

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

#### NEW ASSOCIATES.

- BATES, MISS, care of London and County Bank, Maidstone.
- BEER, MRS., 14, Stratton-street, Piccadilly, London, W.
- COWAN, MRS., Valleyfield, Penicuik, N.B.
- EARDLEY, LADY, 4, Lancaster-street, Hyde Park, London, W.
- KEATINGE, MRS., R. H., 62, Lexham-gardens, Kensington, London, W.
- PAGET, LADY, The Embassy, Vienna.
- SWAN, C. A., 10, Delamere-street, London, S.W.
- TODD, MRS., Queen Anne-chambers, Bond-street, Sydney, New South Wales.

#### MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At a Meeting of the Council held on April 5th, the President in the chair, the following Members were also present:—Dr. A. T. Myers, Lieut.-Colonel Hartley, and Messrs. T. Barkworth, F. W. H. Myers, Frank Podmore, and R. Pearsall Smith.

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

Several presents to the Library were on the table, the particulars of which are given on another page. Votes of thanks were accorded to the donors, especially to Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace for a parcel of nearly 20 volumes.

It was agreed that the name of M. Léon Marillier should be inserted on the "Objects," as Secretary for France.

Mr. R. H. Bates having given notice to terminate, at Midsummer next, his tenancy of the rooms let to him, it was resolved that the needful steps be taken to secure a fresh tenant.

The next meeting of the Council was fixed for May 10th, at 5 p.m.

NEW NUMBER OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The fourth number of the *Proceedings* of the American Society for Psychical Research, published in March of this year, contains nearly 300 pages of matter of great and varied interest for all readers who have given serious attention to our investigations. It begins with some "Remarks" by Mr. Gurney—with a postscript by Mr. Myers—concluding the controversy raised by Professor C. S. Peirce on a portion of the evidence in *Phantasms of the Living*, which occupied a considerable place in No. III. of the *Proceedings* of the American Society. Next comes an interesting paper by Professor C. S. Minot, containing the results of a statistical inquiry into the tendencies of average men and women, when asked to draw diagrams, to select certain forms rather than others; 5,010 diagrams were collected, 501 persons having responded to an invitation to draw each 10 diagrams on a post-card. A comparison of these showed a decidedly preponderant tendency to simple geometrical figures. Thus there were 209 plain circles, and 72 circles with inscribed figures, 174 plain squares and 62 with cross lines or figures inscribed, 220 triangles, and 245 four-sided figures other than squares, making 978 in all; so that if an American, unaware of this "diagram-habit," is asked to draw a diagram, the chance of his drawing one or other of these figures may be taken to be little less than 1 in 5. Nearly half the whole number—2,344—were drawn with simple straight lines; and 681 of the rest with simple curved lines. Next in frequency to the circles, squares, triangles, and four-sided figures came the faces, of which there are in all 96. Professor Minot bases on these results a criticism of the experiments on thought-transference recorded in several numbers of our *Proceedings*. He says that "if we examine the drawings given in the various articles above referred to, we notice that with the exception of a single series . . . the figures drawn by both the agents and percipients are in greater part just such as our diagram tests have shown to be the ones likely to be drawn." Hence the authors of the articles "fail to offer the necessary proof that the proportion of coincidences was greater than chance would account for." Professor Minot does not attempt to show that chance *would* account for the amount of coincidence in our experiments: and Professor W. James, who writes a note on his paper, considers that "the revelation of the diagram-habit has not appreciably weakened the evidence for thought-transference" contained in our reports. Readers of this *Journal* who will take the trouble to compare Professor Minot's paper with our reports are, I think, likely to agree with Professor

James: at the same time Professor Minot's results are decidedly interesting, and it will be advisable, in any future experiments of the kind, to guard against the effect of "diagram-habits" by employing diagrams selected at random from a larger number—say 50 or 100—previously prepared.

The next long paper is a careful record of experiments in guessing numbers by persons who have "tried hard to find" some explanation of the results other than telepathy. Their success is not of a dazzling kind—586 guesses were right out of 3,000, the number that chance would tend to give being 300—but, as the experimenters say, the preponderance of right guesses is sufficient to prove some influence other than chance.

Then follows the *pièce de résistance* of this part of the *Proceedings*—the report of the Committee on Phantasms and Presentiments, with a long Appendix and further comments by Professor Royce. I must reserve my remarks on this for a separate paper. Meanwhile, I may invite our readers' attention to an able reply by Mr. Hodgson to some objections to the theory of telepathy, which follows Professor Royce's paper.—ED.

