

JOURNAL

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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NEW ASSOCIATES.

BICKNELL, NORMAN L., Foxgrove, Beckenham, Kent.
 BIRKS, REV. EDWARD B., M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge.
 EARLE, MRS. C. W., 5, Bryanston Square, London, W.
 HOOK, REV. CECIL, M.A., Hook Memorial Vicarage, Leeds.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

A Meeting of the Council was held on the 2nd of March, at which the following Members were present :—Professor H. Sidgwick (in the chair), and Messrs. Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and H. Arthur Smith.

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

Four new Associates, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected.

Two presents to the Library were on the table, for which thanks were awarded to the donors.

Cash accounts were presented in the usual form for the months of January and February.

These included donations from Miss Bertha Porter of £5 ; and from Mrs. Russell Gurney of £2 18s. (In sending her subscription of £2 2s., Mrs. Gurney had forwarded a cheque for £5.) They had been duly acknowledged with thanks.

The House and Finance Committee presented a report stating that they had carefully gone through an estimate of receipts, and a scheme of expenditure for the current year, which they submitted to the Council. If the anticipated income is realised, and the proposed expenditure carried out, the deficiency of current assets over liabilities will be extinguished at the close of the year. With some slight modification in regard to one or two items, the report was adopted.

Having regard to the pressure upon the finances of the Society, it was agreed that the minute passed on the 13th of February, 1885, relative to the expenses of Members of the Committee of Reference in attending certain Council Meetings (see *Journal*, Vol. I., p. 260), should be rescinded. It was, however, felt that the position occupied by Professor Barrett, as a Founder of the Society, and as residing in Ireland, was an exceptional one, and that the minute should be retained in his case, as a special exception.

The next Meeting of the Council will be on Friday, the 13th of April, the day fixed for the General Meeting, at 4.30 p.m.

FURTHER CASES OF AUTOMATIC WRITING.

A few more cases of automatic writing should, perhaps, from time to time be submitted to the readers of the *Journal*, not necessarily on account of any great intrinsic importance in most of them, but rather to help in keeping alive an interest in the subject, and a willingness to make experiments. I continue to feel disappointed at what seems the indifference of the Spiritualistic body to this class of experiment,—so eminently interesting, one would have supposed, to those who start from the belief that a mind external to the writer's is concerned in the replies thus given. Hardly any record of such messages at present appears in the Spiritualistic papers,—beyond the mere commonplaces, reflecting the writer's attitude of mind, which so many persons can obtain almost at will. A few good cases, however, have been sent to me, for which I am extremely grateful. Two of the best of these were read at the last meeting of the Society for Psychical Research. Meantime I must continue to rely mainly on the kindness of those readers who may be willing to make an attempt at automatic writing in response to my appeal. Records thus obtained, even if not individually very striking, have the advantage of freedom from prepossession; and in so obscure an inquiry we must collate many cases, some of them apparently trifling, before we can expect to see our way.

I. In the first place, a few more details may be given with regard to the "Schiller Case." (*Proceedings*, XI., p. 216, *sqq.*). Mr. F. C. S. Schiller writes from Oxford, September 18th, 1887: "I have lately succeeded in tracing some more of planchette's productions; in this case some of 'Irktoimar's' Provençal. I happened to look up Boucoiran's *Dictionary of French Dialects*, and found s.v. 'Goumet,'—'Gilet,—voir *boumbet*,'—and under the latter the following quotation

'La blodo de telo cirado
Am soun boumbet de tafetas.'

Now planchette wrote 'Goumet de telo arciado;' which is, I think a

distinct reminiscence of the above; *goumet* being substituted for its equivalent *boumbet*, and *cirado* having its letters transposed. The other couplet which we could make out by ordinary French, I also found to be linguistically correct." It happens that these messages were written in my presence, and Mr. Schiller inquires whether I have any knowledge of Provençal, which could have been transferred to Mr. F. N. Schiller's mind (for whose own ignorance, see *Proceedings*, XI., 223); but I was quite equally ignorant, and when I saw the words *goumet de telo arciado* written, I certainly had no idea of any possible meaning to them.

