

JOURNAL

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF GENERAL MEETING.

The next General Meeting of the Society will be held at the Rooms of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, S.W., on Friday, the 29th of October, when a paper will be read by Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers on "Multiplex Personality." The chair will be taken at 8.30 p.m.

CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

(Continued.)

[The Literary Committee will be glad to receive well authenticated evidence of phenomena belonging to any of the following classes, specimens of which are from time to time recorded in this Journal :

L. *Phantasms of the Living.*

G. *Phantasms of the Dead.*

M. *Hypnotism, Mesmerism, and Clairvoyance.*

P. *Monition and Premonition.*

S. *Miscellaneous phenomena of the kind sometimes described as "Spiritualistic."*

Personal experience of "sensory hallucinations" of any sort will also be welcome.

*The Committee print such cases as *prima facie* seem to them likely to throw light on the subjects investigated by the Society, or to serve as material for profitable criticism and discussion.*

Communications intended for the Literary Committee should be addressed to Edmund Gurney, Esq., 26, Montpelier Square, London, S.W.; or, to Frederic W. H. Myers, Esq., Leckhampton House, Cambridge.]

G.—182.

The account which follows was originally published in *Light* of March 10th, 1883, having, as Mr. C. explained to us subsequently, been written down at the request of some brother clergymen at a clerical meeting. Some time after the appearance of this account we

entered into correspondence with Mr. A. D. C. himself, and other members of his family, and their letters are appended :—

I have been asked to furnish some account of my experiences in a haunted house, which occurred some twenty years ago.

My father was a private schoolmaster, and in my tenth year his school outgrew the accommodation which the house we then lived in afforded. A friend, who was the non-resident lessee of a large, commodious house, some eight miles away, made him an offer of this dwelling, capable of accommodating nearly sixty persons, at the suspiciously low rental of twenty pounds a-year. The reason was easy to find—it was reported to be haunted !

Tall trees environed it on every side, and the gardens were like a wilderness, so neglected had the place been for years. It was three storeys in height, spacious, with a flat, leaded roof, whence one could look down upon the country through the trees. There was an abundance of out-houses in a somewhat ruinous condition. The carriage-way had become a damp lane, sometimes flooded in winter. But the building itself was sound—its walls very thick. A tragedy had taken place therein nearly half a century before the date of which I write. A captain in his Majesty's Navy had lived there with an amiable young wife, to whom he was unfaithful to such an extent that, disguising his marriage, he made an offer to another young lady, and was on the point of committing bigamy. Indeed, the marriage ceremony had actually begun, when the injured wife appeared on the scene and forbade its completion. *He* ran away ; *she* returned home, and in her distress hung herself in a room at the extreme angle of the top storey of the house.

The unhappy wife lies buried in a neighbouring churchyard with the following epitaph :—

Reader !

If thou hast a heart famed for Tender-
ness and Pity, Contemplate this Spot,
In which are deposited the Remains of a
Young Lady, whose artless Beauty, innocence
of Mind, and gentle Manners once obtained
her the Love and Esteem of all who knew her ;
But when Nerves were too delicately spun to
bear the rude Shakes and Jostlings which we
meet with in this transitory World, Nature gave
way ; She sunk and died a Martyr to
Excessive Sensibility :

Mrs. Sarah Fletcher,

wife of Captain Fletcher, departed this
Life at the Village of Clifton on the 7th of June, 1799,
in the 29th Year of her age.

May her Soul meet that Peace, in
Heaven, which this Earth denied her.*

* The epitaph as given in Mr. A. D. C.'s original account was, as he tells us, written down from memory, and contained some verbal inaccuracies. The epitaph as it appears in the text was copied for us by Mr. G. Acheson, University College, Oxford, on June 11th, 1885, direct from the tombstone in Dorchester churchyard.—F. P.

A pitiful story! And who would wonder that the place was said to be haunted? And so it was, as I shall proceed to show.

The rustics asserted that wheelbarrows ran about without visible agency; that pump-handles worked when the form of the worker was invisible; that the house was lighted up at night, when no one was within; and even that a benighted traveller, calling to ask his way, had the door opened to him by the ghost! My father, however, was not at all moved by all this village gossip. But he did the right thing; he went and spent a night in the house. No unearthly sight or omens appeared; all was still that night; and we took possession of the place. It was prophesied that we should not occupy it a year, but the year passed quietly away.*

* * * * *

Some years had elapsed and I was nearly seventeen. I slept, then, in a little bed-chamber which opened out of a large outer room called "the lower room." One bright moonlight night, "as I lay a-thinking" about some mundane subject or other, I heard steps, which awakened strange recollections, descend the stairs, outside this outer chamber. I heard the door open and the night-walker seemed to enter. The steps approached my door. It was a peculiar tread; the boots "creaked," to use a common saying, "as though they had not been paid for," and as I lay wondering who it could be, thus shod, about in the night, the sound ceased. Soon afterwards, *I heard the village clock strike three.*

The next night I was awake again by mere chance; the same phenomena were repeated; and immediately afterwards *the clock struck three again!* Then I felt sure that there was something out of the common in these steps, and I determined to lie with my door open the next night, and to see what it was. That next night, as I lay in anticipation, I heard the steps descending the stairs. I heard the outer door open. Whatever it was that entered, it certainly possessed force, for it pushed the open door of a wardrobe, which obstructed the passage, forcibly aside, and shut it with a loud noise. The steps came round between the beds where some young boys slept, towards my door, when to my amazement, no form appeared; yet the steps pressed on towards my bed. I cried aloud, "Who is it?" and all was silent. I sprang out of bed and searched the room and the adjacent passages, but no elucidation of the mystery appeared.

When I communicated my night's experience (very cautiously—for my father had again and again forbidden such reports as likely to alarm the boys and prejudice the school), I found that I had stumbled on a fact known to many in secret—that at a quarter to three each morning these steps paraded the house, from the chamber where the suicide was committed to the room in which I slept.

An assistant master informed me that, going upstairs at that hour, he had met the steps coming down and felt a cold blast of wind pass him, to his no small terror. My brother, younger than myself, told me that one night as he lay awake in that outer room with a bad cough, he heard them coming,

* The passage concerning an apparition, which followed here in the original account, has been omitted at the request of Mr. C. himself, who thinks that stress should not be laid upon it.—F. P.

and thought his father had heard him cough, and was bringing him some lozenges—when the door opened and the bodiless steps came to his bedside, frightening him terribly. Many others had also heard the steps, but all said, “Say nothing about it; it will vex your father and do no good; neither do the steps do any harm.”

At last, anxious to obtain some key to the mystery, I asked the senior assistant master to sit up all night with me in his own little room (which was partitioned off from the chamber in which the suicide had been committed) that we might endeavour to find out what was the nature of “the steps.” I had not then seen the tomb of the unfortunate Mrs. F., and did not know the exact date of the tragedy, but I am inclined to think that we watched on the very anniversary of the fatal day, or rather night.

