

JOURNAL

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|------|---|------|
| Meetings of Council | 17 | New York Anthropological Society | 23 |
| Members and Associates Elected February, 1884 | 18 | Correspondence | 29 |
| Report on the "Shropshire Disturbances" | 19 | Supplementary Library Catalogue | 30 |
| General Meeting | 26 | Presentations to Library, February, 1884 | 31 |
| The Vienna Disturbances | 27 | Committees | 31 |
| | | Officers and Council for 1884 | 32 |

MEETINGS OF COUNCIL.

A Council Meeting was held on February the 5th, the President in the chair, when the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, Dr. Wyld, Messrs. W. H. Browne, W. H. Coffin, E. Gurney, C. C. Massey, E. R. Pease, F. H. Podmore and H. A. Smith were present.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and signed as correct.

Mr. John H. Stack, of 30, Kensington Park Gardens, was elected a Member of Council under the second clause of Rule 17 ; and Mr. Geo. Bidder, Q.C., of Ravensbury Park, Mitcham, Surrey, was re-elected on the Council under the same clause.

Sixteen new Members and Associates were elected, whose names and addresses will be found on another page.

Various matters of routine and other business having been gone through, the meeting was made "special," to consider two motions, notice of which had been given in due form. After discussion, two resolutions were unanimously carried as follows, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 24 :—

(1) That Rule 8 stand thus :—"The Council may invite any person who (i.) is either distinguished for knowledge and experience in Psychical Research or otherwise eminent, or who (ii.) has rendered services to the Society, to become an Honorary Member of the Society, with the privileges but without the obligations attaching to Associates."

(2) That the second sentence of Rule 23 stand thus :—"Every Committee shall report its proceedings to the Council, through the Chairman or Secretary of such Committee, one of whom must be a Member of the Council, and no report shall be published without the sanction of the Council."

The Council also met on February the 27th. Lord Rayleigh was elected as a Vice-President of the Society. A considerable number of additions were again made to the list of Members, the particulars of which will be found on the next page.

Arrangements were under consideration for taking the Rooms at 14, Dean's Yard, under a longer tenure than the yearly agreement at present existing, and it is hoped that they will shortly be completed.

ELECTIONS DURING FEBRUARY, 1884.

VICE-PRESIDENT.

LORD RAYLEIGH, F.R.S., Professor of Experimental Physics in the University of Cambridge.

MEMBERS.

ARGLES, MISS EDITH M., 34, Norham-road, Oxford.
 BEVERIDGE, ERSKINE, St. Leonard's Hill, Dunfermline.
 CRAWSHAY, R. T., 16, Berkeley-square, London, W.
 GARDNER, HERBERT, 46, Dover-street, Piccadilly, London, W.
 GATTY, ALFRED SCOTT, 71, Warwick Road, London, S.W.
 PASCHKOFF, A., Trinity College, Cambridge.
 SCOTT, MISS, 64, Harley-street, London, W.
 TAYLOR, MAJOR G. L. LETTS, Royal Military College, Farnborough Station, Hants.
 WEMYSS, MRS. M. ERSKINE, The Clock House, Chelsea Embankment, London, S.W.
 WILLMOTT, MISS R., Warley Place, Great Warley, Essex.

ASSOCIATES, HONORARY AND CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

ANDERSON, JAMES ARBUTHNOT, 46, Warwick Gardens, Kensington, London, W.
 BRUHNS, THEODORE, Simferopol, Russia.*
 BURT, PERCIVAL J., 16, Leadenhall-street, London, E.C.
 BUTLER, NICHOLAS MURRAY, Columbia College, New York, U.S.A.
 CARMICHAEL, REV. F., LL.D., Ranelagh, Dublin.
 COOKSON, MRS. MONTAGUE, 29, Rutland Gate, London, S.W.
 FENZI, THE CHEVALIER SEBASTIANO, Florence.
 FLEMING, A., Broxbourne, Herts.
 GRIGNON, REV. WILLIAM S., M.A., The Grove, Pluckley, Kent.
 JOHNSON, WILLIAM ERNEST, B.A., King's College, Cambridge.
 MACALISTER, PROFESSOR, M.D., F.R.S., Strathmore House, 5, Harvey-road, Cambridge.
 MACKENZIE, MISS MINNA, 1, Ennismore-gardens, London, S.W.
 MIDDLETON, MISS ALICE EDITH, 3, Porchester Gate, London, W.
 MULLEN, REV. DAVID, B.A., Kingstown, Co. Dublin.
 NEVILLE, FRANCIS HENRY, M.A., Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.
 NEWTON, RICHARD HEBER, Garden City, New York, U.S.A.
 NICHOLS, MISS IRENE, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.
 PERRY, EDWIN, C. B.A., King's College, Cambridge.
 RANDOLPH, EDMUND, 34, Upper Brook-street, Park-lane, London, W.
 RAWSON, HENRY G., 68, Cornwall-gardens, London, S.W.
 STEARN, H. T., B.A., King's College, Cambridge.
 WHERRY, G. E., M.R.C.S., Corpus Buildings, Cambridge.
 WHITTINGHAM, REV. R., Pikesville, Maryland, U.S.A.

