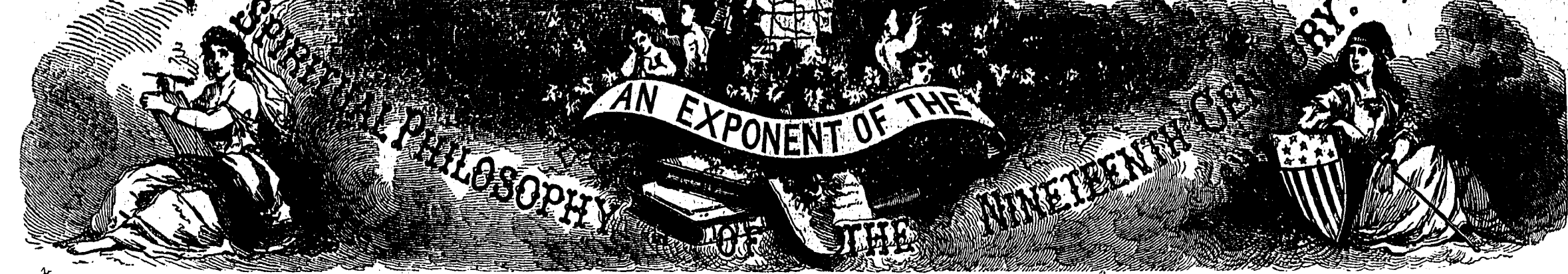


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## PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—SOME INTERESTING CASES.

BY REV. M. J. SAVAGE.

I am to tell some stories; others are to explain them—if they can. Not that I mean to shirk any responsibility. I am ready with my opinions as to what seems to me reasonable in the way of theory, and what unreasonable, only I do not propose to dogmatize; and I am ready to listen to the suggested explanations of anybody else.

The one thing I know about these stories is that they are true. I say this advisedly and weighing my words. If in the case of any one of them, I only think or believe it is true, I shall say so; but nearly all of them I know to be true—know it in the same sense in which I used the word of that which is scientifically demonstrated.

These stories will lead us into the realm of the supernatural. I do not say supernatural, because I do not believe in any supernatural. In my way of looking at the universe, I regard all that is as natural. If, for example, there are invisible beings who can take part in the events of our lives, their being invisible does not make them either supernatural or supernatural. A blind man would have no right to regard other people as supernatural merely because he could not see them. Science makes it purely rational for us to believe in the possibility of the existence and activity of persons we cannot see. Our senses are limited; so it is only a question of fact and evidence. But certain things may transcend the range of our ordinary or normal experience. For clearness of thought, then, let us call these supernatural.

If the claim is made that some supernatural thing has occurred, it is only reasonable that people should demand adequate proof. The chances are against the supernatural, and the normal is more common than the supernatural. If some one tells us that he has just seen on the street a dark-haired man dressed in gray, we do not ask for evidence of such a fact; but if he tells us that, while he was looking at him, he faded out of sight and disappeared, we naturally and rightly doubt the reality of his experience. We know that people can be mistaken; we know that they sometimes lie; we know that, in certain conditions of the brain, men think they see when no objective reality corresponds with their vision. The probability, then, are in favor of some one of these explanations.

But that a real, conscious, intelligent being may exist and not be visible to normal eyes; that such a being may be seen at one time by a particular person and not at another; that he may be seen by one person and not by others—there is nothing in all this that contravenes scientific possibility. It is not as if a man should tell us that he knew of a country where water did not freeze at 32° Fahrenheit. The scientifically impossible is one thing; while the improbable, the uncommon, or the unusual, is quite another thing. The supernatural may be true. While, then, the probabilities are against it, the proof may be such as to render it credible. Indeed, it is conceivable that the proof may become so strong as to make incredulity absurd and unscientific. The attitude of caution is rational; but the attitude of those who "know" a thing cannot be true, merely because it is unusual, or because it does not fit into the theory of things which they happen to hold—is irrational.