The evening passed slowly, in spite of books, and draughts, and other amusements; and contrary to my expectation—for I had imagined that midnight would not pass unmarked—all was quiet until the dawn of the summer’s day made itself dimly felt through the window curtains. It was then a quarter to three, and we sat looking at our watches with but little expectation—for daylight is a great obstacle to belief in ghosts—when all at once, just as I had said “Unless it comes soon there will be nothing to-night!” a step, heavy and determined, was heard in the adjacent room behind the thin wooden partition. It stalked out through the door, along a little passage a few feet in length, and then passed our door. I opened the door and looked out. The passage was fairly lighted up by the breaking dawn of day, and the steps were passing heavily along it, but there was no form! We followed, but a few feet behind. The steps reached the staircase and began to descend the stairs. We looked over from the balustrade above; the stairs seemed to bend under that mysterious tread; but my companion faltered, and I followed down the flight above.

Midway there was a landing and then, turning an angle, a second short flight of stairs ended in front of a large window, and on the right hand was the door of the lower room. In the light of that summer dawn I distinctly saw the handle turn and the door open; and I heard the steps enter. I was so close behind that, as I followed, the door was slammed in my face. I pushed it open again. The room was empty, save of boys sleeping quietly in their beds, unconscious of the mystery around them. It was now nearly three o’clock, and, satisfied that the matter was beyond human agency, we slept till our usual hour of rising.

No further investigation seemed necessary. We all felt convinced it was a case of the supernatural, and left it. But sometimes a visitor would say to my father at breakfast:—

“You were about very late last night, weren’t you?”

“No. I retired before midnight.”

“Because I heard heavy steps about, just before three.”

Then we would look at each other and say nothing.

But within a year from this time, the phenomenon (if I can apply that word where naught was seen) ceased, and for ten years the house was perfectly quiet. I often lay awake, having set my alarm for the time, but nothing whatsoever rewarded my watching. This, perhaps, may be an argument

that imagination had naught to do with the matter. Mine was as much excited on the latter as on the former occasion.

Ten years passed away. My father and mother had retired from active life, and gone away to live. My brother had become the head master of the school, was married, and resided at the old house. I was myself ordained in priest's orders and chaplain of a large school, when, just before the Christmas holidays, I received a letter from my brother, in which were these words :

"We are very anxious to see you at home again. Do you remember the ghostly disturbances about ten years ago? They have returned worse than ever, and we want your aid to investigate them."

I was about to return home to spend the Christmas vacation when I received this, and went full of anticipation, not sorry to have the opportunity, as a man, of further investigation into the mysteries which had so puzzled me as a boy. I found when I reached home, and had had a long talk over it all, that for some time there had been a renewal of the disturbances, but not quite of the like nature with the former manifestations. They centred, it is true, at the old hour, but were by no means confined to it now. I will give a few instances.

My brother told me that one night he was awoke by loud cries of terror from the boys who slept in the "suicide's room," just above his own. (I need not say we did not give it that name before the pupils, nor did they know the story.) He rushed upstairs, greatly alarmed, and found several excited boys, who declared that a woman without a head had entered the room. He tried to laugh at it, comforted them, left a light burning, and came downstairs.

"Look at your watch," said his wife.

A quarter to three !

Another night my sister was sleeping in the fatal chamber, with a cousin. All at once she was awoke by a loud cry, and found her companion in hysterics. The aforesaid woman had entered the room. My sister looked at her watch. (The cousin did not know the preceding facts.)

A quarter to three !

A midwife who attended at a confinement and slept in that room, after the first night asked whether she could have another chamber.

"Why?" was the natural question.

"Oh, it does not matter," she said; she would try it again; and coloured slightly as if ashamed. The next day she said she *must* sleep elsewhere for some one came into that room each night, and threw himself (or herself) down on an empty bed; but it seemed no natural person, for when she struck a light there was no one there.

There were many similar tales all connected, more or less, with a *quarter to three*, but just at this time the disturbances had become worse and extended throughout the night.

For a day or two I heard nothing, so far as I can remember, but at length there came one bitterly cold night, when I had got to bed with a hot water bottle for companion to my frozen feet, in a room of the top storey where I slept. I was alone on that floor; the pupils were all home for their

holidays. I had just put my light out when a series of noises began, as of the moving of furniture, the opening of doors, the parading of the passages. One would suppose every room was tenanted by restless beings save my own, which was quiet *inside*. I had gone to sleep in spite of it all—for it was too cold to get up to investigate—when I heard the ringing of a bell in my room, which had been a servants' room, and communicated below. I got up and heard knocks upon the ceiling beneath my floor.

An invalid sister was then sleeping in the chamber beneath, and I accordingly put on my dressing-gown, went out into the bitter atmosphere (that night a policeman was frozen to death in his box not far off), descended the stairs, and went to the door of my sister's room.

"Poor L. is so dreadfully alarmed by the noises," said my other sister, who slept with her; "do see what it all means!"

"It is useless," I said, "but I will go through the house to satisfy you that there are no robbers in it." So I went through all the large rooms of the empty house. I was the only man in it that night. All was quiet; and I went back to my sisters' door, and said, "You need not fear; it is only the ghosts. They can do us no harm while we trust in God!" I then went back to my bed, but not to rest, for I was no sooner asleep than I was awoken by a fearful crash! Outside my door was a large box; this appeared, judging by the sound, to be lifted up several feet, and then allowed to fall heavily on the floor. I would not get up, and soon dozed off again. It was repeated a second time, with a deafening noise and shock. Still, I would not get up, but, commending myself to God, slept again. A third time I was awoken by the same shock.

A sudden thought inspired me. I was a priest and might try what exorcism would do. So I used, as nearly as I could remember it, the ancient form commanding the spirits to depart in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! And all was quiet through the old house during the remainder of that night. In the morning I asked my sisters, "Did you hear anything after I left you?" They replied, "Yes, three heavy smashes; then all was still."

This occurrence, more than aught else, led me to believe that the noises were the result of the agency of *evil* spirits.

A friend, who is a great believer in Spiritualism, tells me that I ought to have questioned the ghosts, for they can open no communication, but evidently sought such opening; and that I might have done good had I addressed them.

To conclude, from that night until we left the place it was the scene of continual disturbance. Our doors were tried at night; we saw the handles turn; steps continually paraded the passages; furniture appeared to be shifted, but never could we detect any visible agency. The most melancholy occurrence connected with these disturbances was as follows:—A poor boy was left behind in the following Christmas holidays, suffering from congestion of the lungs. He died, and one night, while the body was lying in a room adjacent to my brother's study, such dismal noises issued from the chamber of death while my brother and his wife were in their room, that they could not bear it, and were obliged to go elsewhere.

And the most significant thing occurred at the same trying season. My brother was in town, and his wife was sleeping alone when she heard sounds all over the house, as if a number of carpenters and upholsterers were taking down the furniture previous to removal. She heard them, as it seemed, take down the bedsteads, and place the iron laths in succession on the floor with distinct sound. She lay terrified a long time, and then awoke a visitor who slept in the adjoining room. He, too, had heard all these noises with the utmost astonishment, greatly wondering what household arrangements thus interfered with the rest which night should bring to all. These noises were evidently prophetic, for within a year fever broke out in the village, extending to the school, and costing us two or three lives; and my brother, under medical advice, moved his whole establishment to a well-known watering-place on the South Coast, where it still flourishes.

We are all, from experience, what the world calls "believers in ghosts"; but none of us have ever had such experiences elsewhere—a strong proof that the occurrences I have detailed did not originate in our own imaginations.

March, 1883.