* Mr. Bruhns, who was already a Member, has now been elected a Corresponding Member.

REPORT ON THE "SHROPSHIRE DISTURBANCES."

We herewith place before our members the report referred to in our previous number, which the Hon. Sec. of the Physical Phenomena Committee has presented to the Society, as the result of his personal and careful investigations into the mysterious disturbances which occurred in a farmer's house in Shropshire last November. As some months have now elapsed since the newspapers contained the description of these disturbances, it may be convenient to precede this report by the account given in one of the daily papers, otherwise some of the references in the report might be unintelligible.

"A series of occurrences which have caused great excitement in the neighbourhood of Leebotwood, and no small speculation and wonder in the adjacent town of Shrewsbury, have just taken place. At a secluded farm called 'The Woods,' which is about a mile and a half from Toppington and nine or ten from Shrewsbury, resides a farmer, named Hampson, and about four o'clock one afternoon, at the latter end of last week, the servants were in the kitchen of the farmhouse, preparing tea. On the fire was a saucepan in which were some eggs boiling, and this 'jumped,' as the girls declared, off the fire, while the tea things were thrown from the table and smashed. Some of the hot cinders were also thrown out of the grate, and set fire to some clothes in a basket. So far, the explosion of some material in the grate might have been sufficient to account for the occurrence; but what is said to have occurred subsequently will not bear such an explanation. On the table was a paraffin lamp, with a globe, and the globe was 'lifted' off the stand and thrown across the room, the lamp itself being left on the table. A mat under the lamp took fire, and the inmates of the house becoming alarmed, they ran out for the neighbours. Among others who went to the house was a Mr. Lea, an adjacent farmer, who states that when he approached the house it seemed as if all the upstairs rooms were on fire, 'as there was such a light in the windows.' Mr. Hampson consequently went upstairs and made an examination, but everything there was safe, and in the usual order. As things were continuing to jump about the kitchen in a manner which was altogether inexplicable, and many were getting damaged, Hampson decided to remove everything that was in that apartment outside. He accordingly took down a barometer from the wall, when something struck him on the leg, and a loaf of bread which was on the table was thrown by some invisible means and hit him on the back. A volume of 'Pilgrim's Progress' was thrown or 'jumped' through the window, and a large ornamental seashell went through in a similar fashion. In the parlour a sewing machine was thrown about and damaged, and has had to be sent to be repaired. The nurse-girl was nursing the baby by the fire when some fire leapt from the grate, and the child's hair was singed and its arms burnt. The girl was so alarmed that she set off to a neighbour's, and on the way there her clothes took fire, and had to be torn from her body. During the evening, while the girl was at the neighbour's, a plate which she touched while having her supper was

apparently thrown on the floor, and the pieces were picked up by some unseen agency, and put in the centre of the table. Other occurrences are said to have taken place in the neighbour's house while the nurse-girl was there, the whole lasting considerably over half an hour. As no one could explain the cause of what they witnessed, the police were communicated with, and made full inquiries from the inmates of the house and others, the result being that they ordered the coal to be consumed in the open air, believing it to contain some explosive substance, but it burnt quietly away. Those who witnessed these occurrences tell a marvellously straightforward story, and curiously enough none of them attributed it to any supernatural cause, as might have been expected in a quiet country locality, but they say it was 'something in the coal or in the air,' while one or two fancy it was some electrical phenomena."