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#### CASES SUPPLIED TO THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

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The following narrative from a lady, Miss W., known to Mr. Myers, contains, first, a good instance of an *illusion*,\* which must be carefully distinguished from an *hallucination*. Secondly, an account of a collective impression difficult to class. Thirdly, an apparition of a living person at a time of danger, which, though not at first-hand from the percipient, is at first-hand from a person aware of the phantasm before the coincidence was known.

I am very pleased to comply with your request, by writing down the following incidents, which, although occurring many years ago, I remember in all essential details as if they had happened last week.

I saw what I am going to describe as plainly as ever I saw anything in my life, and my youngest brother, were he still alive, would corroborate all I say; he saw "it" (in the first instance relating to our father's death) as clearly as I did.

#### [AN ILLUSION.]

But first, as a proof that I am not easily duped by mere appearances, or my own imagination, the following circumstance may not be without value. One evening at dusk I went into my bedroom to fetch something I wanted

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\*"Illusion consists either in perceiving a totally wrong object in place of the right one, . . . or in investing the right object with wrong attributes."—*Phantasms of the Living*, Vol. II., p. 184.

off the mantel-piece. A street lamp threw a slanting ray of light in at the window, just sufficient to enable me to discern the dim outline of the chief articles of furniture in the room. I was cautiously feeling for what I wanted when, partially turning round, I perceived at a short distance behind me the figure of a little old lady, sitting very sedately with her hands folded in her lap, holding a white pocket-handkerchief. I was much startled, for I had not before seen anyone in the room, and called out "Who's that?" but received no answer, and, turning quite round to face my visitor, she immediately vanished from sight. "Well," I thought, "this is strange!" I had left all the rest of the household downstairs; it was hardly possible that anyone could have followed me into the room without my being aware of it, and besides the old lady was quite different from anyone I had ever seen. Being very near-sighted, I began to think my eyes had played me a trick; so I resumed my search in as nearly as possible the same position as before, and having succeeded, was turning to come away, when lo! and behold! there sat the little old lady as distinct as ever, with her funny little cap, dark dress, and hands folded demurely over her white handkerchief. This time I turned round quickly and marched up to the apparition, which vanished as suddenly as before. And now being convinced that no one was playing me any trick, I determined to find out, if possible, the why and because of the mystery. Slowly resuming my former position by the fire-place, and again perceiving the figure, I moved my head slightly from side to side, and found that it did the same. I then went slowly backwards, keeping my head still until I again reached the place, when deliberately turning round the mystery was solved.

A small, polished, mahogany stand near the window, which I used as a cupboard for various trifles, made the body of the figure, a piece of paper hanging from the partly-open door serving as the handkerchief; a vase on the top formed the head and head-dress, and the slanting light falling upon it, and the white curtain of the window completed the illusion. I destroyed and re-made the figure several times, and was surprised to find how distinct it appeared when the exact relative positions were maintained. Surely many a "ghost" has had an as easily explicable origin! But no similar explanation can be given to that which I now proceed to relate.

#### [A COLLECTIVE IMPRESSION.]

My dear father died of bronchitis about half-past 12 Saturday night, November 16th, 1862, in his 62nd year.

The doctors had pronounced him out of danger at about half-past nine the same evening, and between 11 and 12, my dear mother, at my earnest solicitation, retired to take some much needed rest.

A little after 12 o'clock he roused from a rather restless doze, and I gave him some beef tea, which he eagerly drank. Shortly afterwards he said in a feeble but perfectly distinct voice, "I am dying." I said, "Oh, no, my darling, you are only very weak." In a few minutes afterwards, evidently thinking it was my mother who was supporting him, and that I had left the room, he said as clearly as before "My darling," then quickly, "Call Kate, call Kate." I immediately requested a kind neighbour who had come in to

assist, to call my mother, sister, and two brothers, and soon they were all assembled round the bed, I on the right-hand side, my arms round the dear one from whom life was fast ebbing, my mother and youngest brother at the foot of the bed, and the rest on the other side of it. The fire (which faced the foot of the bed) gave a steady and subdued light, and there was only one lighted candle in the room. I am particular in thus recording these details, in order to show that neither imagination nor the light in the room could have had anything to do with what presently happened. In a few minutes my dear father breathed his last, and I gently laid his head down on the pillow, supporting his chin as I did so, at my mother's suggestion. Then while we were looking on, scarcely realising what had occurred, suddenly I and my youngest brother simultaneously whispered "Look," and we both beheld distinctly a vaporous luminosity quivering in a circle over my father's head. It was as if the breath itself had become radiant and hovered over the prostrate form as a bird might over the cage which had so long been its home, ere it took its buoyant flight to freer air. None of the others saw it, though my dear mother would have given much to have done so.