What looks like proof of certain supernatural happenings has been accumulating so rapidly during the last few years that public attention has been turned in this direction as never before. Psychical investigation is becoming "respectable." It will be fortunate for it if it does not become a fashionable fad for those who want a new sensation. It is curious, and would be ludicrous were it not sad, to watch the progress of these things. "You ought to be thankful to me," said John Weiss one morning as I met him on Washington street, "for I have been killed to make room for you." Yes, brave men were professionally and socially killed to make room for religious liberty possible. And now even the "Orthodox" get great credit for being "liberal," and the blood-bought liberty is the hobby of snobs. Always some Winkleroid makes way for liberty at the price of fatal thrusts of spears.

A world-famous man, a Church of England clergyman and scientist in one, said to me one day, "I do not talk about my psychic experiences and knowledge with everybody. I used to think all who had anything to do with these things were fools; and I do not enjoy being called a fool." But now the danger is that the society fools will go to dabbling in the matter. Said another man to me—a scholar, known to two continents—"Suppose you and I should come to believe, it would only be a couple more cranks." But it begins to look as though the "cranks" might get to be in the majority, when a famous German philosopher can say that "The man who any longer denies clairvoyance does not show that he is prejudiced; he only shows that he is ignorant."

So much by way of preface to my stories. It seems to me that all these points, at least, ought to be kept in mind by one who reads them and seriously tries to think out what they may mean. Now to the stories themselves.

I. Let me begin by telling about some raps.

Do these ever occur except in cases where they are purposely produced? Are they always a trick? A vast amount of ingenuity has been expended by those who have thought they could explain these things as being the toe joints, or other anatomical peculiarities. It will be something to find out that genuine raps do occur, whatever theory may be adopted in explanation of them.

I know a regular physician living not a thousand miles from Boston. His wife I should call a psychic, though she does not call herself so. Neither she nor her husband has ever had anything to do with Spiritualism, nor are they believers. Where they formerly lived they were continually troubled by strange and unaccountable happenings, but though they moved to their present residence, the happenings—with one important exception—have not ceased. No attempt has been made to reduce these happenings to order, or to find out whether there is any discoverable intelligence connected with them. The doctor vaguely holds the opinion that they indicate some abnormal nervous condition on the part of his wife. So far the whole matter has been treated from that point of view. But what is it that happens? Sometimes, for two hours on a stretch, the doctor and his wife are kept wide awake at night by loud rattlings on the headboard of their bed. In accordance with his nervous theory, the doctor will hold his wife with one arm, while the hand of the other arm is pressed against the headboard, in the attempt thus to put an end to the disturbance. Said the doctor to me one day, "If anybody thinks these rattlings are not genuine, I should like to have him go through some of my experiences."

He and his wife will be sitting by the drawing-room table at an evening. They will be conscious of a stream of air passing by them—an accompaniment of psychic facts well known to investigators—and then the "trouble" will begin. Sometimes it is only raps. At other times they will hear a noise on the floor of the room above, and will think their boy has fallen out of bed; but on going up to see, they find him quietly asleep. Sometimes there will be a loud crash in the corner of the room over the furnace register, as though a basket of crockery had been thrown down and broken. They occupy the house alone, and have no other way of explaining these unpleasant facts than the one alluded to above.

I give this case because of the undoubted occurrence of these things in the house of one who is not a believer, nor even an investigator. There is no expectancy or invitation of them, or any superstitious attitude of mind toward them. They are, in this case, plain, bold, apparent facts, as real as breakfast or supper, or the existence of a brick in the sidewalk.

The "one important exception" referred to above is this: In the house they formerly occupied, the doctor's wife sometimes saw the figure of a woman. Others were said to have seen it also. It was never visible to the doctor. There is the story of a tragic death which connects this woman with this particular house. Those who believe in haunted houses would thus be able to explain why this figure is never seen in the house at present occupied by the doctor's family.

Here there are raps not to be explained as the conscious, purposed work of any visible person; nor can they be explained as the result of the shrinking of boards, as the work of rats or mice, or in any ordinary way. Starting with facts like these, many persons have supposed themselves to get into communication with invisible intelligences who had taken these ways of attracting attention. Nothing of this sort has been even attempted here. I simply set forth the facts and the reality of the raps.

