have made an examination, as carefully as circumstances permit, of the cases published by the Society, from which I gather that while the “ghost chill” has been recorded in much less than 1 per cent. of Phantasms of the Living, it is mentioned in about 7 per cent. of recognised Phantasms of the Dead, and nearly 14 per cent. of recognised and unrecognised together. The feeling of chill is also frequently alluded to in the records of séances with Mr. Home. Of the cases of animal terror I have not found one produced by a recognised Phantasm of the Living, but about 12 per cent. in other cases, nearly all unrecognised, but generally assumed by the percipient to be post-mortem for reasons more or less cogent.

A discussion of Mr. Barkworth's main argument would seem to be impossible without entering into the “dubious metaphysics” which he desires to avoid. We will only point out that there is an ambiguity in the word “objective,” which may either be understood to mean real though purely psychical existence independent of the percipient's mind, or may be used to imply

some mode of material existence. The "objectivity" of ghosts in the latter sense appears to us to involve difficulties, the gravity of which Mr. Barkworth has perhaps hardly recognised.

Moreover, the distinctions drawn by him between phantasms of the living and phantasms of the dead in respect of (1) the sensation of cold sometimes experienced by the percipient, (2) the appearance of the phantasm in particular localities, and (3) the terror of animals, are scarcely, we think, justified by the facts so far collected by the society. All these points are interesting and should at some future time be fully discussed with all the light that can be thrown on them by the evidence available, some of which will be furnished by the census of hallucinations now in progress. We may, however, now make one or two provisional remarks bearing on them. Apparitions of human beings may be divided into three classes, viz. :—(a) recognised apparitions of living people; (b) recognised apparitions of dead people; (c) apparitions which are not recognised at all and which may therefore represent living people or dead people or have no relation to any one, living or dead. This classification is as appropriate if we consider only those apparitions which there is some *primâ facie* reason for regarding as having some cause external to the percipient's mind,—and which we may for brevity call veridical apparitions (using the word in a wide sense),—as if we include the much larger number which there is at present no such reason for regarding as other than purely subjective. But the comparative numbers of the classes are different in the two cases. Among veridical apparitions, recognised apparitions of the living are the most numerous, then unrecognised apparitions (this class including most of the collective cases and cases where figures are seen successively and independently in "haunted houses" and the like), and lastly, recognised apparitions of the dead. Taking all apparitions together, however, unrecognised apparitions are the most numerous, then recognised apparitions of the living, and again lastly, recognised apparitions of the dead.

Clearly in any comparison between apparitions of the living and of the dead the unrecognised class must be treated as neutral ground, and not assumed to be apparitions of dead persons; and we are the more concerned to call attention to this because we fear that our practice of numbering unrecognised phantasms, with those of the recognised dead, among "G." cases in our collections may be apt to lead to some confusion; and this confusion may perhaps be increased by the inclusion by Mrs. Sidgwick and by Mr. Podmore of "haunted house" cases, where the "ghost" is entirely unrecognised, in papers entitled "Phantasms of the Dead."

The feeling of cold spoken of by Mr. Barkworth is occasionally testified to with all classes of apparitions—of the dead, of the living, and unrecognised ones,—but not at all generally with any of them.* Very likely, however, it may be experienced more often than it is mentioned; the traditional idea of the hair standing on end when a ghost appears suggests this. Mr. Gurney, who had probably made a more complete study of the casual hallucinations of sane persons than anyone else, often expressed in conversation the opinion that this feeling of cold was a not uncommon accompaniment of

* I am unable altogether to follow Mr. Barkworth's estimate of the numbers.

purely subjective hallucinations, depending probably on the physical processes, whatever they may be, which accompany these; and he regarded the fact that it also occurred in the case of veridical phantasms as one of the reasons for believing the experience in these cases to have the same hallucinatory character as the subjective ones, though differently originated.