Mr. A. D. C., after seeing Mr. Podmore's notes of his interview with Mr. E. E. C. (given below) wrote as follows:—

February 17th, 1885.

* * * * *

(1) As to the headless woman, I should have said I got the information from my brother himself, for he was the hero of the episode; but as he does not remember it, I think it must have been Mrs. C. who told me. There is great difficulty in remembering a thing which took place *so long ago*.

(2) The extract from my diary is brief; it was written at the reappearance of the ghost in 1867, after I was ordained.

January 5th, 1867, Saturday.

"Last night there was a pretty disturbance of the supernatural character. About midnight, soon after we all got to bed, there was a continuous series of heavy noises in all the empty rooms, as if heavy bodies were lifted up, and then dashed violently against the floor. I slept in the Master's room and was alone upon the upper floor; it was intensely cold, and I had got under a prodigious number of blankets, with a hot water apparatus at my feet, so I was not much inclined to move; but presently a bell rang in my room, and I quietly observed to myself, that the ghosts were improving in their practice; but when I heard voices in the room below (occupied by my sisters), I found they had rung the bell (by a wire), and that they were dreadfully alarmed by the noises; so I was forced to get up and search the house, very ineffectually, until reporting all safe, I got into bed again, and was no sooner warm than the malicious hobgoblins began as badly as ever. So I said a prayer against evil spirits. After this I heard no more, and slept comfortably till daybreak. It was strange that at the moment I named, the noises seemed to cease everywhere. At breakfast this morning we tried to discuss the matter, but could come to no satisfactory conclusions; the noises were unaccountable, so they must lie at the door of the same agencies which used to disturb us so dreadfully ten or twelve years ago."

This extract was written for no eye but my own, and now first sees the light after 18 years. You can see it was not written for publication, by its loose style, which might be improved.

* * * * *

(3.) The story of the midwife was from my cousin, Miss W., who had it from the woman; but as it was so long ago (the child in question is my brother's *eldest* son) she may or may not remember it.

(4.) The story of the noises in the chamber of death was *decidedly* from my brother himself, I remember it perfectly. It was he and his wife who *both* heard them, and could not sit longer in the *adjacent* room, where they were busy over books and accounts. If he did not remember *this*, it is passing strange, and shows how much more hold it took of my imagination than his.

(5.) I could affirm that I saw the door-handle turn as *confidently* as I can affirm *anything* that has occurred in my life, I am morally *sure* of it, I see the whole scene now as I write.

(6.) I shall be very glad to hear what Mr. W. says, it was he who was there with me that *June* night in 1854, 30 years ago; he did not descend so far as to see the door handle turn, but halted on the landing place above. . . .

* * * * *

After seeing Mr. J. S. W.'s letter, Mr. A. D. C. writes again:—

March 7th, 1885.

I have drawn you a new plan, *to scale*, according to my best remembrance. Let me add a few remarks:

No. 3 is the room mentioned by Mr. J. S. W., where the nail was. The footsteps always came to the door, but no further.

No. 7. Here Mr. J. S. W. slept with one of us, on the most eventful night in his annals. Here I slept that cold winter's night described in *Light*, when I searched the house, and conjured the spirits, as described in my *diary* sent you; but at the *latter* period (1867) it was partitioned off, as described by the red* lines, into *three* small rooms. The dead lights were looking into the passage, marked thus

You can get approximate distances from plan, drawn 10 feet to the inch.

* * * * *

I have, *since* I wrote last, seen the cousin referred to, and her account I enclose. It differs a little from the account given by me, which was *again* *tradition*, through a third person. How every investigation shows us the tendency of stories to receive *additions* as they go from mouth to mouth. Still I think the main facts correspond. . . . A. D. C.

We sent Mr. A. D. C.'s account to his brother, Mr. E. E. C., and received the following letter in reply:—

January 27th, 1885.

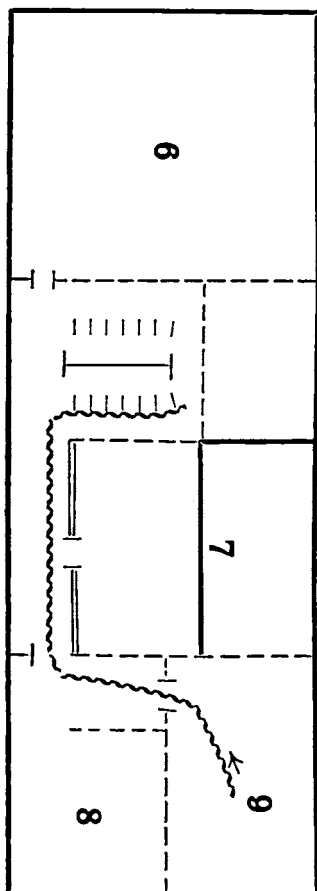
DEAR SIR,—I have carefully read the paper you send me, and I can give it a *general* confirmation.

Some of the details are new to me. They may be perfectly correct, but I do not remember them.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

E. E. C.

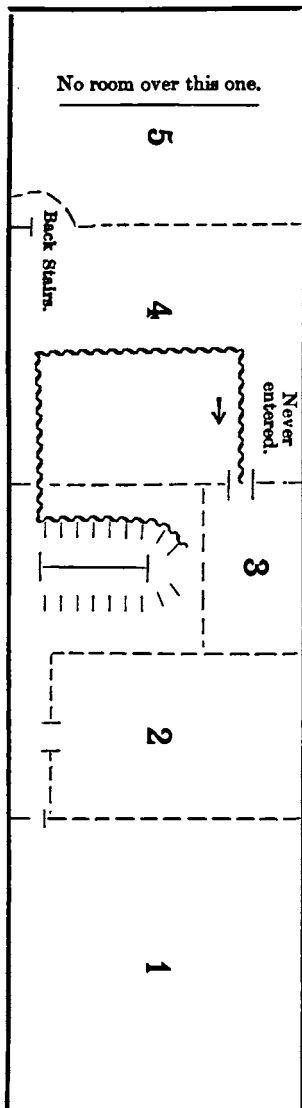
* Indicated by the *thick* lines in the plan as given on the opposite page.

Front elevation of House
rough sketch.



SAME SCALE.

SECOND FLOOR.



SCALE ABOUT 10 FT. TO 1/4 IN.

FIRST FLOOR.