II. I will now tell a brief story of one of my own experiences in this line. Until within the past year or two there lived in New York City a lady who, when a girl, had been somewhat known as a "medium." But for twenty or thirty years she led a quiet home life with her husband, a well-known business man. But intimates in the house told stories of remarkable occurrences. For example, a friend of this family has told me how, when at breakfast, after having spent the night there, raps would come on the table; and, by means of them, how long and pleasant conversations would be held with those who once had walked the earth, but now were in the unseen. This is his belief.

Having occasion to pass through New York, this friend, above referred to, gave me a letter of introduction, saying he knew I would be welcomed if I called at the house of this lady. I had never seen her, nor she me, but one morning I presented myself with my letter. I was shown into the back parlor. Carpenters were at work on a conservatory opening out of this room where the lady had received me. They made more or less noise, but not enough to interfere with our conversation. Soon I began to hear raps, apparently on the floor, and then in different parts of the room. On this the lady remarked, simply: "Evidently there is some one here who wishes to communicate with you. Let us go into the front parlor, where it will be quieter." This was done, the raps following us, or rather beginning again as soon as we were seated. At her suggestion I then took pencil and paper (which I happened to have in my bag), and sat at one side of a marble-top table, while she sat at the other side in a rocker and some distance away. Then she said, "As one way of getting at the matter, suppose you do this: You know what friends you have in the spirit-world. Write now a list of names—any names you please, real or fictitious, only among them somewhere include the names of some friends in the spirit-world who, you think, might like to communicate with you if such a thing were possible." I then began. I held a paper so that she could not possibly have seen what I wrote, even though she had not been so far away. I took special pains that no movement or facial expression should betray me. Meantime she sat quietly rocking and talking. As I wrote, perhaps at the eighth or tenth name, I began to write the name of a lady friend who had not been long dead. I had hardly written the first letter before there came three loud, distinct raps. Then my hostess said: "This friend of yours, of course, knows where she died. Write now a list of places, including in it the place of her death, and see if she will recognize it." This I did, beginning with Vienna, and so on with any that occurred to me. Again, I had hardly begun to write the real name, when once more came the three raps. And so on concerning other matters. I speak of these only as specimens.

Now, I cannot say that in this particular case the raps were not caused by the toe joints of the lady. The thing that puzzles me is explained by the fact that the toe joints happened to know the name of my friend, where she died, etc., which facts the lady herself did not know and never had known. Certain theories, as explanations of certain facts, are already regarded as demonstrated by those familiar with the results of psychic investigation. Among these are hypnosis, clairvoyance, telepathy, and the agency of the

sub-conscious self as active about matters with which the conscious self is not familiar. Can the simplest, genuine rap be explained as coming under either of these? No one has the slightest idea how, and as yet there is nothing in this direction that, even by courtesy, can be called a theory; but it may be possible that these raps are produced by psychic power. If so, as in Case I., the psychic herself does not know even that she does it, much less how. Are they the work of the sub-conscious self? No sub-conscious self has ever claimed to do it. And if so, from what source does this sub-conscious self, as in Case II., obtain a knowledge of facts the psychic never knew? To explain these cases in accordance with any yet accepted theories, mind-reading must also be introduced. This New York lady must have been able, not only to produce the raps, consciously or unconsciously, but also to read my mind and tell me things she never knew before. But these things, if they do no more, reveal such an extension of mental power as to lead us into a world vastly unlike that which is recognized by ordinary scientific theories; and it may be well for us to be on our guard lest we invent theories more decidedly supernatural than the facts we seek to explain.