II. I shall next quote a few sentences from Mrs. Ellis, 40, Keppel-street, W.C., who has long been in the habit of writing automatically, in obedience to a strong impulse, though without belief in any agency external to her own mind. Mrs. Ellis has kindly allowed me to examine much MS. of this kind, the production of which seemed almost forced upon her, in the midst of assiduous literary work which might well indispose her for needless writing. These MSS. contain much of the usual hortatory matter, which the unconscious self always seems so anxious to inflict upon us, and also a certain number of prophecies, undoubtedly written before the event, and most of them fulfilled. Several facts thus predicted were unexpected by the writer, and in themselves improbable; but they are mostly foretold with a strange oracular ambiguity, and Mrs. Ellis cannot feel certain that the coincidences are beyond the range of chance. The following extract from a letter of November, 1887, describes the sensations felt during writing—a point on which I should be glad to receive further communications.

"I find in reading Professor Richet's letter (on variations of handwriting accompanying different imaginary personalities imposed by hypnotic suggestion), that he speaks only of the automatic writing of hypnotised persons. I have never written in a hypnotic state, being not at all a good subject, but I have come to the conclusion lately, through noticing certain slight mental and physical peculiarities, whilst the automatic writing is going on, that I must be more or less in an abnormal or semi-hypnotised state, though how that state has come about I cannot understand. I described to you the curious twitching, restlessness, and slight muscular pain in the right arm and hand which precedes the writing; also the sense of nervous constriction of the throat, and swelling of the chest, as I seem unable to breathe freely. But with this is an inability to *speak*. I have tried repeatedly, and could only get the words out in a fragmentary stupid fashion, like a person speaking half asleep. I have tried over and over again to read a book while the writing was going on, but found it was excessively painful—I might say torturing—

and the writing then only consisted of confusedly-scrawled repetitions. I could not comprehend a word I was reading, as it seemed as if all the brain-power was *dragging away* to the automatic writing. I can write when my eyes are shut, but even then I get a worried feeling that the words are running crookedly into each other; and the slightest distraction stops the flow of the writing. A troubling recollection, no matter how trifling, spoils it; it then becomes only the normal voluntary writing. I have noticed lately that at times when at work on my regular 'copy' for the printers, my writing, especially if I am getting wearied, changes into writing like some of the specimens of automatic writing which I have shown you;—never into the large scrawling script, but into another style, a small hard formal writing. A peculiarity of my normal composition, a tendency to tautology, which gives me endless trouble, appears in the automatic writing in a most intensified form.

"One thing more. As M. Richet speaks of the physical changes in his subjects, I have observed there is a difference even of attitude required by some of the automatic messages. With one especially, I must sit up straighter, squarer, with my head held stiffly up, and feet extended, with the impression that a *man* is writing. Another, is a small, pale, slanting, prim writing. I write very slowly and carefully, the pen just gliding up and down in old-fashioned feminine writing. The impression is that a lady is writing,—a woman whose style is old-fashioned,—a neat, gentle, characterless sort of person. Of course, were I a Spiritualist, I would tell you who the writer *seems* to be. But though I would fain believe in the prophetic quality of these messages, yet I feel almost sure that all the phenomena can be explained by the intelligence within."