A night or two after, I am almost sure it was the Monday night, I was lying awake, with a weary longing in my sad aching heart, when all at once I saw above me a light, similar to the one just described, only *larger* and *brighter*. I called softly to my mother, who was in another bed in the same room, but she had fallen asleep, and I did not like to wake her; indeed the radiance did not last more than a brief minute, and then vanished as suddenly as it appeared. I sat up in bed and tried to discover some rational cause for it, but could not.

The fire had been too over-loaded with slack when "banked up" to give any light whatever; indeed I am not sure that it was not quite out. Certainly no last flicker could possibly have shot from such a dull mass. The night-light was burning dimly and steadily, and not in a position to have thrown any rays in that direction, and the house we then lived in was so surrounded by its own grounds that no passing light from any road could have reached the window, and even if that had been possible, the shape (a diffused circle) and appearance altogether precluded the supposition that it could have had such an origin. A feeling of peaceful trust stole over me, and I soon afterwards fell into the first calm untroubled sleep I had had since my dear father's death.

I have abstained from mentioning these circumstances to any but a very few, as the generality of people attribute to mere imagination or hallucination of some kind any such manifestations, which they themselves have not experienced; but in the cases I have described no such explanation affords, to my mind, the slightest satisfactory clue to the mystery.

[Miss W.'s brother and sister corroborate as follows]:—

I can corroborate what my sister has above written, well remembering the mention of the incidents at the time of their occurrence.

H. P. W.  
G. H. W.

## [A PHANTASM OF THE LIVING.]

[L. 826.—A<sup>e</sup> P<sup>n</sup>]

I will now relate something which happened to a dear friend of mine. This is, however, of quite a different nature. Mrs. G. was a Yorkshire lady of good family, the widow of a clergyman, and the mother of two sons, who were sailors in the merchant service.

One day, calling upon her during the absence of both her sons, I found her looking very anxious and excited, and in reply to my inquiries as to the cause of her agitation, she said, "Oh! my dear Kate, I have seen R." (naming her youngest son). "Have you!" I exclaimed, much surprised. "Surely he cannot be home yet, I thought he was somewhere in the Chinese seas." "I don't know where he is," she answered, "but saw him yesterday as plainly as I see you now!" She then explained that the previous afternoon she was alone in the house, with the exception of one servant, every one else having gone out. She was dressing in her room, and wishing to speak to the servant, whom she thought she heard in an adjoining room, she went to the door to call her, when she saw a young man coming upstairs. Thinking it was W. (a young gentleman then staying on a visit), who had returned unknown to her, she drew back, and, after allowing sufficient time for him to reach his own room, again went to the door, and saw her own son R., in a flannel suit, slowly ascending the stairs, bending forward and looking very grave. She saw him come up all the stairs to the landing, and then he vanished. "Oh, my dear," she concluded, "I am sure something dreadful has happened." I tried to console her as best I could, and suggested there must have been some one in the house she was not aware of, and that, thinking of her son, she had unconsciously conjured up the phantom. But *no one else was in the house* at the time, and nothing could dissuade her from the conviction that the vision was a presentiment of evil tidings.

She related the circumstance to her brother and sister-in-law; the latter, being of an extremely practical turn of mind, only laughed at her, but she put down the date, and said, "Well, we will see what comes of it." Some time after, a letter from that son told her that at that very time he had been in imminent danger of shipwreck; his ship had been caught in a terrific storm, and all on board had given themselves up for lost, and he added, "If I never prayed before in my life, I prayed then in agony that I might see my dear mother once more!" And the dates exactly tallied!

I do not know whether this incident will be of any value to you, uncorroborated as it must, I fear, remain, for all the principal actors in it have been dead for some years, and since I saw you I have endeavoured in vain to find those to whom I thought it possible Mrs. G. might have related it, and who might have been able to proffer some additional sidelight verifications. But changes of residence, death, &c., have hitherto rendered my attempts fruitless.

[Miss W.'s brother and sister corroborate as follows]:—

I can corroborate what my sister has above written, well remembering the mention of the incidents at the time of their occurrence. G. H. W.

H. P. W.

[The date of this incident, Miss W. thinks, was about 1861 or '62.]

We give next two cases of what purport to be

COLLECTIVE HALLUCINATIONS.

L. 827. Coll.

About the middle of September, 1881, between five and six in the evening, whilst it was quite light, the Rev. J. Jones, vicar of Dunston, and myself were fishing the North Tyne, at the junction of Blindburn with the Tyne, from a bank of shingle, in length about 80 yards and about 10 wide, sloping from a grass field to the margin of the river, with neither trees nor bush in the immediate vicinity, and after fishing for a short time Mr. Jones came up to me to ask for a match for the purpose of lighting his pipe. As we were thus standing together lighting our pipes from the same match, I said to him, "Do you see that man fishing down there?" He replied, "I have had my eye upon him for the last 20 minutes, and as it may be Major-General Allgood, I think I had better go down and apologise to him for the liberty we are taking, as I have not yet been once to see him this year to ask his permission to fish."

