

ESSAYS  
IN  
PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

BY  
MISS X  
(A. GOODRICH-FREER)

*"Integra mens augustissima possessio"*

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## PREFACE

THE papers which are here collected from various periodicals in which they have appeared, are in every sense essays in Inquiry. There is little in them for those who *know*; for the Spiritualist who with certainty explains, or for the Materialist who, with equal certainty, ignores. In spite of twelve years' association with the Society for Psychical Research I can profess no special sources of information, impose no theories, dogmatise as to no deductions. I have no claim to the attention of others, but such as they may grant to a lifelong experience of some of the phenomena under consideration. My earliest fulfilled premonition was recorded when less than three years old, and though such things were a punishable offence in nursery and schoolroom, they persisted in right of heredity, of temperament, possibly of intercourse with Nature in her wilder utterances: psychic experience being a state to live in, not an art to acquire.

It is, perhaps, because certain of the phenomena called "psychic" are as familiar to me as any other phenomena of nature, that I do not regard them as in any sense supernatural, that I can approach them with more calm than the beginner, and less *parti pris* than the convert; that I have nothing to ask of the professional medium, and no occasion for offence from the vulgar trivialities of the séance.

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If I know anything, I know that psychic phenomena are not to be commanded, be their origin what it may. Mr. Andrew Lang has well said, "No gentleman questions the Umpire's decision," and if the voices of the Past shall speak, it is ours to listen, but not to evoke. He who "ordains the services of angels" as well as men, may send His messengers, but not, I think, to produce "poltergeist" phenomena. The veil of the Future may be lifted now and then, but not, I take it, at the bidding of a guinea fee in Bond Street. That we may momentarily transcend Time and Space, the temporary conditions of our mortality, I cannot doubt, but such phenomena are not to be commanded, nor of everyday occurrence, nor hastily to be assumed.

We have many hypotheses of explanation—telepathy and sub-conscious mental activity, and the deductions of unconscious memory and observation—and I think we should exhaust these, and more, before we assume that our phenomena are transcendental. They are strong to help and heal in proportion to our confidence in their origin and nature.

Many recent observations seem to point to possibilities of discovery of some law or force in Nature, which may add still further to the number of alternatives, physical or psychological, which we have to consider before resorting to those which are psychic, and which may still further subtract from the number referred to the supernormal. With Sir William Crookes and Professor Oliver Lodge to conduct investigation in England, and others, of only less eminence in the world of science, to watch our interests abroad and in America, we may await this issue in confidence of the single-heartedness, if not of the immediate result of their inquiry.

That, at least in some directions, the exponents of Psychical Research cannot be accused of undue haste has been recently illustrated in the affairs of the Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino. Professor Chiaia, after experimenting with her almost daily for ten years, declared, in 1896, that he had constantly oscillated in regard to her phenomena between the greatest credulity and downright unbelief. In 1892, after the famous Milan experiments, Professor Richet of Paris, writing to Dr. Carl du Prel, said: "What I saw is quite extraordinary, and either a mechanical normal explanation, or the hypothesis of fraud, by which we were one and all deceived, appears to me absurd. But the alternative—that is, the existence of spirits or of a force which has escaped the observation of the students of physical science through all time—is also absurd. What can one do in the face of these two absurdities but reserve one's opinion, wait, and experiment further? My conclusion is, therefore, *I do not know.*"

After the further experiments of 1894, carried on by scientific savants of world-wide reputation on a lonely island in the Mediterranean, where therefore collusion with the medium was an untenable hypothesis, Professor Lodge described the phenomena that had occurred—the movements of objects at a distance, the visible raising of heavy furniture under conditions normally impossible, the "graspings, parrings, clutchings of my head and arms and back, while the hands, head, and feet of the medium were under complete control, and nowhere near the persons touched." "The effects themselves," he adds, "were not illusions, the phenomena do really occur. It remains to describe them, and, if possible, gradually, by continued investigation, to account for them."

Dr. Hodgson, who is the *exploiteur* of Madame Blavatsky and the *entrepreneur* of Mrs. Piper, doubted the evidence, and suggested that Eusapia had a dummy foot, and wore clips on her sleeves, though one would hesitate to accuse some of the first scientific observers in Europe of ignoring such rudimentary cheating as this; "attributing to us," says Professor Lodge, "definite and deliberate falsehood."