Subsequently the same paper states their "Shrewsbury correspondent telegraphs that he paid another visit to Weston Lullingfield yesterday, and was informed that on Saturday and Sunday there were more extraordinary manifestations in connection with the girl Emma Davies. Police-constable Taylor, of the Shropshire Constabulary, remained in the house until late on Saturday. During the time he was there the fender moved from the fireplace into the middle of the room, and on being replaced came forward a second and third time. A cushion placed at the back of a chair on which the girl sat several times flew across the room, and all the stitches in her apron came undone, followed later on by the buttons upon her dress being wrenched off. Miss Maddox, the village schoolmistress, made a statement to the correspondent to the effect that she called to see the girl, a former pupil, on Saturday evening, and had not long been seated when she observed both the chair and the girl rise from the floor. She took the girl on her lap and sat in the chair herself, and immediately the girl's boots flew off, and although replaced the circumstance was twice repeated. On Sunday a box in a bedroom was hurled across the room, and a number of cups and saucers were smashed."

The report by Mr. F. S. Hughes is as follows :—

During the first and second weeks of November, 1883, accounts were to be seen in the London and local papers of strange phenomena stated to have taken place at Wood's Farm, near Wem, and other houses in the neighbourhood.

These phenomena could not apparently be accounted for by ordinary physical laws, and it seemed therefore very desirable that the stories should be thoroughly sifted on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research.

The scene of the first series of these phenomena was Wood's Farm, and the time, the afternoon of Thursday, the 1st November. A nurse-girl at the farm, named Emma Davies, was connected in some way with the disturbances by the occupiers, and she was accordingly dismissed and sent to her home at a village, called Weston Lullingfield, about five

miles off. Here the singular phenomena appeared shortly after her arrival, and the affair began to attract very general attention.

On Friday, the 9th, the girl, who seems to have got into a very nervous state, was taken to a branch establishment at Wem, of Dr. Corke, of Baschurch, and kept in strict seclusion, at the same time being closely watched by the housekeeper, Miss Turner.

On the following Thursday the *Daily News* and the *Daily Telegraph* both had long reports, stating that the girl had confessed to having wrought all these wonders by very ordinary sleight of hand.

As, however, these accounts did little to explain away the phenomena which had taken place according to the previous newspaper reports, I was asked by the Society for Psychical Research to go down to Shropshire to investigate the evidence on which the original stories rested, and to see whether they could really be accounted for satisfactorily by the girl's alleged trickery.

On Saturday, the 17th November, I proceeded to Wem, and shortly after my arrival called at the doctor's house, and saw Miss Turner, Dr. Mackey, the assistant of Dr. Corke, not being at home.

Miss Turner is a lady of about 30 years of age, who appeared to be a practical, shrewd person, not at all excitable, and she gave her evidence in a very straightforward manner.

Calling again, later on in the evening, I saw Dr. Mackey, who is a young Scotchman, of about 27 or 28, and who seemed nervously anxious not to give any evidence about which he had any doubt.

I am quite confident that the girl was well treated while living with them, and was subjected to no undue influence.

I made notes of the evidence they were able to give me on the subject, and obtained their signatures to my account after they had heard it read to them.

Briefly their account is:—That certain manifestations took place, similar in character to those that preceded them, and for two or three days they were quite unable to detect any fraud, though no manifestation ever took place when the girl was not in such a position that she *might* have produced them by ordinary trickery.

On Tuesday morning, however, Miss Turner was in an upper room at the back of the house, and the servant of the establishment and Emma Davies were outside, Emma having her back to the house, and unaware that she was observed. Miss Turner noticed that Emma Davies had a piece of brick in her hand held behind her back. This she threw to a distance by a turn of the wrist, and while doing so screamed to attract the attention of the servant, who, of course, turning round, saw the brick in the air, and was very much frightened. Emma

Davies, looking round, saw that she had been seen by Miss Turner, and apparently imagining that she had been found out, was very anxious to return home that night.

Miss Turner took no notice of the occurrence at the time, but the next morning (Wednesday) she asked the girl if she had been playing tricks, and the girl confessed that she had, and went through some of the performances very skilfully, according to Miss Turner's account.

Later on in the day she repeated these in the presence of the doctor, Miss Turner, and the two reporters from London, but Miss Turner said nothing like so well.

Dr. Mackey further gave me an account of a conversation which he had had with Emma Davies, chiefly with reference to some of the extraordinary stories that had appeared in the papers.

One of these stories was that after the girl's return to her father's house, she was in the habit of assisting her sister in household work. One day they were putting clothes out on the hedge to dry, but those placed by Emma Davies refused to remain on the hedge, and "jumped over into the road."