It will be seen that in some points there is a close analogy between this case and the cases described by Mr. Gurney where the awakened hypnotic subject manages with difficulty to carry on concurrently two performances, involving different strata of his being. Just as Mr. Gurney's subjects sometimes find it hard at the same time to read a book aloud with their normal intelligence and to write out with their hypnotic intelligence sentences which have been suggested to them in the trance state;—just as the piece of work which the primary consciousness is performing presents itself to the secondary consciousness as a vague and painful disturbance intruded upon the secondary activity (*Proceedings* XI., 319); even so does the attempted combination of primary and secondary activities in Mrs. Ellis's case—as when she tries to read a newspaper whilst writing automatically—present itself as a vague and painful disturbance, referred to the whole tract of graphic energy, from hand to brain. In each case we have a message from one stratum of the

writer's psychical being conveyed to another stratum; and though in one case the dislocation of psychical strata originates in a definitely distinguishable layer of hypnotic personality, in the other case in some vague conglomerate of irregularly-fused impulses or conceptions,—yet in each case the conditions of outcrop are approximately the same—in each case similarly they teach the observer on the surface how little he knows of the subjacent structure of the mind of man.

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

EXPERIMENTS IN HYPNOTISM.

(Abridged from the Original German.)

In *Sphinx* for December, 1887, appears a paper by Albert von Ntzing describing the experiments of a special committee of the Psychological Society in Munich, formed in May of the same year for the investigation of transcendental psychical phenomena in the hypnotic state, which paper was communicated to the Society on September the 29th.

After a series of 40 sittings, attended in all by 75 witnesses (among whom were Professors of various faculties), the committee felt itself in a position to offer a preliminary Report, with the promise of a detailed treatise on Thought-transference later on.

During the experiments the committee specially aimed at the confirmation of certain passages in the programme of the Psychological Society, which, translated and abridged, run as follows:—

“By means of hypnotic research, is opened out a wide and productive field for the foundation of an experimental psychology, and we may now look forward with greater confidence to the science (with even more than usual energy) taking that flight which every branch of learning has taken as soon as it has become possible to pursue it experimentally. . . .

“Above all, there is no profession, scientific or artistic, that could not derive benefit from the investigation of this matter. . . .

“The artist may believe that he can gain nothing; but gestures and mimicry in the hypnotic state (not being responsive alone to extraneous ideas), are expressive to a degree unattainable in the waking state, because they are worked from within outwards.”

Taking into consideration the limited extent to which experimental researches can be carried out by private individuals even in a scientific spirit, and submitting to all tests for the exclusion of deception, the committee confined its activity to as exact a verification as possible of psychical facts—so far as they have not yet been generally acknowledged. They refrained from considering the specialities of hypnotism so thoroughly investigated by numerous French inquirers,

only seeking to adduce proofs of their *artistic* importance, on account of the many hostile attacks called forth by the passage cited above.

The experiments, of which the number amounted to 200 (excluding 15 per cent. of failures) are arranged in three groups:—

1. Supersensuous Suggestion (in the hypnotic state).
2. Experiments in the Substitution of the Senses.
3. Photographic Experiments.

I. SUPERSENSUOUS SUGGESTION.

Many witnesses attended these trials, the majority asserting themselves convinced that thoughts and impulses were imparted to the hypnotised subject without the intervention of the usual channels of sense. The conditions under which they were carried out having been made so widely known by publication in various periodicals, no repetition was offered by the committee. It was, however, thought advisable to mention that during the latter half of the sittings, experiments were made for the express purpose of convincing sceptics, and differed from those reported, inasmuch as:—(a) Simpler commands were given; (b) All hints and assistance were stringently avoided.

II. EXPERIMENTS IN THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE SENSES.

In their 33rd sitting, the investigators were surprised at the appearance of a sort of clairvoyance or abnormal transposition or substitution of the senses. By this is to be understood the perception of external impressions which in the normal state would only reach the central organ through the bodily sense. In the subject operated upon by the committee (who in all cases was a girl called Lina), as soon as the deep hypnotic stage was reached, the functions of the eye were executed by that portion of the head corresponding to the anterior fontanelle of infancy, situated at the junction of the sagittal and coronal sutures.

The committee recommended to consideration the somewhat analogous case of response to light-stimulus in some blindfolded animals, such as the frog and the earth-worm, and the anatomical and embryological researches justifying the assertion of the skin being the original seat of the whole organ of vision.