- 1.—Room occupied by my father and mother—subsequently brother and wife.
 - 2.—Visitors' Room.
 - 3.—"Ante-Chamber" (*lucus a non lucendo*) much disturbed.
 - 4.—"Lower Room" (much disturbed).
 - 5.—Servants' Room (never disturbed).
 - 6.—Top Room (never disturbed).
 - 7.—Box Room (much disturbed).
 - 8.—Master's Room. Mr. J. S. W. slept here at one time; here, too, he and I watched.
 - 9.—The Suicide's Room—*sons et origo mali*.
- ~~~~~ Track of the Ghost, 2.45 a.m.

These dimensions are from memory, but approximately correct.
(Signed) A.D.C.

On the 14th February, 1885, I called upon Mr. E. E. C., with whom I had some previous acquaintance. The following notes of our conversation have been read through and corrected by him :—

When he wrote that he could only give a general confirmation to the account written by the Rev. A. D. C., he by no means intended to imply any doubt of the general accuracy of his brother's narrative. Mr. E. E. C. cannot profess to remember all the details given ; but he confirms in the fullest manner his brother's account of the footfalls.

They went to the house in 1846, when Mr. E. E. C. was only four years old. He distinctly remembers the incident narrated by his brother, viz., hearing the steps come down to him at a time when he lay in the lower room, Mr. E. E. C., indeed, frequently heard the steps as a boy. He describes them as firm and determined, but not heavy—like a woman's footsteps. They always began in No. 9—the suicide's room—and went along an uncarpeted passage, and down two flights of uncarpeted stairs, passing through the lower bedroom—in which Mr. E. E. C. used at one time to sleep—into the boudoir, where they ceased. Thus, throughout the whole of this course the boards were bare, and the steps sounded like a woman's firm steps on boards; quite loud and unmistakeable. They never varied in their character, their course, or their time. Mr. E. E. C. never heard them, and never learnt that anyone else heard them, at any other time than 2.45 a.m. He is unable to conceive any ordinary explanation for the noises. No mere creaking of wood, noises of the wind, rats, or any other cause with which he is acquainted could, in his opinion, account for them. On one occasion in particular, when about 16 years old, Mr. E. E. C., when sleeping in the lower room (on the ground floor), woke up suddenly, with an indescribable feeling of terror, shivering all over, and then heard the steps coming along the passage overhead, and got out of bed to go upstairs to a cousin's room. He passed the steps, on this occasion, on the stairs—he going up, the steps, apparently, coming down.

It was about this time (1857, or thereabouts) that Mr. J. W., the senior assistant master, and Mr. A. D. C., sat up to hear the steps. Mr. E. E. C. did not himself sit up, but he distinctly remembers hearing from Mr. W. and his brother an account of their adventures the next day.

He also recollects on many occasions hearing visitors asking who had been walking about the house in the middle of the night ; and, whenever the time could be accurately fixed, it was found to be the same—2.45 a.m.

It was in 1866 that Mr. E. E. C. married, and took the charge of the school. During the first year or so of their married life, he and his wife lived in a cottage in the village, so that he was not himself a witness of the noises.

The incident of the boys being alarmed he recollects, however ; and it must, therefore, have occurred rather later. The boys told him that someone had come into the room ; but on questioning, he ascertained that they had only heard steps *leaving* the room, and had drawn the inference that someone must have come *into* the room before. Nothing, he thinks, was said about a figure being *seen* by any boy. But it is possible that some nervous small boy may have made the statement referred to by Mr. A. D. C. He cannot

remember on this particular occasion consulting his watch ; but he is certain that if he had found that the time was other than 2.45 a.m. he would have noted the instance as remarkable.

The sister mentioned in the next paragraph of Mr. A. D. C.'s account is dead.

The nurse (not midwife), who was a complete stranger in the neighbourhood, stated to him, on being questioned, that she had merely heard sounds of someone leaving the room. She said that she would prefer—if there was no other room for her—to sleep on the door mat outside Mr. E. E. C.'s room. This was in 1867.

Mr. E. E. C. can recollect hearing from both his brother and the two sisters (one dead, one at Oxford), their accounts of the noises and the exorcism, but he was not himself present in the house ; nor can he recollect how the noises were described at that time.

In general Mr. E. E. C. can only recollect hearing the steps. He never himself saw handles turned, or doors opened, or heard the noises as of furniture being shifted. Nor can he remember the noises issuing from the "chamber of death" referred to. Indeed, it is very unlikely that such noises would have been heard unless extremely loud. The room in which the dead body was placed was situated at the extreme end of a long and rambling pile of buildings, in the same wing as his study, but at the opposite extremity, and far away from the bedroom occupied by himself and his wife.

Mrs. E. E. C., who has read through Mr. A. D. C.'s account, told her husband that she well recollected the noises as of bedsteads being moved, &c., but that in her opinion they were due to ordinary causes. The sounds occurred in an exceptionally stormy winter (Christmas, 1867), and no doubt wind amongst the trees, and in the roof, was responsible for most of the sounds.

In this same winter, however, Mr. E. E. C. sat up each night during his wife's illness, reading in his study, and would hear the steps go along the passage and down the stairs on most of the nights of his vigil. They were always heard at the same time. If nothing had happened by 3 a.m. Mr. E. E. C. knew that nothing would happen, and would go to bed.

Mr. B., a relative of the boy who died, stayed in the house before the death, and on one occasion came to Mr. E. E. C.'s room in the middle of the night to ask if anyone had gone down to the boy, as he had heard someone passing down the stairs. Mr. E. E. C. then looked at his watch, found it was just past 2.45 a.m., and was able to assure his visitor that no one had stirred, and that the steps would not be heard again that night.

Mr. E. E. C. is decidedly of opinion that the footsteps were not of physical origin. He has had no other experience of the kind, and has never been the subject of a hallucination.

Mr. E. E. C., as a boy, heard the story of the suicide from James, an old inhabitant of the village—of the labouring class—who died in about 1856, at the age of between 90 and 100. He believes that the history of the house, given by his brother, is entirely accurate.

F. P.

February 17th, 1885.

Dear Mr. Podmore,—I return your MS. slightly annotated and amended.

In reply to your queries:—(1) Mrs. C. cannot corroborate the account of the noises from the "Death Chamber."

* * * * *

Miss W. would generally confirm all I have stated, but she would decline to give evidence.

E. E. C.

February 19th, 1885.

. . . I cannot still confirm my brother's statement about the noises from the "Chamber of Death"—even my "study," in which he states I was sitting, was separated some 40 yards from the chamber in question, with four other rooms intervening.

E. E. C.

We wrote to Mr. W., the master referred to in Mr. A. D. C.'s account, and we submitted his first letter to Messrs. A. D. C. and E. E. C. for their comments. The latter gentleman writes to us on the 26th February, 1885, that:—

"Mr. W.'s letter is very interesting.

"He is a most conscientious man, and you may strictly rely on his statements as far as his memory serves him.

"I cannot do more than *generally corroborate*.

"I may have stayed up with him, but if so I have absolutely forgotten it."

E. E. C.

Mr. A. D. C. supplied some comments on Mr. W.'s statements which are appended as footnotes to the account.

The following is Mr. W.'s first letter:—

February 18th, 1885.

Dear Sir,—In response to your letter of the 16th, I will endeavour to give you an account of the events alluded to, so far as memory may assist. It is nearly 31 years since my first acquaintance with the two gentlemen you name, the Messrs. E. E. C., and A. D. C., who were then young, and resident at C. I was told, shortly after becoming an inmate of their father's house, that it was subject to sundry disturbances, one of which in particular took place as a rule shortly before 3 in the morning. I agreed with the elder brother—now a vicar in W—— diocese—to devote one night to a careful watch. I do not think anyone knew of our intention. The room in which we sat was, perhaps, about seven yards from the top of the stair-flight where the foot-steps were said to commence.* At the given time—I think 15 minutes to 3—foot-steps, as of a high-heeled boot were heard descending the stair: they were followed by the younger gentleman, while I remained above to see it was no combination or trickery. They passed *through or under* (?) a heavy oak door