With reference to this the statement of Emma Davies, as reported by Dr. Mackey, was as follows: "they put the clothes on the hedge, and then returned to the house, nothing unusual having occurred. On going outside again, the linen was found on the ground, two little boys being seen running away." She was quite confident that she did not see the things going off the hedge.

Several of the other stories were similarly disposed of by her. Thus, when the windows were broken at her father's cottage and the farm, there were a lot of men and boys standing about outside.

The girl always denied that she had produced the various phenomena at Wood's Farm and Weston Lullingfield, but Dr. Mackey thought that she had been carefully primed not to "let on" about this.

Dr. Mackey added that the girl's physical and mental condition was quite normal so far as he could ascertain.

On the following morning I drove over to Wood's Farm, which is about five or six miles distant from Wem, and there obtained the evidence of the following witnesses:—

Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, their servant girl, Priscilla Evans, Mr. and Mrs. Lea, of a neighbouring farm, and the waggoner at Wood's Farm, Thomas Williams.

Mr. Hampson was a very intelligent man, who unfortunately was not at home at the time of the occurrences, and only had evidence on some minor details.

Mrs. Hampson was very diffuse in her account, and appeared rather credulous. She looks about 30 years of age.

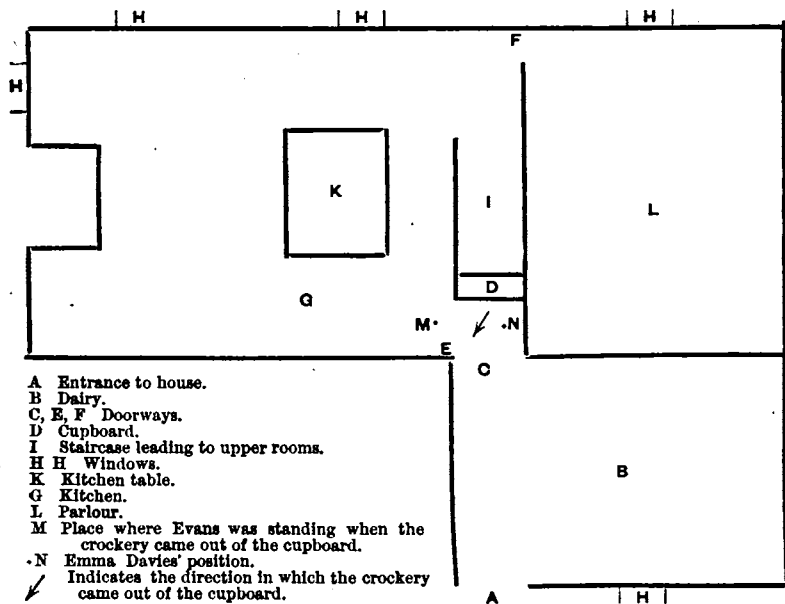
The girl, Priscilla Evans, is about 16, very voluble, but gave her evidence in a very straightforward manner, giving me the impression that she was telling me what she believed to be the truth. She had an excellent character from Mr. and Mrs. Hampson; and it is mere justice to her to state that the charge of complicity with Emma Davies' trickery, brought against her by the reporters of the *Daily News* and the *Daily Telegraph*—on the ground of a supposed confession of the waggoner Williams, that he had taught his fellow servants "how to shift things about"—completely broke down under my examination. The waggoner denies that he ever said, or could have said, anything of the sort; and his denial was entirely confirmed by Mr. Belliss, the innkeeper, who drove the reporters over from Wem, and himself suggested the questions put to the waggoner which led to the reporters' mistake.

I could not regard Mr. and Mrs. Lea as good witnesses, since their firm conviction of the devil's agency in the matter rendered them too much indisposed to accept any ordinary explanation of any of the occurrences to which they referred; and they did not bring forward any cases of manifestations which took place when Emma Davies was *undeniably*, according to my opinion, in such a position that she could not have produced them.

A rough drawing of the premises will show the relative position of the parlour, kitchen, and dairy, and will be useful in estimating the value of the evidence.

According to Mrs. Hampson's account, the family, with the exception of Mr. Hampson, were occupying the parlour on Wednesday, the 31st of October, when suddenly coal was seen to be "alive" in various parts of the room, apparently having flown out of the fire. Nothing unusual was observed that day in addition to this, the fire having been removed to the kitchen, and coke instead of coal employed.