The fact appeared incontrovertible in the trials undertaken to verify it. Fraulein Lina, when in the hypnotic state, was verbally commanded to read with her skin, and on being blindfolded and carefully watched by a couple of witnesses, was given a book, the contents of which were unknown to those present—a precautionary measure for the exclusion of thought-transference. The order being given, she opened it at hazard, and laid it on the portion of her head described

above, and then, as she slowly drew the book along, she read the words which happened to be exactly over the sensitive part, and which were taken down by someone present. Her whole body was then convulsed, she groaned deeply, and sometimes painfully, soon became fatigued, and when about a line was read the book fell from her hand, and she sank back in her chair breathing heavily. She was then, as a rule, induced to sleep for some time, during which suggestions were made for the prevention of unfavourable after effects, which mostly succeeded. Still, on waking, she declared that she felt as though that portion of her head was open, and complained of considerable pressure there.

When hypnotised (specially in the deep or lethargic stage) she used this faculty precisely as an eye, as long as her eyes were closed. She examined those present by means of it, surveyed the objects which she was mentally commanded to find, and indeed knelt down and laid her head on the floor in order to observe a cushion there.

The fact that large print was preferred and more easily read than small pointed to the co-operation of hindering physical factors, but it was impossible to attribute this faculty to the mere refinement of the sensory nerves, as in the extraordinary performances of the blind, because the attempts at reading from smooth surfaces (photographed writings or the position of the hands of a watch under the glass) were as successful as any others. Writing was especially photographed by a member of the society, and kept by one of the witnesses in a sealed envelope until the decisive moment.

The idea that rays of light were indispensable proved to be unfounded, for, in most cases, the passages seen were in contact with the skin, and at another time the investigations took place in complete darkness.

Though unable to offer an acceptable explanation of the occurrence, the committee regarded it as a fact still looked upon as within the boundaries of the mysterious, but one for which the recognition and investigation of orthodox science should be demanded, on account of the simplicity of the conditions of demonstration and the absolute certitude of the results.

III. PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENTS.

With Fraulein Lina the phenomena of *imitation automatique* were produced in a marked degree. No physical help was required in order to bring about any desired position of the limbs; if such an attempt was made, the fidelity of the representation was destroyed at once. Mere suggestion, verbal or pictorial (especially if it had been repeated several times), sufficed to produce the expression required, and the bare command was enough to fix it on her face at the precise moment

for taking the photograph. At the same time it rested entirely with the subject to work out the impressed idea and represent it by gesture.

During three sittings with Fraulein Lina, 20 representations were obtained under the direction and in the studio of the artist Albert Keller, Lieutenant Höhn, a member of the Psychological Society acting as the photographer. Three of these are reproduced in the December number of the *Sphinx*.

In the January number for this year of the same periodical is published Dr. Carl du Prel's report on Supersensuous Thought-transference, communicated to the Psychological Society in Munich on the 14th of April, 1887.

Hypnotism, according to Dr. du Prel, has experienced the unusual treatment at the hands of its earliest discoverers of having its scope under-estimated. Only recently its curative effects, as practised by Dr. Liébeault in Nancy for over 25 years, have been recognised by his colleagues—and that half a century after the discoveries of Braid.

The experiments described took place in Dr. du Prel's study, his wife, Herr von Notzing, Baron Hornstein, and he being present. A young girl—Lina—was to be put into the hypnotic state, and was to carry out orders, partly during it and partly after being awaked. The fact of the passive obedience of hypnotised persons has long been known, and though one wakes from hypnotic sleep without any recollection of what has taken place during it, nevertheless the illusion of acting independently remains while fulfilling post-hypnotic commands (even when the performance is contrary to social custom or even morality). The phenomenon is of the greatest psychological interest, provided always that the commands given during sleep vanish really from the memory on waking.