III. I will now tell a story that will be explained as a case of telepathy. The date of the occurrence is April last, and the place Boston. For eight years Dr. B. and his mother had lived together in Odessa, a city in the southern part of Russia. Their relation was one of peculiar dependence and tenderness, as they had no other relatives living. The doctor left Odessa a year ago last fall. A close correspondence was kept up, it being their plan that the mother was to join him here as soon as he determined on a place of residence, and matters were properly arranged. On Monday, April 27th, the doctor received a letter telling him she was in the room of health, and full of anticipated joy over their speedy reunion. The doctor himself was growing happy and excited over the prospect. There was nothing, therefore, in the situation even to hint anything but happiness. But on April 28th, at 2:30 A. M., the doctor awoke, trembling from head to foot, and in the greatest excitement. He awoke out of a most vivid dream. He was in Odessa, and his mother was taking leave of him, and saying, "God bless you, my boy! I shall never see you again here." The next day, or the same day, i. e., the 28th, he told the doctor's some friends (I have this from the friends as well as from himself) that there is no doubt as to the order of the events. During the morning of Wednesday, April 29th, the doctor received a telegram from a friend in New York saying, "Arrive 8 P. M., Boston. Expect you depot or Hotel Vendome." This troubled him a little, taken in connection with his dream; for there was no ordinary known reason for a visit from this friend at this particular time.

And this fact needs to be inserted right here. On Wednesday morning early, a friend called at the doctor's room and found that he had been so excited, and had suffered so the night before, that he had come in and thrown himself on his lounge in his clothes, and without removing even his overcoat, and so had passed the night, so absorbed in his forebodings that he was hardly conscious of what he was doing.

On Wednesday evening, then, the 29th, he met his friend from New York. After two hours of preliminary talk, in which he tried to prepare him for bad news, he handed him a cablegram in German. This cablegram asked him to indulgently prepare the doctor for the news and death of his mother. The hour of her death coincided precisely with the time of the doctor's dream. Not only this, she died holding the hand of the friend who had sent the cablegram; and in her wanderings she imagined she was talking to the doctor, and taking leave of him in the precise words that he had heard in his dream.

What, then, are these souls or spirits or minds of ours that can communicate from Russia to Boston by some psychic line whose wonder turns telegraph and telephone to commonplace? One case like this might be explained as merely a coincidence. But so many have been carefully traced and verified that the theory of coincidence becomes too irrational even to consider.

IV. My fourth story goes far beyond any of these, and—well, I will ask the reader to decide as to whether there is any help in hypnosis or clairvoyance or mind-reading, or any of the selves of the psychic, conscious or sub-conscious.

Early on Friday morning, Jan. 18th, 1884, the steamer "City of Columbus," en route from Boston to Savannah, was wrecked on the rocks off Gay Head, the southwestern point of Martha's Vineyard. Among the passengers was an elderly widow, the sister-in-law of one of my friends, and the mother of another.

This lady, Mrs. K., and her sister, Mrs. B., had both been interested in psychic investigation, and had held sittings with a psychic whom I will call Mrs. E. Mrs. B. was in poor health, and was visited regularly for treatment on every Monday by the psychic, Mrs. E. On occasion of these professional visits Mrs. B. and her sister, Mrs. K., would frequently have a sitting. This Mrs. E., the psychic, had been known to all the parties concerned for many years, and was held in the highest respect. She lived in a town fifteen or twenty miles from Boston. This, then, was the situation of affairs when the wreck of the steamer took place.

The papers of Friday evening, Jan. 18th, of course contained accounts of the disaster. On Saturday, Jan. 19th, Dr. K., my friend, the son of Mrs. K., hastened down to the beach in search of the body of his mother. No trace whatever was discovered. He became so excited that she was among the lost, but was not able to find the body. Saturday night he returned to the city. Sunday morning, the 21st, Mrs. B. came from her country home to give the customary treatment to her patient, Mrs. B. Dr. K. called on his aunt while Mrs. E. was there, and they decided to have a sitting, to see if there would come to them anything that even purported to be news from the missing mother and sister. Immediately Mrs. K. claimed to be present; and along with many other matters, she told them three separate and distinct things which, if true, it was utterly impossible for either of them to have known.

She told them that, after the steamer had sailed, she had been able to exchange her inside state-room for an outside one. All that any of them knew was that she had been obliged to take an inside room, and that she did not want it.

2. She told them that she played whist with some friends in the steamer saloon during the evening; and she further told them the names of the ones who had made up the table.