The next day about four p.m. the family were about to sit down to tea, when the saucepan on the fire jumped off, and coal began to fly about. A cup and saucer "went off" the table, by unseen agency, and they were all so frightened that E. D. was sent off to Lea's farm for help. Mrs. H. and Priscilla retreated to the dairy, whence, it will be seen on reference to the map, they had a full view of the kitchen table. They both state that they saw the crockery rise up off the table and fall to the ground. The articles did not go off all at once, but one or two at a time. They are quite certain that this happened while Emma Davies was absent, fetching Mrs. Lea from the neighbouring farm.



Some of the crockery, on the return of Emma Davies and Mrs. Lea, was placed on the table, but again went off. Mrs. Lea and Mrs. Hampson then deemed it desirable to go for further assistance, the girls being left behind. This ends Mrs. Hampson's evidence as regards the occurrences of that evening at the farm.

Mrs. Hampson also stated that in the morning the baby was in its cradle inside the parlour, where it had been placed to be out of range of the fire. Mrs. Hampson and the girls were in the kitchen, and E. D. went in to see after the baby, returning presently, screaming, saying that the baby was on fire. On the various occasions (three or four) that the baby was on fire, E. D. was always the one to discover it; and she always had time to cause the fire according to Mrs. Hampson. Once she was seen to be shaking the child's pinafore, which was alight, although Mrs. H. had carefully warned her always to "crush" fire out.

Further, on one occasion when E. D. was alone in the parlour, during the manifestations, a noise as of a striking match was heard, and when Mrs. H. entered the room there was a distinct smell of brimstone, and a used match was found at the baby's head.

Priscilla Evans. added some information with regard to articles found on fire, which was corroborated by Mr. Lea. Mrs. Hampson was not present, I believe, when they were discovered.

It is well to note that E.D. was always the person to discover

anything on fire, and none of the witnesses could state positively that on any single occasion was she in the company or in sight of any one when she made the discovery.

One of the baby's caps, of a kind of woollen material, and a paper mat were found in flames, the flames being very high and white, and the articles apparently burning were very little singed when the flames were extinguished. The cap and mat, which had both been exposed to the air for some time, were shown to me, and I cut off a bit of the cap, which I dipped in paraffin, which was largely used at the farm. Lighting it, she, Priscilla E., declared it presented exactly the appearance of the former blaze, and the bit of cap was of course little singed, when the flame was extinguished. Mr. Hampson stated that the cap, when shown to him on his return, had a greasy feel.

The most important piece of evidence that the girl Evans contributed is, that when Mrs. H. and Mrs. Lea had left the house, the cupboard opposite the dairy door was apparently locked by one of them, but afterwards flew open, whereupon E. D., going to close it, became, as it were, rooted to the spot. Priscilla tried to pull her away, but the girl shrieked and said she couldn't move. The cupboard was well stocked with crockery, and these things proceeded to come out of the cupboard two or three at a time, generally in the direction shown by the arrow in the diagram. The girls occupied the positions indicated in the same diagram. Priscilla states that E. D. had her arms folded all the time, and that she, Priscilla, watched her closely, and was certain that she did not pull the things out. I should, however, point out that it must have been nearly dark at the time.

With regard to the statement that E. D. was put up to these tricks by the waggoner, there appears—as I have already said—no evidence for this, and it is almost absurd to suppose a heavy rustic capable of giving lessons in legerdemain.

Priscilla and E. D. appear to have been on rather bad terms, and none of the people at the farm gave E. D. a good character.

Continuing my journey I arrived at Weston Lullingfield, a village about five miles from Wood's Farm. I first called on Miss Maddox, a woman of about 40, who has been training the youth of Weston for the last 12 years ("come December"). She is rather excitable, and a woman who would, I think, be easily imposed upon. Her evidence is a remarkable illustration of the manner in which the sensational newspaper reports dwindle down into the common-place.

She states that when she visited the girl there were about 20 people standing and sitting about the room, and the girl E. D. was wriggling about on her chair in a state of great excitement. Miss M. is positive

that the chair rose off the ground about a foot, but this I imagine a clever child could accomplish by a clever "kick off."

Miss M. then took the child on her lap, and the child's boots flew off, but whether they were securely fastened on her feet, or down-trodden at the heels she cannot say.

The only further evidence that Miss M. had on the subject was that she saw a table (*up against a wooden partition*) moving up and down rather violently, without, she thought, any one being near. She added that the partition seemed "bulged in," so that somebody might have been pushing it on the other side of the partition.

She gave E.D. a good character.