Accordingly Mr. Jones left me for this purpose, and when he came to within about 15 or 20 yards of the supposed fisher, the figure suddenly disappeared and seemed to pass away into nothing, whilst we were both looking on. Mr. Jones then turned round and looked towards me, but did not speak until I had advanced to within a few paces of him, when he said, "Ridley, I hope nothing has happened at home." We at once proceeded to take down our rods.

Anyone visiting the spot would at once see that no human being would be able to get away without being seen by us. Let me now describe the figure, as it appeared to us. It was dressed with felt hat, dark pilot jacket, light drab fishing stockings, laced boots. We never saw the face. The rod was a full-sized salmon rod, painted black, large brass reel. He was throwing from over the right shoulder. Mr. Jones remarked that he was throwing a good line. I might add that we left a Mr. Bartlett at our lodgings that evening before going out to fish, and it would appear that during our absence he had fallen asleep, as he informed us on our return. When questioned what he had been doing, he (to the best of my recollection) replied, he had been sleeping.

JOHN JONES,  
Vicar of Dunston, Durham.

J. H. WILFIE RIDLEY, M.R.C.S.Eng.,  
6, Collingwood-terrace, Gateshead.

October 12th, 1885.

[In an earlier but second-hand account of this incident sent by Mr. Hartig, of Gateshead, we were informed that the dress and rod of the figure seen resembled those of Mr. Bartlett, who had been fishing with the percipients earlier in the day.]

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In the following case it is easier than in the last to suppose that the figure seen was a real man. On the other hand, if it is not an

instance of collective hallucination—and in that case a very remarkable instance—it is certainly a singular coincidence of a double mistake in identity with an unexpected disappearance.

L. 828. Coll.

On the night of December 3rd, 1887 (Saturday) I was serving customers in the bar, together with my daughter. About a quarter past nine (as near as I can remember) I saw William Frazer standing at the private door of the bar that leads into the house. He said, "Well, how are you, old man?" I replied, "Hallo! is that you, Frazer—long looked for, come at last." My daughter, who was standing near me, behind the counter, turned round and saw him also, for she called out, "Good gracious! Wonders never cease." I had a tray of glasses in my hand at the time which I was just about to carry upstairs, so I came to the door beside Frazer, took him along to the smoke-room, and saw him enter. As he stood just within the room, with his back almost turned to me, I said, "Content yourself there. I'll be down in a minute." While saying this I remember distinctly I stood with my foot on the bottom step of the stair. I also remember that as I passed the smoke-room door I saw a stranger seated in an armchair near the fire. I took the glasses upstairs, and returned in about a minute and a-half; but on entering the smoke-room I found neither Frazer nor the stranger there. I thought Frazer must be hiding somewhere, as he was always full of fun and "up to larks," so I searched all over the house for him, also over the yard and outhouses, as I thought he might have slipped out there while I was upstairs. I concluded he must have gone home, and would doubtless return the next day (Sunday) to settle up. I should explain that the "Engineers' Friendly Society" meets at my house. Frazer is a member, and before going on his last voyage he had asked me to keep his subscriptions paid up while he was away. This I had done, so that when I saw him at the bar-door, I naturally concluded he had called to settle with me about his society's affairs. He did not call on the Sunday, and some days later we saw the *Collingwood* ss. (Frazer's vessel) reported in the newspapers as arriving at Antwerp. When Frazer appeared, he was dressed much as usual, with the exception of his hat. He carried a black leather bag. He looked tired and dejected, and he did not look me straight in the face.

On the night of December 19th (Monday) Frazer did actually call upon us. We told him of our strange experience. He told us that on the night of the 3rd the *Collingwood* ss. sailed from Gibraltar for Antwerp. He didn't say what he was doing at a quarter past nine—in fact, he laughed at the whole affair. They had had some very rough weather on the voyage, hence their detention. I settled up with him in connection with the Friendly Society, then we walked out together. He was not so lively as usual; he didn't feel much inclined to go to sea again at once—he thought he was entitled to "a bit holiday." He asked my advice about it; I didn't advise him either one way or the other, but left it to himself to decide. I regret now that I didn't advise him to remain ashore, for the next day he sailed for Savona in the *Collingwood*, from the Tyne (owners, C. Tully and Co.). His vessel has not been heard of since leaving Gibraltar; she is now fully a month



overdue. Frazer's mother has not given up hopes of his safety yet—but I have, so has the owner. The mother thinks the crew may have been picked up by some outward bound vessel.