3. Then came the startling and utterly unexpected statement: "I do not want you to think of me as having been drowned. I was not drowned. When the alarm came I was in

[Continued on second page.]

## Original Story.

## HERETOFORE--NOW--HEREAFTER!

BY ELVIRA HOWE BIGELOW.

[Concluded.]  
We gathered the children in and took them to places of refuge. My love for the little ones was so strong that I influenced her to give them more of her precious time and attention than she had thus far done. Together we worked, the most perfect harmony existing between us. When she rested from her labors I could only wait and watch, for my powers were limited; without her I could not penetrate the material to find the spiritual, through which alone I could give aid. My interest was wholly centered in the work of the woman; as an individual I knew her not. A plague of great virulence broke out in the city where we labored. The woman's strength was severely taxed, she was stricken down, and in a few hours the death of the material body ensued, and her brave, unselfish spirit was released.

Then for the first time I recognized her as an individual, as a woman. For the first time my nature responded to a woman's love. Her glad recognition of me as her spirit-helper awoke in me an ecstasy hitherto unknown. I recognized her symmetry and beauty, but I was not sufficiently developed to rejoice unselfishly in her superiority. I was chagrined by my own want of comeliness. I was grieved and disappointed, and I should have been far better satisfied to have found the woman faulty, rather than myself. This was a phase of life to which I was an entire stranger, namely, to feel myself an inferior. My grief and mood brought me en rapport with an inexperienced, loving girl who was about to become a mother without the sanction of the law. My sympathy for her sorrow led me to assuage my own despondency by giving her courage to bear her burden bravely. My endeavors were crowned with success, for my great knowledge and wisdom were quenched, and I became a crying, pining babe, born into the earth-life under the grievous ban of illegitimacy. Ah! how heavy a burden that is to a proud, sensitive nature none need tell me. My mother's burden was scarcely greater than the one I carried for her as a little child, as before I could understand its meaning I felt the scorn that accompanied the whispered word when we chanced to appear in public.

Dear mother! more sinned against than sinning, your sorrow and grief were but evidences of your weakness; and your helplessness was a strong weapon in the hands of the ignoble souls who heaped their uncharitable contempt upon your bowed head. Even as a child, dear mother, the willfulness of your soft, dark eyes appealed to me. My parental love and respect were not dormant, but active and well developed, and my mother had great need of it. I think that the prevalent idea among believers in reincarnation—i. e., that we choose our own path in life, marking it out and following it as our spiritual needs demand—arises from the fact that our affinities lead us always in the right way. I, for my part, know that I never deliberately or consciously marked out such a birth or life. I had not the requisite wisdom. I did not know my needs. I did not know that in my previous earth-life I had learned of woman's strong, quiet, self-reliant nature; nor did I know that it was necessary for my spirit to feel the woes and carry the burdens of one whom I respected and loved as my mother, and while I honored I should also pity and protect her, and she should lean upon and look up to me for comfort! In my previous earth-life I had learned of the strength and purity of woman; now I was to learn of her loveliness and weakness. Intellectually I was apt, in morals I was upright, and while my mother blushed for my birth she never blushed for my conduct, and I early vowed that those who now passed her by with scorn should seek and honor her; every tear, every sigh, her sensitive shrinking from notice, was a stimulus to my ambition.

I passed through the regular course of study and chose the ministry as a profession. My mother went with me wherever my interests led, for I was all to her. Father and mother having both been called to spirit-life when she was still a child, left without a natural guardian, she in her innocence and youth fell a victim to the base selfishness of a man who should have been her protector, as he was her instructor. Other than this I knew nothing of my father until I met him in spirit-life. I am not proud of him. He has no part in me, nor I in him. I see you smile at this evidence of my human nature. Dear child, we are human, with all of the loves, hates and desires which we possessed as men, temperate and controlled. The wretch who called into life my material body was not in any sense the author of my spirit. I detest his base selfishness; and I, as well as his victim, am as far from him as the darkness in which he is struggling is from the light of a spirit who loves his fellowmen.

When I was still a lad we removed from the home of my mother's sorrow to the old University town, which is dear to us still. My mother was supposed to be a widow, and among strangers we found an asylum.