* My recollection is that they first originated in the adjoining room, separated by a partition.—A. D. C.

into a large dormitory, between its two rows of silent sleepers, to the door of a small apartment, known as the "ante-room." There the dull creaking "foot-fall" turned, retraced its passage between the parallel row of beds, found an exit by the door at the stair-foot, followed by Mr. A. D. C., and ascending the stair as before, died away about the second knob from the top of the balustrade.* I think these were the plain facts of that evening's vigil. I ought, perhaps, to add that the small room known as the "ante-room" had a large nail in its wall, bent down by some heavy weight. It was said that a man "little of stature" had hanged himself thereon.† Of course I cannot vouch for this having been the case. But I do aver that when the said "ante-room" became my own bed-chamber, the presence of the said "nail," of the size usually known as "tenpenny," was somewhat undesirable, from its association with the above rumour. But I would not make request for its removal; deeming it better to forget its presence than yield to a groundless fear of the intangible. I may not say how many times, while lying there, I have heard the same creaking tramp of footsteps up to my door, then deliberately back to the same point of the stairs.‡ At first I was gravely annoyed, and would unclosethe the door (which opened outwardly) with sudden jerk, vainly thinking to trip up some somnambulist, perchance; but the steps retraced their normal way, while I looked on nothing save the avenue up which they had glided. Once or twice I followed them up the stair by the moon-rays or with a candle; but always with the same effect—the dying away of the strange noise upon the return flight of the stairs, and a short distance from its summit. After I had occupied the room in question for some considerable period, probably two or three years, an alteration was effected during the Midsummer vacation. The plaster of the "ante-room" wall being in parts broken,—specially round the nail, whose presence had become to me a thing of course—it was restored, previous to the painting of the room; and on my return after the month's absence the bent nail was gone. I had nothing to do with its removal; probably it was thought unsightly and unnecessary. But after that I cannot remember hearing the descending "foot-steps on the stairs" again.§ I have watched for them when my avocation rendered it advisable to rise at an unusually early hour, but they came not, as, with measured and privileged tramp up to the door, they had done till the removal of the "bent nail." I look upon this as the appendix of what you have termed our "vigil." I don't know if what I am about to relate may be termed a "vigil," as we had on this occasion no intention of watching. Owing to an influx of visitors, it became necessary one night (a Saturday evening) for me to vacate my snug, newly-painted bedroom,|| and, together with one of the brothers (who had given up his room also for a night or so), to occupy a room¶ on the upper floor, used exclusively for "weekly boarders," who were then gone home. It was close to the head of

* I think it died away in the lower rooms. See plan.—A. D. C.

† Of this suicide there is no certain record. I remember the nail.—A. D. C.

‡ I heard them scores of times at least.—A. D. C.

§ I remember the ceasing, and the watching for them in vain.—A. D. C.

|| I do not remember this particular night.—A. D. C.

¶ This was No. 7, the box-room. I often heard noises there.—A. D. C.

the stairs where the said nocturnal sounds had begun and ended. I cannot at this distance of time remember at what hour we—both being perfectly awake—were disturbed by the seeming falling of a heavy body from the balustrade of the stairs; there seemed to be efforts making to draw from the “fatal” spot—*upwards*—something soddened and ponderous. One of us mounted on a bed (there was an empty bed each side of the door) and looked out of the “borrowed lights” that had been opened on the passage—I presume in the days of the obnoxious window-duty—and round from the stair head came the sound or semblance of something whose weight rendered it difficult to draw; but distinctly between the attempts to overcome the inertia were heard the shufflings, muffled and dabbled, of what seemed the bearer’s feet. The passage where they passed was almost brilliant with the rays, direct or reflected, of an August moon, so that any practical joke would have been impossible. After the labouring paces had seemingly succeeded in reaching a room that was for the night unoccupied, through the non-arrival of one visitor, there commenced upon the panels of its door, for it may be two or three consecutive minutes, a distinct scratching, as of iron talons, from top to floor, then a fall of the body, and a return down the passage in the same fashion as before. I need not say the unusual noise left us in a state by no means enviable. I think that one of us was awakened by the other who first heard the noise on the stair. On the following night the other * brother of the family watched with me; though we had no intention of leaving the room we did not think it necessary to “sit up,” but occupied our several beds—I can scarcely say rested in them. We took certain precautions to make ourselves doubly sure there was no collusion, or rather to detect any if it existed, which was altogether improbable. About the same time commenced the weird sounds from the fatal knob upon the stair-flight, the labouring efforts to drag some unwieldy body upwards, then the floundering upon the passage-floor, the slow advance as on the previous night up to the door of the end room, and the return; but, to my dismay, this time the sound came *through the door* of our dormitory † to within a few yards of our beds; and after what seemed a fierce scuffle of protracted length over a part of the floor that had been replaced with deal, when certain stains had been found indelible, they went out, leaving the idea of soddened footsteps fresh from a slaughter-house. Once in particular afterwards I remember hearing the scratching on the door to which I have alluded. I was unwell, probably with a slight attack of measles, and remained in the “end-room” ‡ for obvious reasons. It was at mid-day, and the same sounds as of a rake or fork, held with a strong hand, and bent on tearing down the wood-work of the door, were heard. I was sitting up, and to investigate at once left the room, which was only parted from the next by panelling; but there was no one save myself, either on that floor or the one below it. These are a few vivid recollections of circumstances that I seldom speak of, though I may not doubt

* It may be by the lapse of time that this particular occurrence has been obliterated from my memory.—A.D.C.

† It was in this room I slept that cold winter’s night described in *Light*.—A.D.C.

‡ Numbered 8 [in the plan].—A.D.C.

the clearness of my perception at the time they occurred. Neither is there any reason to think that they were the result of boyish freak. I have heard the footsteps first alluded to on several occasions when there were no boarders sleeping in the room through which they came, on their measured tramping to my door; but those on the upper-floor I only heard on the two consecutive nights I alluded to.

* * * * *

It is about a quarter of a century, perhaps longer, since the last unearthly sounds were heard by me at that place. I never *saw* anything, unless it were a cloud-like, shapeless mass above the mended or replaced floor, when the muffled footsteps neared our beds; and that might have arisen from the unavoidable feeling of horror that followed the advent of sounds so strange and unaccountable.*—Yours faithfully,

JAMES W.

Mr. W. writes again, in reply to our inquiries, on the 9th March, 1885.

* * * * *

Now for your questions. (1.) The time of our "vigil" was the night of —June, 1854. If it be asked how I remember, I reply that it was a week or thereabouts before the commencement of the first Midsummer holidays after my becoming "assistant master" there. I went there in March, 1854. As the holidays generally commenced about the 15th of June, it must, therefore, have been about a week after the beginning of that month. I am not so clear as to the year in which the other event was registered in memory, but from concurrent circumstances, judge it could not have been later than 1856, and as it succeeded the Midsummer holidays it was probably early in the August of that year. The two consecutive nights alluded to were those of the Saturday and Sunday.