I then visited the girl's home, but could not see the girl. The father, however, came out and spoke to me, but he himself had seen nothing.

The rustics of the village, whom I afterwards interviewed, were nearly all unable to sign their names, and their evidence is hardly worth recording. One man, who was present with Police-constable Taylor when the fender performed feats, states that Taylor was sitting on one side of the fire, and E. D. on the other, but he could not say how the fender "came forward," whether parallel to itself or only in such a manner that the girl might have pushed it out with her foot.

All the other evidence at this place was of the same unsatisfactory nature.

The next day I drove over with Mr. Maitland to try and see Emma Davies, but she would not speak, and was taken upstairs. After the lapse of an hour she re-appeared, but we could get nothing out of her.

Summing up, I consider that there is abundant evidence of some trickery on the part of the girl, E. D., at Wood's Farm; but that some portion of the phenomena cannot be referred to this cause if the statements of Mrs. Hampson and Priscilla Evans as to what occurred in E. D.'s absence, and the description given by Priscilla Evans of the crockery coming out of the cupboard, can be at all relied on. Still, if the case were an isolated one, the evidence is not of so satisfactory a nature as to justify the assumption that phenomena unexplainable by trickery actually took place; but, on the hypothesis that there are cases on record in which trickery and genuine preternatural phenomena were combined, this case might, with some degree of probability, be included amongst them.

FRANK S. HUGHES, B.A. (Cantab.)

December 3rd, 1883.

[Whatever opinion may be formed upon this case, this much is clear, that the statements of newspaper reporters must be received with extreme caution when they deal with matters of this kind. It was asserted that Emma Davies confessed to having, by trickery, produced *all* the mysterious phenomena, that she had learnt how to do the tricks from a waggoner who had seen them done at a fair, that Priscilla Evans admitted she was a confederate, and that "other mystery there was none." All these assertions appear to be incorrect.—ED.]

GENERAL MEETING.

A General Meeting of the Society will be held at the Garden Mansion, Queen Anne's Mansions, St James's Park, on Friday, March 28th, at 8.30 p.m.

THE VIENNA DISTURBANCES.

Unaccountable disturbances, very similar to those at Weston Lullingfield, have recently occurred in a house in Vienna. The *Daily News* gave a brief description of what took place, and a fuller account, translated from the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, appeared in "LIGHT" for February 16th. The disturbances were investigated on January 19th by a "commission of the district magistracy," and no assignable cause could be found by the three commissioners. Further inquiries made by one of us elicited the following sequel to the story, sent to us by a correspondent who writes from Vienna on February 5th, 1884:—

"The alleged supernatural occurrences at Vienna have turned out to be all humbug. For two days large crowds of people collected round a house in Fünfhaus, which was said to be haunted. The thoroughfares became blocked up, general inconvenience was caused, and the police interfered. In this paternal country such matters are settled promptly, if not despotically. The next day at the time the ghost was said to walk, every inhabitant of the house was turned into the street, and the police installed themselves and waited for the usual manifestations. None occurred, and since that day nothing of the kind has taken place. Clearing out the house was, as you may suppose, so disagreeable to the inmates that by some means or other the spirit of disturbance was quieted."

The fact that the disturbances ceased when the police turned out the inmates seems a rough and ready proof of fraud that may satisfy the public, but such a test is obviously neither scientific nor conclusive. If these physical disturbances are associated with certain abnormal organisations, as much evidence tends to suggest, they must be studied with all needful care under the conditions in which they present themselves. It is likely enough the whole affair in this case was fraud; but one would like to know whether the disturbances have really ceased on the return of the family to the house, or whether the inmates have simply declined to expose themselves to further forcible ejections, which their assertion of the continuance of the disturbances would probably involve.

Our readers will notice with interest that among the recent adhesions to the S. P. R. are four distinguished professors. The election of Professor Schuster, F.R.S., of Owen's College, and Professor Lodge, D.Sc., of University College, Liverpool, we recorded in the previous number of the journal. At the last Council meeting Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., was elected a Vice-President of the Society. Lord Rayleigh is the successor of Professor Clerk Maxwell in the chair of Experimental Physics in the University of Cambridge, and is President of the British Association for this year. Dr. Macalister, F.R.S., who has also joined the S. P. R., held for several years the chair of Anatomy in the University of Dublin; he now holds the chair of Anatomy in the University of Cambridge, is a Fellow of St. John's College, and like Lord Rayleigh has an European reputation.