Frazer was a fine young fellow, 25 years of age, unmarried, second engineer on board the *Collingwood* ss.

I have never had a similar experience to this before. My daughter and I are certain we were not mistaken in our man. We know no one else at all resembling Frazer.

.GEORGE MADDISON.

Sunderland, *February 6th*, 1888.

The following is Miss Maddison's account:—

*April 21st*, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—According to promise, I forward you a statement with reference to the vision which was seen by my father and me on December 3rd, 1887, the object being William Frazer, who was at that time second engineer of the ss. *Lord Collingwood*. On *Saturday*, December 3rd, 1887, at about 9.15 p.m., father and I were standing in the bar, and the said William Frazer came and stood at the bar door in the passage, and I heard him address my father, saying, "Well, how are you, old man?" Then father said, "Hallo, is that you, Frazer—long expected, come at last," and I myself said, "Good gracious! Wonders never cease," but I did not hear him reply. I served some drinks over the bar, and then walked into the smoke-room, expecting to see Frazer, but was much surprised at only finding my father there, to whom I said, "Where is Frazer?" Father said, "I don't know," and I said, "Oh, he will be hiding." Father then looked under the seats and down the yard, but Frazer was not to be found, so we came to the conclusion that he had been in a hurry and slipped out, and we fully expected to see him the next day (*Sunday*, December 4th), but we neither saw nor heard of him until a few days afterwards when the ss. *Lord Collingwood* was announced as having left Gibraltar for Antwerp on the 3rd, this being the day that the vision appeared to us. About a fortnight afterwards Frazer did arrive home, and as he sat on the corner of the smoke-room table I told him what I had seen, but he just laughed. I saw him a few times during his short stay at home, but he did not seem so full of fun as usual. After a few days' stay in the Tyne he sailed again for Savona, and I was sorry when I heard that his vessel was overdue, and I regret to think that he is no more, for he was a fine young man and highly respected by all who knew him.

I vouch for the above.

EMMA MADDISON.

[The testimony of the person in the smoke-room might have been conclusive on the question of whether the figure seen was a real man or not, but we learn from Mr. Nisbet, Honorary Associate of the Society, who had an interview with Mr. and Miss Maddison, that Mr. Maddison does not know who this person was.]

M. 668.

## HYPNOTIC EXPERIMENT.

The following account is from an Associate of the Society, known to Professor Sidgwick, whose name, were we allowed to give it, would certainly command confidence. The incident happened a long time ago.

June 17th, 1888.

Some years ago, while my mother and sister were still living, a relative, while our guest, became seriously ill; a friend who had great faith in mesmerism was anxious to try its effect upon her, and before commencing her operations, she requested me to place my hand upon her shoulder, which would, she said, increase her mesmeric power.

The invalid was lying in bed, with her back turned to the operator, behind whom I stood, with my hand upon her shoulder, while the drawn curtain concealed the patient from my gaze. After a while I happened, *quite accidentally*, to place my disengaged hand upon a gold watch, lying upon a chest of drawers, while the other hand still remained upon the shoulder of the operator. Immediately the word "Cold, cold," escaped from the lips of the patient, and the operator turned her head in surprise in order to discover the cause. I immediately removed my hand from the watch, and the mesmeric operations were resumed. Feeling curious to know whether the exclamation of the patient had been accidental, or whether it had any connection with the contact of my hand with the gold watch, I waited for a while and then again laid my hand upon the watch, with the same result; again the patient uttered the exclamation, "Cold, cold."

Not feeling sure whether the word in the written account was *cold* or *gold*, we wrote to inquire. In reply, our informant wrote:—

I was certainly under the impression at the time that the exclamation which escaped from the lips of the patient was "Cold, cold." There is, however, so little difference in sound between cold and gold, that should it appear that patients under similar circumstances can detect metals, I could not be certain that the utterance of the patient in question had not been "Gold," though, at the time, I believed it to have been "Cold."

During the operation she was so situated as to be sheltered from the possibility of draughts, and the instantaneous utterance of the exclamation upon my touching the watch led me, without the slightest hesitation, to regard the two phenomena as cause and effect. The surprise of the mesmeriser, who, on hearing the exclamation, turned quickly round, as if to discover the cause, was another indication that the phenomenon was unusual. Though feeling myself convinced as to the connection between my touching the watch and the exclamation of the patient, I wished to place it beyond doubt; accordingly, some little time after the mesmeriser had resumed her operations, I purposely placed my hand a second time upon the watch, which was followed by the same instantaneous exclamation on the part of the patient. It appears to me most improbable, if not impossible, that the coincidence should have been an accidental one.