(2.) I cannot remember mentioning the matters, either at the time of their occurrence or otherwise, in writing. Being aware that in some instances the supposition of the place being "haunted" might prove detrimental, I should have restrained any tendency to assist in spreading it. Neither did I keep a diary. I can remember being questioned by the "lessee" of the house as to any "experience" I might have had there, and cautioned to "keep dark" on the matter.

(3.) The elder brother was with me (we did not then "sit up") on the evening of the first of the two consecutive nights to which I have adverted, the Saturday evening. I suppose this may not be material, as to the best of my knowledge or recollection one slept in the room on the Saturday and the other on the following night. I do not think I could *affirm* positively which on which night. The room on the door of which the "scratching" took place was void on the Sunday evening, through one visitor, who was expected, having walked on to his house instead of halting at C. for the night. That room being the usual sleeping place of the elder gentleman, he was, perhaps,

* I quite agree with the general narrative, although *details* are either new to me or have escaped my memory.—A.D.C.

the occupant of the same room with me on the second evening. Perhaps both brothers might have been; I am at a loss.

(4.) The "ante-room" referred to by me was a small room entered through the "lower room": the latter being not on the ground floor, but up the first flight of stairs and upon the second storey [*i.e.*, the first floor] of the house. It was, I imagine, so known to distinguish it from a room above, also used for a dormitory, and named the "top room." The name "ante-room" was probably given to the small sleeping-room so-called, by some previous occupant of the place; it was suggested by one of the family that the name should have been "*anti*-room."

(5.) In the opinion of a large majority, all sights and sounds of a supposed ghostly nature might be termed "hallucinations" and spoken of as the outcome of a disordered imagination, or the illusion of a defective vision. I have not been at any time the subject of what might be properly so termed. I have never heard in other houses similar sounds to those we are considering, though I have since inhabited houses whose date was probably earlier by a century.

(6.) I have no recollection of my being told that the handle of the door turned or the door itself opened—I might have been so told. But on occasions when, in after small hours, I followed the same weird noises, the door had to be opened by my own hand. Of course I do not doubt the testimony given, —simply, I cannot remember.

(7.) The room on the upper floor from which I heard the burden dragged along was, I think, north of the "suicide's" room and adjoining it. There were sundry traditions as to its having been the scene of another tragedy. The room in which the previous vigil was held was also adjoining the suicide's room, but to its west and—unlike the other—only parted therefrom by a wooden partition. Said partition, however, in my judgment, was as old as the room itself; and, if "walls have ears" and things inanimate become sometimes sentient, would have witnessed the sad ending of a young frail life.

* * * * *

Mr. C.'s sister, in a letter to us on January 23rd, 1885, says:—

In answer to your letter, I beg to state that I can *truthfully verify* the facts contained in my brother's narrative, but that I would rather not enter into the matter, nor have my name mentioned in connection with it. I could give no fresh information, nothing beyond that which my brother has already written.

Miss W., the cousin referred to in Mr. A. D. C.'s account, writes as follows:—

* * * * *

April 11th, 1885.

On the night in question, I was sleeping in the room where the murder was transacted. My mother and cousin, also, were sleeping in the same room. They did not perceive anything. My bedstead was next to the door. We were all asleep; the door burst open with great force; I was suddenly

awakened with the feeling of some horrible presence near, and the door open. I did not see anything.

Once, only, when sleeping in the guest chamber with a cousin, was I ever alarmed before: when we both perceived that the door which had been shut was wide open in the night, and my cousin got up to close it. This was in the year 1850.

My brother is living in America. He could give you much information of what he saw and heard. He lived in the house some years. . . .

A. M. W.

In reply to a further inquiry:—

I believe it was in 1850 that I was staying in that haunted house.

I have never had any similar experience elsewhere.

A. M. W.

We have written to Miss W.'s brother, but have received no reply.

The following statement is taken from *Jackson's Oxford Journal* for Saturday, June 15th, 1799:—

On Saturday last an inquest was taken at Clifton, in this county, before R. Buckland, Gent., one of his Majesty's Coroners, on the body of Mrs. Sarah Fletcher. This lady put an end to her existence by hanging herself with her pocket-handkerchief, which she fastened to a piece of small cord, and affixed it to the curtain-rod of the bedstead in the room in which she usually slept. After a full investigation of the previous conduct of the deceased, and the derangement of her mind appearing very evident from the testimony of the gentleman at whose house this unfortunate affair happened, as well as from many other circumstances, the jury, without hesitation, found a verdict—Lunacy. The husband of this unfortunate lady is an officer in the Navy, and is now on his passage to the East Indies.

A similar notice appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 8th June, 1799.

We have received the following account of the present condition of the house:—

Balliol College, Oxford.

E. A. Jepson and I went over to see this "haunted house" at Clifton Hampden, March, 1885. It is now divided into two cottages. . . . The door which the "ghost" is said to have opened—at the foot of the stairs—is now permanently closed, as it separates the two parts of the house. The ceiling of the "ante-room" has been removed, and a staircase fills the place, leading to the room over the "lower room." The "ante-room" is not more than six feet square, and the "lower room" about eight or ten square feet. Mr. and Mrs. B. occupy the part on the right, as you face the house; Mrs. B. used to be in the C. family as cook, I believe. She was not at home, but Mr. B. kindly showed us over their part of the house. He corroborates the story of the unfaithfulness of Mr. F., and knew of the epitaph in Dorchester, but expressed disbelief in the stories of noises, &c., in the house. He recounted a story of a noise which frightened him once in the house, a

sort of tapping or scratching, but which turned out to be a jasmine against the window. Nothing was known about any other suicide to account for the story of the bent nail in the "ante-room," as mentioned by J. S. W. Mr. E. E. C. visits the place annually, and seems a great favourite there.

We had not time to visit the other part containing the "suicide's room" and the "box-room." At the back a series of cottages stretch away at right angles to the house; they used to be kitchen, schoolrooms, and dormitories.

A. H. BASSANO.

It is to be regretted that the incidents described in the above account took place between twenty and thirty years ago, and that with the exception of the passage extracted from Mr. A. D. C.'s diary, no contemporaneous account has been preserved. But, while differing on many minor points, the three witnesses are agreed as to the character of the principal disturbance—the sounds as of footfalls—and as to the time at which they occurred,—2.45 a.m. It is true that almost any low sound which is repeated at frequent and regular intervals, may be interpreted as the sound of footsteps; but it would be difficult to suggest any normal cause for the sound here described, which could have escaped detection for so many years.

It will be seen that there are several discrepancies between Mr. A. D. C.'s narrative and the accounts of the same incidents furnished by Mr. E. E. C. and Miss W. But these discrepancies occur only in that part of Mr. A. D. C.'s evidence which relates to the experiences of others, and cannot be held seriously to affect his accuracy as a first-hand witness, so far as his general account of the "principal disturbance" is concerned.

F. P.

September 9th, 1886.

As a rule we do not print in the G series cases where the experience described has only affected the senses of a single person, and admits therefore of being explained as a purely subjective hallucination. But an exception may be made for a case like the following, where the experience recurred again and again to a person in good health, who has otherwise been entirely free from hallucinations of the senses. If subjective, such an experience is at least a very interesting type of hallucination.

G.—480. From Miss Boyle, of 22, South Audley Street, W.

22, South Audley Street.