It was decided that during the experiments no *verbal* commands were to be given, only mental, and thus some light might be thrown on the disputed point of the existence of thought transference without contact. To obviate the charge of possible collusion between the hypnotiser (Herr von Notzing) and the girl, the drawing up of the commands was intrusted to Dr. du Prel, who wrote them on a tablet and allowed the hypnotiser silently to read them. Herr von Notzing then sat down opposite the girl and concentrated his thoughts on the command. Lina was hypnotised and fell asleep in three minutes, exhibiting the decisive proofs of the condition—increased rate of pulse-beat and of respiration, insensibility to the pricks of a needle on her arm, and the outward direction of the pupils of her eyes.

First Trial.—(Command written.)—She shall stretch out her left

hand towards Baron Hornstein, and then strike his, which he shall put forward to meet it.

Result.—Lina made several attempts to raise her left hand from the arm of the chair, but it constantly fell back. At last she reached it across the table towards Baron Hornstein, seized his, did not let it go for some time, and then gave it a slight knock. This she repeated automatically several times by tapping the Baron's hand on the table where it lay.

Second Trial.—(Command written.)—She shall rise, take the red pamphlet from the desk, and hand it to Baron Hornstein, with a bow.

Result.—Lina, after some rambling talk, rose, took a red-covered pamphlet from the desk, and handed it over the table to Baron Hornstein, with a slight bow. The pamphlet was three times removed from the table, and replaced on the desk; she fetched it each time, and although then awake and conscious, gave it to the Baron, and complained, "He takes it away."

As those present had satisfied themselves on former evenings by means of very complicated commands as to the transference of thought in the hypnotic state, they now principally desired to investigate the phenomenon of post-hypnotic commands.

Third Trial.—(Command written.)—On waking, she shall go to the window, look out, and see a rainbow, many merry people, rockets, and shooting stars, and describe it all.

On the chance of Herr von Notzing considering the production of a post-hypnotic hallucination by means of mental suggestion too difficult an alternative command was added: She shall see, in a picture brought to her, the portrait of Dr. du Prel's little son. Of course, the picture should *not* represent the child, the alteration would be due to post-hypnotic *illusion*, but probably more likely to succeed than *hallucination*, in which the picture would be entirely supplied by the girl. Herr von Notzing, however, chose the former command, reserving the latter for a future trial.

Result.—In this trial (unlike Nos. 1 and 2) it was thought advisable to ascertain before waking whether the impression had been conveyed to Lina's mind. Herr von Notzing put the question: "Which is the direction?" She pointed towards the window. Being satisfied, we impressed upon her that she should remain under the commanded illusion till he said the word "Plate" (chosen by Dr. du Prel), and then woke her. After some hesitation, she stepped to the window, but described nothing, though her face bore a joyful expression. Unfortunately her power of speech is somewhat impaired, and only on being asked what pleased her, she replied, "Merry." She tapped with her finger, as though following the rhythm of music, and

invited those present to look out, but her descriptions were confined to a mere mention of lights and people laughing. All at once she said, "Buf comes into my head." This was the pet name of Dr. du Prel's boy. "If I did not know that he was in bed, I should think I saw him there in the corner." Thinking that the second command might have made an impression, a portrait of a lady of the 16th century was handed to her. She at once perceived it as representing the boy, and expressed her admiration of the likeness—comparing it with veritable portraits of the child, greatly to their disadvantage.

Herr von Notzing then introduced the word "Plate" into the conversation—the sign for the cessation of the illusion. The picture was again handed to the girl, when she commented on the lace cap, frill, and chain of pearls. But the first post-hypnotic command still lingered, she spoke of Bengal lights, mentioned the student's song she had heard, declared the people to be still shouting, and only after some time pronounced it all over.

On Herr von Notzing saying the word "Omega," Lina leant back and fell asleep, as had been arranged.