NEW YORK ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

We have received information from Dr. E. P. Thwing, one of our corresponding members, of the formation of an Anthropological Society at New York.

Its aim, as expressed in the constitution which has been adopted, is: "To prosecute researches in the science of Anthropology, to collect and diffuse information, and to promote acquaintance and co-operation among its members and with other students of Psychology in this and foreign lands, by personal intercourse, correspondence and by exchange of publications."

The Rev. Edward P. Thwing, Doct. Phil., of Brooklyn, was chosen President, and Alphonzo D. Rockwood, M.D., of 46, East Thirty-first-street, New York City, was chosen Secretary.

At a meeting of the Society held on the 6th ult., the subject of special interest was an informal report of the committee on the section of Psychological Research, by the Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*. He began the report with an account of his own investigations in respect to hypnotism, extending over a period of more than twenty years. He believed that the trance state is not produced by the will of the operator, but by the condition of expectancy, of reverie, and of confidence. He suggested that the main points of inquiry should be: Is there any influence which goes from the operator to the subject? Has the will any power beyond the understanding of the subject? Have the nerves any power external to the physical organism?

A physician present gave an account of a patient whom he had hypnotised, and subjected to a severe operation without pain, and he argued the utility of the trance in preference to anæsthetics. A person in the hypnotic trance was brought into the room, and subjected to tests which indicated the genuineness of the process.

We notice in the circular of the Society that Dr. Thwing is congratulated "on the success of varied experiments on Thought-transference," which he described last December. We should be glad to hear further particulars of these experiments.

On January 30th a paper on "Thought-transference" was read at the Manchester "Science Students' Association," by Mr. G. I. Johnson, Member of the S.P.R. The Association meets in Owen's College, and the paper excited much interest, the discussion upon it having to be adjourned. Mr. Johnson gave some illustrations of his own ability to discover a hidden pin or localise an imaginary pain in noting the muscular indications given by the person in contact with him: he then proceeded to describe the results obtained by the Thought-transference Committee of the S.P.R., and showed how the results were inexplicable on the ground of collusion, or on any received physiological hypothesis; and that the only possible conclusion arrived at by impartial criticism appeared to be to admit the fact of Thought-transference as a new discovery. There was an animated discussion and the usual argument of *a priori* impossibility, to which Mr. Johnson effectively replied.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

SIR,—I observe that the object of the proposed JOURNAL of the S. P. R., so far as it is explained in your circular announcing its establishment, seems to be confined to communicating a knowledge of the business transacted by the Council and the work of the Committees. These words may, and I hope will, include the record now and then of novel or well authenticated anecdotes brought to the notice of the Committees, but I see nothing as to the admissibility of papers having a speculative or explanatory object. I am inclined to think that suitable hypotheses, advanced with the understanding that they are to be summarily rejected if contradicted by experience, would be found most helpful. A hypothesis serves to direct attention to particular points in a given case as corroborative of the hypothesis or otherwise.

If our Committees had to investigate thoroughly all the ghost stories they hear of, they would have something like the labours of Hercules on their hands, and here, I think, a theory *primâ facie* plausible might be of service. When a theory is supported by a considerable number of instances, then new cases in agreement—though far from unimportant—might be passed by for a time to give opportunity for investigating some asserted occurrence, which, according to the theory, ought not to have happened, but which, from its very disagreement, may be far more important as indicating that the theory must be revised, or even abandoned, and thus, possibly, might be obtained the clue for a new departure.

Allow me then to express a hope that speculative matter may not be altogether excluded from the JOURNAL, though I should deprecate emphatically the idea that I wish vague imaginations or the results of pure guess work to be introduced. Of such speculation there has already been more than enough.

I think we also want better definitions of important words liable to be confounded and misused—Mind, Soul, Spirit, for instance. At least, every contriver of a hypothesis should explain his terms so clearly as to leave his meaning free from ambiguity, and surely it would be advisable to have the meanings and use generally agreed upon.

If it is not trespassing too much on your space, I should like to ask whether the JOURNAL cannot be sold to those who wish to buy. It may often contain statements of facts and proceedings which Members may like to send to friends, thus helping to make the Society better known and creating an interest in its researches. For my own part, I would gladly subscribe for an extra copy for twelve months. New members, too, might like to make their sets complete if back numbers could be had.—I am, &c.,

Crouch Hill, February 16th, 1884.

W. WHITEAR.

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