The patient is no longer living. We asked our informant to

obtain, if possible, an account of the experience from the mesmeriser. She wrote on March 23rd, 1889:—

In compliance with the request contained in your former letter, on learning the address of my friend I wrote to inquire whether she had any remembrance of our joint mesmeric experience in connection with our departed friend—the Mrs. B. alluded to in the enclosed paper. In reply, she tells me, what I had never before known, that she had acted as Mrs. B.'s mesmeriser for several weeks before the latter came to be our guest in London. She does not remember having mesmerised Mrs. B. in —— square, where we then resided. Her visit to London, at that time, must have been accidental; and she adds: "I account for my memory of these subsequent events being less vivid owing to the state of physical exhaustion in which I was, consequent upon the long-continued mesmerising, followed by the fatigue of nursing."

My own experience with regard to the watch appears to me to be the more remarkable as having come quite spontaneously, without my having heard of any connection between gold and mesmeric phenomena.

My friend is not quite exact in stating that I had asked her to state what she could remember of her mesmeric experience in connection with gold in the case of Mrs. B., of which I had never heard, till the perusal of the enclosed paper. What I asked her was, whether she had any remembrance of our joint experience in —— square, the particulars of which I gave her.

The mesmeriser's account of previous experiments follows. It will be seen that it is not clear that the possibility of suggestion was completely excluded.

You have asked me to state what I can remember of my mesmeric experience in connection with gold in the case of our dear cousin, Mrs. B.

Perhaps you may remember that she came to Nottingham to visit Miss N., who had been told of Mrs. B.'s desire to try the curative power of mesmerism on her complaint. In order to test how far she was receptive of the mesmeric influence, her doctor—himself a practised mesmerist—the day after her arrival, succeeded without difficulty in putting her into the mesmeric sleep. He then formed a chain (*i.e.*, taking each other's hands) of, I think, three persons, on each side of the patient, of whom I was one, and placing the hand of the one next to her, at each side, into hers. He then put a sovereign into the hand of the last person of the chain on one side, and Mrs. B.'s brow immediately contracted as if she was much troubled, her hand also showing uneasiness and trying to free itself from the hand of the person with whom she was in contact. The sovereign was then changed to the hand of the person at the end of the chain on the other side; and precisely the same result took place. No one spoke, and the footfall of the doctor could not be heard as he changed the place of the gold.

The latter was then placed on the carpet under each foot in succession; just where the shoe rises leaving a little space between the toe and the floor. At once, each foot in succession, and up to the knees twitched, and the forehead again expressed trouble as before. When the points of the teeth of a

dressing comb also were held at a little distance from her closely shut eyelids, she turned her head from side to side to try to get rid of the effect it produced, the annoyance ceasing as soon as the comb was withdrawn.

As I was to be our dear cousin's mesmerist during some weeks, my own power to undertake the charge of her case in this respect had also to be tested. In order to ascertain this, I mesmerised my friend Mrs. T——'s faithful maid, and with entire success; and when she was in the mesmeric sleep, and her eyes closely shut, I took my watch and held it about a quarter of a yard above her hand which was lying flat on the bed. To my surprise her hand gradually began to rise from the wrist, as if attracted by the gold, and remained with the fingers pointing upwards to the watch, the arm still lying flat on the bed. On the watch being withdrawn, the hand again slowly fell. I asked her afterwards why she had raised her hand. She replied—not knowing what I had done—that she did not know she had done it, but she felt as if I had laid something very cold on her hand, and asked what it was.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### THE PROBABLY CONTINUOUS ACTIVITY OF WHAT IS KNOWN AS OUR SECONDARY CONSCIOUSNESS.

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

SIR,—In connection with the phenomena observed during the somnambule or hypnotic "state," as it is termed, whether spontaneously arising, or self-induced, or brought about by any alien influence, I would suggest that it may *not* really be a "supervening" or special "state," or "condition" at all, but a "*constant*" one, always existing though ordinarily unmanifesting, and that its seemingly peculiar supersensuous powers of perception, and capacities of acquiring knowledge otherwise than through ordinary sensory channels, are constantly in action, though veiled from observation by the influence of the ordinary (normal or primary) consciousness.

When the results of such action become appreciable to observation it is owing to the withdrawal or suspension of such "occlusion" by a temporary inhibition of the activity of the ordinary sensory functions, rather than from the manifestation of any new or unusual capacities or functions set up, or any abnormal state induced. In fact, in a manner resembling that by which a louder sound renders inaudible a weaker one, or the action of a stronger light renders one of lesser brilliancy invisible during its prevalence, although the weaker sound and more feeble light are still existent and manifesting though unperceived.