Many years ago I was travelling in Italy, with my mother and sister, and after spending the winter at Rome, we went to Naples in the early spring, and passed the whole of the summer in that beautiful city.

We first descended at a hotel in Santa Lucia, but finding the quarter

noisy (it was the chief resort of the fishermen) my mother determined on taking an apartment.

She soon found one to her mind, being the lower floor of the Palazzo Caffarelli, a delightful situation, the corner of the Chiaja and the Piazza Caffarelli, and close to the gardens of the Villa Reale.

The rooms were large and lofty, but two of the bedrooms, my mother's and my own, had what in English eyes is generally reckoned the disadvantage of being passage rooms. I, however, was delighted with my dormitory, though it was, like myself, the smallest of all. It formed the corner; one window giving on the Piazza, the other on the Chiaja, and many an hour have I spent at my window watching the blue waves of the tideless sea, as they danced in the golden sunshine, or the silvery moonlight. "A Napoli non e mai notte," I once heard a man exclaim under my window, and the proverbially merry Neapolitans sang, twanged their guitars, and chattered the greater part of the night.

My powers of sleeping forsook me, not only on account of the varying sounds already described, added to the constant rumbling of heavy carts laden with flax at this season of the year, but also on account of the well-known excitable properties of the Neapolitan atmosphere. I was very sleepless. Being obliged to leave my window open on account of the heat, I could not darken the room without excluding the air, and every object in it was therefore partially visible.

There was but a short space between my mother's door and my sister's door, which were situated at right angles to each other in a corner of my room, and every night during the four months I spent at Naples, the figure of a woman passed through these doors, which were always left open.

In the uncertain light I could only see that the form was that of a woman apparently young from the outline and movement. At first I thought it was my sister and called to her, but, receiving no answer, supposed she had not heard me. For a few nights I paid little attention to the circumstance, as there were four women in the house besides myself, and it might easily have been one of these, but gradually I became attracted with the peculiar gliding movement of the figure, and the fact that I never received an answer to my constant challenge of "Who's there?". I resolved on the next opportunity to jump from my bed and follow the intruder into my sister's room. I did so more than once, and each time the form vanished on the threshold. I thought it better not to mention the circumstance to the servants, least of all to the Neapolitan, but I spoke of it to my mother and sister, who both laughed at my superstitious fears. A little offended by this, I entered no more on the subject with them, for indeed I had no fears. The appearance of my mysterious visitor did not cause an extra beat to my heart or pulse, but I set to work to argue with myself the possibility of the whole affair being a freak of the imagination, and I thought "I will look up and see her now." She did not come at my bidding, and later on, when plunged in a reverie respecting my favourite brother at school in England, or in recalling the delights of a moonlight ride on the preceding evening—then, when I had quite forgotten *Her*, I heard the rustle, raised my head, and saw her pass through the accustomed door.

My mother, who felt the heat of the Italian summer very much, changed her apartment for one with a cooler aspect, and I took possession of the bed she had just vacated. I wondered if *she* would appear to me there.

Yes, every night; the hour varied, as was my time for going to rest, but the visit certain.

I became at last rather attached to the apparition, and should have felt slighted if she had omitted to come. There were occasionally strange sounds, and screams, heard by other inmates of the house, but I was the only person favoured with a sight of the Unaccountable; for unaccountable this episode appeared to me, unless the following conversation with the "Donna di faccenda" can be accepted as a solution of the mystery.

I was complaining one day of my sleeplessness,

"Ah, signorina," said Teresa compassionately, "I often wonder you can sleep at all, in a room where a young compatriot of yours died of a broken heart, for the love of the Prince of Capua."

MARY BOYLE.

October 12th, 1884.

In answer to the question whether she had ever experienced hallucinations on other occasions, Miss Boyle replied, on March 1, 1885:—I never had any other experience of the kind.

AUTOMATIC WRITING.

The following is an abstract of an account published in *Psychische Studien*, February, 1884, p. 149. ("Aus Meiner Erfahrung. Philologische Räthsel Mediumistisch Aufgegeben," by the Editor.)

M. Aksakof and his sister-in-law, a lady of 40, and his step-son, a young man of 20, had held a series of sittings, in which communications in various languages had been received through table tiltings, and through a planchette, which stood upon a card on which was printed the French and Russian alphabets.

At the 57th séance a request was made through tilts for the Russian alphabet. After some Russian sentences had been given, planchette turned to the French alphabet. M. Aksakof took no mediumistic part in the experiments, but sat at another table, writing down the letters pointed out by planchette, and which one of the mediums dictated to him.

The following were the letters which he wrote down:—

e m e k h a b a c c h a

which was said by planchette to be a Hebrew saying, signifying "the Vale of Tears."

M. Aksakof requested that the sentence might be repeated in the Russian alphabet.

This was done. (The mediums who dictated the letters without understanding what they meant, could not have done this themselves, and they did not see the note-book.)

On being asked where these words came from, a reply was received that they were a well-known saying of a Portuguese Jewish doctor, whose name—planchette believed—was “Sardovy.”

Here the séance was interrupted by tea. M. Aksakof turned at once to a Hebrew lexicon, and found the sentence “emek habacca”—“Vale of Tears.” He further learnt from the dictionary that the sentence occurs only once in the Old Testament, namely, in the 84th Psalm, verse 7.

The saying was quite unknown to M. Aksakof. It was 30 years since he had studied Hebrew a little, and he had never advanced beyond the first chapter of Genesis, and the first ten psalms. The quotation was right, but for the change of ‘habacca’ to ‘habaccha.’ And turning to a French translation by Cahen of the Hebrew Bible, M. Aksakof found these words translated “la vallée de Bacha,” in which the syllable “ca” was spelt “cha.”

He could not find the name Sardovy in a biographical lexicon. Returning to the séance-room, he found that the mediums had re-seated themselves at the table, and that planchette had just spelt out, “Look in the dictionary for B. Cardoso.” As M. Aksakof sat down planchette continued, “I remember that the name is not Sardovy, but Cardovy; but no, I am still making a mistake, he is called Cardoso,” and then going over to the Latin alphabet—“Cardosio b.” On being asked what b signified, planchette continued, “His name—B. Cardoso, a learned doctor, who in his time was well-known.” Being asked as to the connection between this and the Hebrew letters, planchette replied, “A celebrated motto.”

At the conclusion of the séance M. Aksakof consulted Didot’s *Nouvelle Biographie Universelle*, and found:—“Cardoso (Fernando), Portuguese doctor, born about the beginning of the 17th century . . . who won great fame in his profession. . . . It was a curious fact in the life of this *savant* that he gave up the Christian religion to return to the Jewish creed. . . .”

This time, therefore, the surname and the characteristic details were right, the only mistake being in the Christian name, which was of little importance. Whether the motto was really much used by Cardoso, one cannot tell without a perusal of his works, and this M. Aksakof has had no opportunity of accomplishing.

M. Aksakof calls the attention of those who would view this occurrence as transference of a latent thought, to the following points:—That his hands did not touch planchette, that he sat at another table, and was isolated from all contact with the mediums; that the name was given first as Sardovy, then Cardovy, and lastly as Cardoso, with details of the biography of a man whose name even was not mentioned in ordinary biographical dictionaries; that had the Hebrew words come from him, he would have been able to say with certainty that the sentence was in the Old Testament, or with greater precision still, in the Psalms. No other sources were known to him; he never would have connected the words with a Jewish Portuguese doctor; he would never have asserted that the motto was Cardoso’s, when the name even was unknown to him.