Accordingly, Dr. Hodgson came over to Cambridge, and the experiments were once more repeated, with the result, that though Professor Lodge maintained his original opinion, Mr. Myers wrote, "I had no doubt that systematic trickery had been used from first to last, and that there was no adequate ground for attributing any of the phenomena occurring at these sittings to a supernatural cause."

During the whole of this time a separate series of investigations had been going on in Paris under the leadership of Dr. Dariex, Flammarion the great astronomer, Sully Prudhomme, and others, and they had practically come to the same conclusions as Professor Lodge, that, though the medium was ready to cheat when she got the chance, she produced undoubted phenomena when the chance was not given her, and after a very little experience it was not difficult to provide against opportunities for deception.

On January 27, 1899, the Society for Psychical Research assembled in the Westminster Town Hall to hear Professor Richet and Professor Lodge say over again what they had said in 1892 and 1894, and—Professor Lodge at all events—what he had maintained, *pace* Mr. Myers, in 1895. The new element was that Mr. Myers withdrew what he had said in 1895, and (subject to the revisal of Dr. Hodgson, now

in America with Mrs. Piper) proposed to return to what he had said in 1892, and what Professor Lodge and the French savants had been saying all the time.

Moreover, we are now definitely told, what before was only whispered, that these movements at a distance are effected, not by psychic but by physical force, that Eusapia develops, for the moment, another limb. In its early stages it is as hard as wood, says Professor Richet, with a claw at the end, but when its materialisation is complete, it is a hand with the usual attributes of hands!

"Do I sleep, do I dream, or are spirits about?" is no longer an exhaustive question. Savants of world-wide reputation do not sleep or dream while experiments and discoveries of deepest import are in progress. Whether there are spirits about is not yet determined, but Eusapia's prehensile appendage *may* be of the same nature as the "materialisations" which Sir William Crookes long ago dealt with from the point of view of science, in his experiments with "Katie King"; the more that Eusapia claims to be "controlled" by a certain "John King," familiar to the clients of several professional "mediums."

But if we have to accept ultimately some such explanation as this, it can only be—one would suppose—after exhausting the other alternative of which Professor Richet spoke, as "equally absurd," that of some "force which has escaped the observation of the students of physical science." That, however, was said in 1892, and the progress of physical science being more rapid than that of psychical inquiry, the intervening years have shown us several things which had escaped the observation of students of physical science, and so distinguished a savant as Professor

Richet would probably put the case differently in 1899. It may turn out, in short, that the study of Eusapia is one for the Royal Society rather than for the Society for Psychical Research.

On the whole, the problem of Eusapia seems—to some among us—of greater promise than that of Mrs. Piper, who is still under investigation in America. So far as has appeared, it involves no personal suffering, Eusapia's trances producing no physical distress; moreover, the phenomena are of a less familiar and more tangible kind than those of thought-transference and alleged "spirit-communication"; and, above all, the evidence is that, not of emotional frequenters of séances, eagerly seeking messages from departed friends, but of Fellows of the Royal Society, professors of natural science, and physicians of experience and repute.

To some the association between Science and Psychical Research may seem more remote than history has shown it to be. We are living in an age when the voice of science is continually heard in our midst, and no subject is beyond her sphere, as may be seen by a perusal of the mere list of topics for discussion at the latest meeting of the British Association. In no age has psychical inquiry stood alone. Merely to trace its direction would involve the whole history of sociology, the geographical distribution of mankind, the tendency of races, the causes—individual, historical, literary, religious—which turned the bent of the inquiry in this direction or in that; why, for example, should we associate divination with Egypt, astrology with Chaldea, magic with India, the appeal to oracles with Greece, witchcraft with the wandering races of Central Europe, or second-sight with the Highlanders of Scotland? The

subject, though so immense and far-reaching, is, in its superficial aspects, by no means difficult of access. Its more obvious lines are familiar to every one; they are in every ballad, in every old wife's fable, in every village tale. There are few branches to which the Old Testament does not introduce us—to Joseph and his divining-cup, to Saul and the witch of Endor, to the ghost of Samuel, to the whispering in the tops of the mulberry-trees which summoned Israel to war, to witches that peep and that mutter, to the stars that fight in their courses, to dreams and their interpretation, to trance utterances and prophecy, to astrology and its leadings, to the apparent extension or suspension of the laws of nature which we call "miracle."