In that dear old town that had given us and our sorrow so kindly a shelter, I met and fell in

love with a beautiful, willful girl, who after ward became my dearly-beloved wife. In the long and confidential talk which I had with my mother before my betrothal, she urged me to tell my love of my birth. But I replied, "It does not affect me as a man. I am none the less honorable that my father was a villain; and, mother, your good name and happiness are dearer to me than the love of this dear girl even, and before I will sacrifice you I will give her up, and remain always your loving and obedient son." Dear mother! How well I remember that evening. With tear-wet face and trembling lip she faltered: "My son, your thoughtful, tender love has made even my sin a blessing, and I humbly thank God for your birth."

No praise was ever so sweet! No hour of my life so glorified! I had reached the goal of my ambition. I had filled my mother's desolate heart with peace and joy. After a few years, when still in the flush and ardor of youth, I was settled over a large city church. Then I married. For me to relieve the sorrow of God's poor, and those that were deep in degradation, was inborn; I had not lost my former lessons. While the memory of those scenes had been dropped on my entrance into this last earth-life, their effect upon my spirit remained. I loved the work of ministering unto the needy. It was from real love that I sought out the forsaken and miserable. In this field I found my bright, piquant, merry wife an ardent and efficient co-worker. She refused from the first to be hampered by church nonsense, as she termed it, and insisted upon her liberty, and her right to her own way, refusing to do many things which were then required of a clergyman's wife. This would have been perhaps a source of trial to me if my blessed mother had not come to the rescue, and quietly filled in the gap. My mother! I love the name, repeat it as often as I may! She was a dignified, beautiful woman, and the matrons of our parish received her ministrations without audible comment; but many times in those early years I had to stand between my wife and the censure of the deacons, for I would not have her hampered. I, too, was liberal enough to see that much which was required of her was "church nonsense." Their gossip affected her but lightly. "I am married to you, James," she would say, "not to an old church," and I was foolish and fond enough to like it, and our life was full of harmony.

My wife's warm, impulsive spirit led her straight into the hearts of the poor, not only of our own parish, but of the larger city charities in which she took an active, intelligent interest. In this missionary work she often became so absorbed that I would teasingly remind her that it was James she was married to, not a city hospital, or an old woman, or perhaps a family of immigrants, helpless and needy.

In time dear children came to us, beautiful to our loving eyes. The first, a boy. How my heart beat with fond pride as my mother placed him in my arms; but I well knew the memory that stirred her heart of another birth where no father's welcome awaited the helpless stranger, and even the mother's heart throbbed only with pain and shame at this birth-cry. Taking the new-born babe from my mother's arms, I knelt before her, craving her blessing upon my boy.

"Dearer to me than my son, even, is my mother," I said. Never should a shadow fall upon that true, loving heart, if by word or deed I could drive it away.

This sweet domestic love!—spirit-life has nothing purer, nothing more satisfying.

I linger with pleasant memories on this simple home-life. How vividly comes before me the picture of the happy girl-wife and mother, as she proudly displayed her new treasure to admiring friends; and what pleasure it gave when she so confidently placed her babe's welfare in our mother's keeping. Nothing of jealousy or envy ever marred my darling's treatment of my mother, and to mother she was "James's wife." That would have been sufficient, if she had not won her by her own loveliness.

And still, dear friend, some people said that the pastor's wife was not perfect. But to me her faults but added to her grace and beauty. "And what is perfection?" I ask. That which most delights us. We do not see with our neighbor's eyes; indeed, we often think our neighbor blind.

The wife, the mother, the boy—whichever are the dearest? I questioned. I have never yet arrived at a satisfactory conclusion. All had their own place in my heart, and there was room for eight more, each and every one as dear as the other. The children, as precious as they were to the material heart, never infringed upon the wife's love for the husband.

James was first and last; every joy and every sorrow we shared. I can see her now softly pushing open my study door and putting her dear face between my eyes and the book or sermon that I might be engaged upon, claiming my attention. And whatever she asked she received, for what word could be so important that it must be uttered to her dear one's hurt?

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