There is a logical impossibility in such a view, which M. Aksakof believes

will be the greatest difficulty, those will have to contend with, who deny an intelligence exterior to that of the sitters.

Professor Butlerow was also present at the sitting.

Since translating the above I have had a personal interview with M. Aksakof. He repeats that his knowledge of Hebrew was of a most elementary nature, enabling him with the help of a dictionary to pick out a few words only. His step-son knew no Hebrew.

He wishes to call especial attention to a point which he regrets having omitted to comment upon in his original paper, namely, that even though it were possible to suppose that the Hebrew words could have been unconsciously impressed on his brain, there is a very much larger assumption involved, if it be maintained that the *meaning* could likewise have been unconsciously impressed.

J. H. S.

M. Aksakof writes on the 17th August, 1886:—

I have been in the British Museum and found there some of the works of *Fernando Cardoso*, namely:—

1. *De las utilidades del Agua*, Madrid, 1637.
2. *Discurso sobre el Vesuvio*, Madrid, 1632.
3. *Philosophia libera*, Venetiiz, 1673.
4. *Las Excellencias de los Hebreos*, Amsterdam, 1678.

The last two works were published by him under the name of *Isac Cardoso*, after having embraced the Hebrew religion, and are, I think, the most important. I have perused all the four volumes, but did not find the motto.

According to the *Biographie Universelle de Michaud* (nouvelle édition), there are some other works of Cardoso, and among them are given the titles of: “*De febris syncopei*,” Madrid, 1634. “*Panegyrico del color verde*,” *ib.*, 1635, which are not in the Library of the British Museum.

And so, however, it is not positively proven, but I am inclined to conclude that the reference, as regards the motto, is wrong. Its confirmation would be valuable, but the important point remains (*Cardoso's name, with particulars, &c.*).

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

SIR,—Like many others I must submit to hard names and be considered “unreliable”; as this was exactly my attitude not long ago towards the Spiritualists, I deserve all I get. However, after careful investigations and a great many sésances, I am convinced and content, be I in your opinion scientific, accurate, or mad. What I have said and done has only been to aid others in my feeble way to what appeared to me truth, and as truth will out, I can afford to wait. In my saying “the slates were cleaned,” I ought to have said “Mr. Eglinton's slates were cleaned.” The three I bought were uncleaned, and can be viewed by any doubting the fact. No one can rob me of the

evidence of my own senses under the following circumstances. I take my own folding slates, hold these in mid air between the medium and myself, have a friend in her normal condition to sit by and watch with me, and under these conditions get writing in the folding slate. I fail to see here the chance to cheat, and cannot but believe.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

H. K. BRIETZCKE.

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

SIR,—As I find Mrs. Sidgwick's letter in your last *Journal* (for August) would lead to, indeed seems to rest upon, a misconception of my previous note in some particulars, I now wish as shortly as possible to make my sense clearer.

Mrs. Sidgwick says that I have expressed "surprise that a believer in telepathy should feel any difficulty in accepting Mr. Eglinton's phenomena as genuine." I never used the word "genuine," for which the substitution of the word *possible* would be correct; and I made no reference whatever to "telepathy," but to *one* special case of planchette-writing, well-known as the *Newnham*, to which a considerable part of the first half-yearly report for 1885 was devoted. It is no simple case of telepathy, but a much more involved example of those psychical puzzles the Society have set themselves the task of explaining. True, telepathy may account for the unconscious transference of thought in the first place from Mr. Newnham to his wife, the medium; but after that several unknown psychical processes are required to complete the chain which ends in a written answer to an unknown question. For at no time does Mrs. Newnham have any conscious idea of her husband's silent questioning. Each question therefore received, let us say telepathically, by Mrs. Newnham had to be submitted unconsciously to her sub-conscious self, an answer found, and still again transmitted by unconscious muscular action to the planchette pencil (?), such answer finally from its immorality being unrecognisable by Mr. Newnham as that at all likely to come from his wife. So curious an illustration of psychical power cannot be passed out of argument as simply "telepathy."

Mrs. Sidgwick then goes on to hint that perhaps I mean that "anyone taking one step away from scientific orthodoxy" (as with her belief in the *Newnham* marvels)—"accepting as a truth anything not generally admitted by scientific men—is logically bound to believe everything else." Of course not. My argument was rather this: that, given a certain series of reported and unusual phenomena bearing a great *impression of exterior resemblance* and close relation, yet of an incredible nature, it would be just and scientific that an investigator hitherto a stranger and disbeliever in all, should, on finding one to be true—however explained—at least for a little suspend judgment or be careful in rejecting the rest—also *possibly* true, however explained. I consider myself quite justified in seeing on the face of things some resemblance between the *Newnham* case and Mr. Eglinton's occult writing as reported, inasmuch as in the latter there is only an extended or additional invisible as well as unconscious power over a pencil for the answering of unknown questions. But Mrs. Sidgwick had, as I am rather glad to record again, "no hesitation" at all in ascribing slate-writing to conjuring, a very different position indeed from that of adepts themselves in conjuring such

as Angelo J. Lewis (Professor Hoffman) and Dr. Herschell, and far more, from that of some eminent authorities in science.

Still, after all, I think Mrs. Sidgwick in these words and verdict just quoted surely overstates her inward convictions as to possibilities. For I read in her last letter that she has been investigating Spiritualism for 12 years. This presents to me a picture of a very remarkable period of hesitation, not likely either, I fully believe, to be soon ended. The facts remain and increase, yet being of so delicate a kind, requiring dispassionate, even sympathetic interest for the time, will ever remain a riddle to those who approach them with the moods of mind which are represented by hard and fast outward conclusions and condescending criticism.

I need not enter into what would become an interminable argument upon methods of investigation. The suggestion Mrs. Sidgwick makes is a good one, but if successful is not necessarily, I fear, convincing. Equally striking proofs exist in both Zöllner's and Crookes' books, but apparently are of small service.—I am, sir, yours obediently,

J. MURRAY TEMPLETON.

Cove, Dumbartonshire, N.B.
6th : 8 : 86.

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

SIR,—I venture to express a hope that the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, or Mr. A., "the amateur conjurer," will be able to proclaim that Mr. A. and S. J. D. are not one and the same person, as has been suggested in some criticisms that have appeared in *Light* on the evidence furnished by Mr. A., "the amateur conjurer," of which Mrs. Sidgwick availed herself.

I have no wish whatever to know who Mr. A. is, and I have no right to ask. When a writer wishes his name to be concealed that wish is entitled to respect; but this principle will not be violated by the announcement I suggest, as I believe that the readers of the *Journal* will, in common with myself, be as much in ignorance as to who Mr. A. is after we have learnt, as I hope we shall learn, that he is not S. J. D., as we were before.—I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

PERCY WYNDHAM.

44, Belgrave Square, London, S. W.
August 27th, 1886.

[Mr. Wyndham's letter will be laid before the Council at the next meeting, which, as at present arranged, will be on October 15th.—ED.]

"PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING."

The price at which this book (2 vols. octavo) will be issued is one guinea. One copy will be supplied to every present Member of the Society who has paid his subscription for the current year, for 5s. 3d. and the cost of carriage or postage; and to every present Associate who has paid his subscription for the current year, for 10s. 6d. and the cost of carriage or postage. Members and Associates who desire copies are requested to send their names to the Assistant Secretary, at 14, Dean's Yard, S.W.