Many facts in the papers recently read before the Society for Psychical Research, one "On the Connection of Hypnotism with Spiritualism" (given in the *Proceedings*, Part XIII.), and a later one by Mr. Barkworth on an analogy between some of the phenomena of hypnotism and those of ordinary life (or a similar title), will, upon careful examination, be, I think,

found to support this theory. Also the fact of the existence of a continuous and independent memory in the hypnotic consciousness, and the working of obscure and complicated problems, and the solution of difficult questions known to have taken place during sleep, would seem to prove a perpetual mental activity under higher conditions, in what, for want of a better term, is named the Secondary Consciousness. A constant activity of the faculties of reasoning and "willing to reason, in a certain direction," would seem to exist *both while the primary (sensory) consciousness is active and while it is dormant*, the effects of such action being more manifest when sensory susceptibility to external stimuli is in abeyance.

Hence, instead of a new and peculiar "state" being developed or induced, we have merely a usual and constant normal condition of mentality unveiled and disclosed to our observation, by a suspension or temporary inhibition of ordinary functional manifestation.

H. VENMAN.

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

SIR,—It seems to me that the interesting problem which Mr. Venman's letter suggests will be easier of discussion if we try first to get some clearer notion of what is meant by the *continuous* activity of any known consciousness whatever. If we take the word in its strict sense, then I think that we cannot apply it to any form or phase of consciousness which manifests itself through, or is conditioned by, any activity of the human brain. But if by continuous we mean "ready at all times to respond if the appropriate stimulus be supplied," then I agree with Mr. Venman that the "secondary self" may be as continuous as the primary.

In what does the continuity of my waking or primary self consist? Not in an *unbroken* chain of memories, but in the fact that when the appropriate stimulus—of light or of nervous nutrition—is supplied, my waking self resumes possession of the temporarily broken chain.

And the case with, say, my hypnotic or somnambulant personality is precisely similar. The hypnotic personality is summoned by the appropriate stimulus; it is exhausted after a time, for the somnambulant state cannot (as it would seem) be indefinitely prolonged; and then when the appropriate stimulus is re-applied it takes up the chain of hypnotic memory once more.

No doubt we have evidence of a certain activity of the hypnotic self in the interim. It counts off the days, for instance, if it has been told to accomplish some suggestion at a distant date; and it shares—to some extent at least—in the experience and acquisitions of the working self during the interval between the hypnotisations. But this intermediate activity is not continuous in the sense in which the somnambulant access while it lasts is continuous. It affords opportunity for the repose of that special combination of cerebral processes—whatever it be—which differentiates the somnambulant from the waking state. Going a stage deeper still, we find the *Dæmon* of Socrates always ready to intervene when wanted, yet not intervening in a way so continuous as to exhaust any combination of cerebral processes on which its manifestations may have depended.

In other words, it seems likely that any chain of memory, or phase of personality, which manifests itself through the brain, must admit intervals of at least partial repose, during which that special mode of cerebral functioning may renew its power. Each of us, we may say, contains within himself the potentiality of an unknown number of personalities, some at least of which may be educated to become as readily recurrent as is his primary personality, although no one of them can—any more than his primary personality—be made to manifest itself in a really continuous manner.

But if we go—as I conceive that Mr. Venman means to go—beyond and behind these terrene personalities to the hypothetical *individuality*—unaffected by earthly birth or death—which we may regard as the basis of all the forms of self-manifestation which earth exhibits,—then, of course, the question of continuity changes its aspect. If that individuality exist independently of the brain, we know of no reason why it should need repose. We may more plausibly appeal to other analogies, and consider our “soul” as a definite and continuous energy, which is always accomplishing an equivalent amount of work, but in varying ways; and which, consequently, may then flow most freely into higher and unseen activities when the adits of earthly sensation are closed, and the agitations of terrene personalities calmed into dreamless sleep.

F. W. H. MYERS.

P.S.—The above remarks may perhaps serve as a partial answer to Mr. Barkworth's letter printed below, but received too late for notice in this number of the *Journal*. “Changes in Personality” form, I believe, one of the subjects on the programme of the *Congrès de Psychologie Physiologique* to be held in Paris, August 5th-10th; and, with Mr. Barkworth's permission, I should prefer to postpone further discussion till after that date, in the hope that we may then have the subject before us in a completer form.

#### DUPLEX VERSUS MULTIPLEX PERSONALITY.

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

SIR,—I should not again venture to ask for space to discuss this subject, but for two considerations,—first, its importance, which is second to none in the whole range of Psychical Research, and secondly, the desirableness of arriving at some definite point of issue, or of agreement, while the subject is fresh in the minds of your readers.