Fourth Trial.—(Command written.)—To-morrow at 3.30 she shall come to Dr. du Prel's and ask for a cup of coffee. Questions were then put to satisfy the investigators that the command had been transferred. Lina was awakened, but still had the picture of the child in her mind. It had been Dr. du Prel's design to pretend that he was going away for a week, in order to make the fulfilment of the command for the next day more difficult, but this was abandoned.

Result.—The following day the same company assembled, and at 3.30 the bell rang, and Lina, in some embarrassment, and with many apologies, made her appearance. She had had an appointment with a friend at that time, but had thought that she *must* come and see them, she said. The request for coffee was only obtained after some rather direct leading-up. Both illusion and hallucination of the previous day remained to a certain extent. She spoke of the boy's portrait, and decided that there must have been a birthday celebration.

Only one experiment has been omitted in the foregoing report. The attempt to alter the pulse action from 100 to 60 for the length of five minutes failed utterly.

On the whole the experiments were regarded as successful, and as proving the following:—

1. Thought-transference without contact.
2. The fulfilment of post-hypnotic commands.
3. The imparting of post-hypnotic illusion.
4. The imparting of post-hypnotic hallucination—
the last mentioned leaving most to be desired.

INTEMPERANCE CURED BY HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION

The following case has been furnished by the Rev. S. MacNaughton, M. A., Preston.

A brief notice of a most interesting case of removing "the drink crave" may perhaps encourage some of our less experienced hypnotists to direct their attention to this phase of moral healing.

Mr. M. is between 40 and 45 years of age, and by no means a "sensitive subject." For many years he took drink to such excess as to most seriously impair his health, his life on one occasion being despaired of by his medical attendant. On several occasions he determined to give up drinking; but invariably went back after a short period of abstinence. He was most anxious, and at times even determined to reform, but all to no purpose. In March of last year I hypnotised him, after repeated trials extended over a period of six or seven weeks. The alcohol in the system no doubt made him a more difficult subject than otherwise he would have been. Usually I have not much difficulty in producing profound sleep; but in his case it was not attained until after about 18 or 20 trials. After the eyes would firmly close the hearing would be marvellously acute, the slightest noise, even stroking the kittens, would disturb and distress him. Eventually hearing was overcome; but still there was a further stage. When the subject recollects on awaking what took place while he is in the sleep, he is not in the profoundest sleep. This fact ought to be specially noted by beginners, if they would ensure themselves against failure. Profound sleep being attained, I said, "You are determined never again to taste beer or any kind of intoxicating drink?" He said, with whole-souled emphasis, "YES." I then said, "You could not take it, even if it was put to your lips, it will be so bitter and nauseous." And putting a glass of water to his lips, I said, "Just try." Immediately the liquid touched his lips, he spat it out with manifest signs of extreme disgust, and immediately wiped the moisture from his lips. Ten months have now elapsed, and he has never had the slightest desire during that period to taste any kind of strong drink.

This I consider an excellent test case. First, because Mr. M. was not a "sensitive," but the very reverse, being one of the most difficult subjects to hypnotise that I have had. Secondly, because he had repeatedly tried to give up the drink, knowing that his life depended upon his abstinence, and had always failed. Thirdly, because a sufficient period has now elapsed to warrant the conclusion that the cure is permanent.

I have another case of about three months' standing, similar methods to the above being used on the first trial. Ever since, to use the words of his wife, this man is "dead set" against the drink. I may add that the craving for tobacco or any other narcotic may be removed by similar means.

The following sentence should have appeared as part of Mr. Morell Theobald's certificate printed at the foot of the Receipts and Expenditure Account in the last *Journal*:—

“The outstanding debts on 31st December, 1887, were stated to be £329 15s.”

To prevent this statement from misleading the reader, it must be added that at the date mentioned the Society's assets amounted to £225, independently of the Library, valued two years ago at £250, and of the unsold stock of *Proceedings*. More than two-thirds of the outstanding debts have been paid off since the beginning of the year.