As to the appearance of phantasms of the dead in particular localities, there are, we think, very few well authenticated cases where an apparition clearly recognised as that of a definite dead person *recurs* in a particular place. There are, on the other hand, several cases of solitary appearances where the only link between the percipient and the dead person whose figure is seen is the locality—where in fact the locality of the apparition leads to its recognition. But in the case of phantasms of the living, locality also plays an important part, though usually it is obscured by much stronger links between agent and percipient. Among veridical cases there occurs to us one quoted in *Phantasms of the Living*, Vol. I., p. 540 (No. 200), where a young man who, in delirium, in Australia, imagines himself on the lawn at home, is seen on the lawn by his sister; and also No. 35, Vol. I., pp. 225-6— not a visual case— where Mr. Newnham, dreaming of his *fiancée* going upstairs, runs after her in his dream, and clasps her round the waist, and she—actually going upstairs at the moment—hears the step and feels the clasp. In non-veridical apparitions of living persons, locality is often an element—for instance, it is very common for such apparitions to represent persons living in the same house as the percipient and to appear in the house in places where the living person might naturally be seen. In one of these cases a gentleman “haunted” his own drawing-room, his figure being seen there on two occasions independently by different members of his family! Again, we have some cases where A, waiting for B, sees him coming in the direction from which he is expected.

Finally, as to the terror of animals. The only instance we happen to remember of its occurrence in connection with an apparition known to be a post-mortem one is General Barter's; though there are, of course, several instances of dogs and horses showing alarm when something mysterious was seen or heard by their masters, or in places supposed to be haunted. We have one where a dog was alarmed by a sound said to have resembled the footsteps of a deceased person when nothing was seen; and a similar one (B. L. 31) where a dog was alarmed by the sound of footsteps which apparently coincided with the delirious imaginings of an absent living brother of the percipient's. But a good deal more evidence is required before it can be confidently affirmed that animals share in phantasmal experiences—a proposition which, from the nature of the case, is very difficult to prove, on account of the difficulty of ascertaining definitely the cause of the animals' emotion.—Ed.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIBRARY CATALOGUE.

Additions since the last list ("Journal" for May).

THE EDMUND GURNEY LIBRARY.

- BJÖRNSTRÖM (Fredrik, M.D.), Hypnotism: Its History and Present Development. From the Swedish *New York*, 1889
 DOUBLE PERSONALITY (*British Medical Journal*, May 17th, 1890),
London, 1890
- KRAFFT-EBING (Dr. R. von), An Experimental Study in the Domain of Hypnotism. From the German, by Charles G. Chaddock, M.D. *New York*, 1889
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London, 1890
- LUYS (Dr. J.), Leçons Cliniques sur les Principaux Phénomènes de l'Hypnotisme *Paris*, 1890
 — Les Emotions dans l'état d'Hypnotisme et l'action à distance des Substances Médicamenteuses ou Toxiques *Paris*, 1890
- BÜCHNER (Prof. Dr. L.), Das künftige Leben und die moderne Wissenschaft.....*Leipzig*, 1889
 — Fremdes und Eigenes aus dem geistigen Leben der Gegenwart
Leipzig, 1890
- MESMER (Dr. F. A.), Mesmerismus, oder System der Wechselwirkungen, &c., herausg. von Wolfart (Dr. K. C.) ... *Berlin*, 1814

THE GENERAL LIBRARY.

- EPITOMES OF THREE SCIENCES:—Comparative Philology, Psychology, and Old Testament History. By H. Oldenburg, J. Jastrow, and C. H. Cornill *Chicago*, 1890*
- HUMAN NATURE, Vols. VIII., IX., X., XI., and Nos. January to July, of Vol. XII *London*, 1874-8
- AKSAKOF (Alexander), Animismus und Spiritismus. 2 Vols.
Leipzig, 1890
- MANETHO (G.), Aus Uebersinnlicher Sphäre *Vienna*, 1890†
- NEUE SPIRITUALISTISCHE BLÄTTER, Vol. VIII., Nos. 1—...*Berlin*, 1890
 * Presented by the publishers. † Presented anonymously.

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HENRY SIDGWICK.