Let me begin by defining what I understand by “personality.” It is not a mood or state, nor does it change with any number of moods or states, however different from one another. A man's whole appearance, character, conduct and capacity may be radically altered without any pretence for claiming that his personality is changed. Such an alteration is only too frequent when, for instance, a man becomes a confirmed drunkard, or even a confirmed gambler, or opium-eater. Nor can a mere dislocation or hiatus in the chain of memory such as sometimes occurs after a fall on the head or an attack of brain fever, justify us in asserting that we are dealing with a different psychical entity from the one we knew before. Still less can such an assertion be made of the vagaries of a hypnotised subject under suggestion, and during trance, where it is evident that he is but an instrument played upon by the will of another. In formulating such a stupendous dogma as is involved in the negation of uniform personality, we must rest upon no uncertain ground which a new way of regarding the facts may cut from under us. Where, then, is this certain ground to be found? I reply, only in cases where the sub-conscious personality can be observed in operation without any break in the normal procedure of the active consciousness. Such cases incontrovertibly have been observed, in automatic writing, in the execution of post-hypnotic suggestions, in the exhibition of sub-conscious thought-transferences such as those between Mr. and Mrs. Newnham, in the quasi-automatic actions of which I gave instances at the January meeting, &c. In these instances the passive consciousness can be absolutely seen in operation without either the knowledge or control of its active partner, and while the latter is, with unabated power, engaged on other affairs.

Mr. Myers' letter has left the question just where it was before. No

evidence whatever has been produced in support of multiplex personality, though he says that such evidence is growing daily beyond his power to record. I do not for a moment presume to contradict him upon evidence which I have not seen, but I will press the question, if the evidence is too bountiful for record as a whole, is that any reason why he should not let us hear at least some of it? Our *Proceedings* are rich in the records of experiments both at home and abroad. Is there any reason why those which make for multiplex personality should not be put before us?

I do not, however, overlook the fact that Mr. Myers' letter indicates more or less where the evidence he relies on may be found, and these indications are as follows:—

1. The "three states" of the Salpêtrière school.
2. The Brighton experiments of Mr. Gurney.
3. The *Revue Philosophique*.

I am unable to understand how Mr. Myers can regard the three stated as evidence of multiplex personality. They are clearly set forth in Binet and Féré's work on *Animal Magnetism*, where they are classed as Somnambulic, Lethargic, and Cataleptic. The differences between them seem to be mainly of a physical character, and though the mental condition of the patient may to some extent vary also, it does so only functionally, and not essentially, just as the mental state of a man may differ when insane from what it was before. Moreover, the classification of the three states is, I believe, rejected by Liébeault and the Nancy school.

The Brighton experiments are, I confess, much harder to deal with. If an alternating memory were to be accepted as proof of an alternating personality, they would indeed be conclusive. But in my former letter I gave reasons why I think they should not be so accepted. Beyond this, I need only quote Mr. Myers himself on these same experiments (*Proceedings*, Part XIII., p. 386), where he speaks of "mere stages—which cannot be called *personalities*—through which Mr. Gurney's hypnotic subjects could be led backwards and forwards at pleasure." The italics are Mr. Myers'. If, therefore, he now relies on these experiments to prove multiplex personality, it is certain that he must have changed his opinion.

Mr. Myers' third reference is to the *Revue Philosophique*, and here I am at the disadvantage of not being able to follow him. I have inquired at the office, but was not surprised to hear that all the numbers he refers to were engaged. In this, however, I am no worse off than other members. Is it then desirable that we should be dependent upon the chance numbers of a foreign periodical for information on a subject which, as much as any that can be named, lies at the root of our investigations? Until the nature of the human Ego is as far as possible explored and decided, nothing is done; that is to say, nothing can be reliably concluded. Until then, we are made the sport of words, such as psychical and physical, living and non-living, mental and subjective, of which we know only the phenomena they stand for, and nothing of the ultimate truths they represent.

Let me, then, make this appeal to Mr. Myers. Let him embody the more salient portions of the evidence for multiplex personality, on which he relies, in a paper to be read or published. We shall then be able to form some idea of it, which at present we cannot.

I cannot follow Mr. Myers in his distinction between personality and individuality, nor in his use of metaphor—always, I fancy, rather a hazardous mode of dealing with questions of which the facts are not yet ascertained, because we are apt to mistake the completion of the metaphor for the demonstration of the fact. Nor am I, at present, so much concerned with the inferences derivable from his theory, as with the theory itself. On the former I will only say, however, that from his point of view the objection he puts into the mouth of the materialistic objector appears to me to be at present unanswerable.

THOMAS BARKWORTH.

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\* Presented by Alfred Russel Wallace. † Presented by the Rev. C. L. Dodgson.

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