Whether or no we are approaching a solution of this world-problem it would be difficult to say, but the student of history must admit that the rising consciousness of its importance is among the recognised features of the higher civilisation. Superstition has often paved the way for faith; inquiry is the root of all philosophy and of all science; it is only what Macaulay called the "Cocksure," from which nothing is to be hoped.

We shall find that, in all ages, the inquiry has taken the colour of the times—it has been in the hands of religion, or of science, or of the people, and has been important as one or other came uppermost; it has received its special direction from the individual force which treated of it at the moment. There were, no doubt, among Saul's companions, some to whom the story of the ghost of Samuel seemed a mere visual hallucination, a telepathic impact from the witch herself, a hypnotic delusion, the trick of a fraudulent medium, or, in terms familiar in all ages, "too much supper," or

a lie. Happily there was, once upon a time, so far as we know, a period when no one suggested an "astral body," or "magnetism," or "odie force," as universal keys to fit all wards, and it may be that the end of the century is perhaps yet one remove nearer to the safer attitude of *I don't know*.

The belief in the continued existence and in the possible previous existence of man, is to be found in all ages and in every nation throughout the world. It is almost an instinct, and, as a matter for dread or for desire, has been part of the system of rewards and punishments of every stage of civilisation. It is the story alike of anthropology and of Christianity, of folklore and of the New Testament; it is told by the Pyramids of Egypt and the grave in the country churchyard, by the Towers of Silence in Persia and the wayside cross in Brittany, by the reverence for the Lares and Penates of Rome, by the funeral rites of all ages, by the very proverbs and nursery tales of every country.

It is with regret that I record the recent, and let us hope temporary, removal from the scene of "The Welsh Lourdes" of Father Beauclerk, S.J., upon whose presence and personality, as I believe, the greater part of the success of the cures depend, and by whose self-sacrifice and devotion they have undoubtedly been revived. Those who are concerned to prove the existence of miracle may say that this dependence should not be, forgetting that there are miracles of soul as well as of body; while, on the other hand, those whom talk of miracle offends, may gladly accept the probable decadence of the shrine as satisfactory proof that the cures were those of mere "Suggestion" effected by a faith-inspiring personality. Be this as it may,

miracle or suggestion, one regrets the subtraction of healing for pain, and comfort for sorrow, in a life in which suffering is more potent than theory, and charity more convincing than nomenclature.

Hypnotism is not in itself any part of the business of Psychological Research, and the fact that an interesting and elaborately evidential report of its progress was communicated by Dr. Bramwell at the last meeting of the British Medical Congress, is mentioned here only because Mr. Myers also read a paper on the same subject from his especial point of view. He now adds the phenomena of hypnotism to those of hysteria as belonging to the same category with the inspirations of genius; and has formulated the proposition, speaking of the sense suggestions often imposed upon the minds of hypnotic subjects (though rather, one would have supposed, by the peripatetic "professor" than the physician) "*as the Sistine Madonna was to Raphael, so to the hypnotic girl is the delusive cat*"—an analogy which some among us may not willingly admit. If the delusions of hypnosis are an inspiration, why not those of delirium tremens or insanity, which have at least this in common with the inspiration of Raphael, that they are not due to external suggestion, but are created by the mind which produces them? England may have no poets now, her Art may not be that of altarpieces, but even yet there are some among us to whom genius is differentiated from disease, to whom Art is not a morbid phenomenon, but to whom—ourselves dumb spirits in prison—it brings at once a memory and a hope; who look to a Raphael, or a Beethoven, or a Wordsworth, for reminder at once of the "trailing clouds of glory," and "the God who is our home."

Perhaps, after all, despite the need one feels for

the support and countenance of science, it is to the humanity, to the inherent emotions of man, that these subjects make their real appeal. The history of what, for want of a better name, we call "Psychical Research," is the history of man. Man is a worshipping animal, he looks before and after, he remembers, regrets, anticipates — therefore he speculates and inquires. He hopes and aspires to the infinite; he loves and interrogates the past. He is conscious of his finality, and "breaks into thens and whens the eternal Now." He asks, "Where are our yesterdays?" "What will to-morrow bring?" and from age to age Religion, Science, Superstition, echo in varying tones what is, in its origin, only the universal cry of human pain.

A. GOODRICH-FREER.

February 1899.

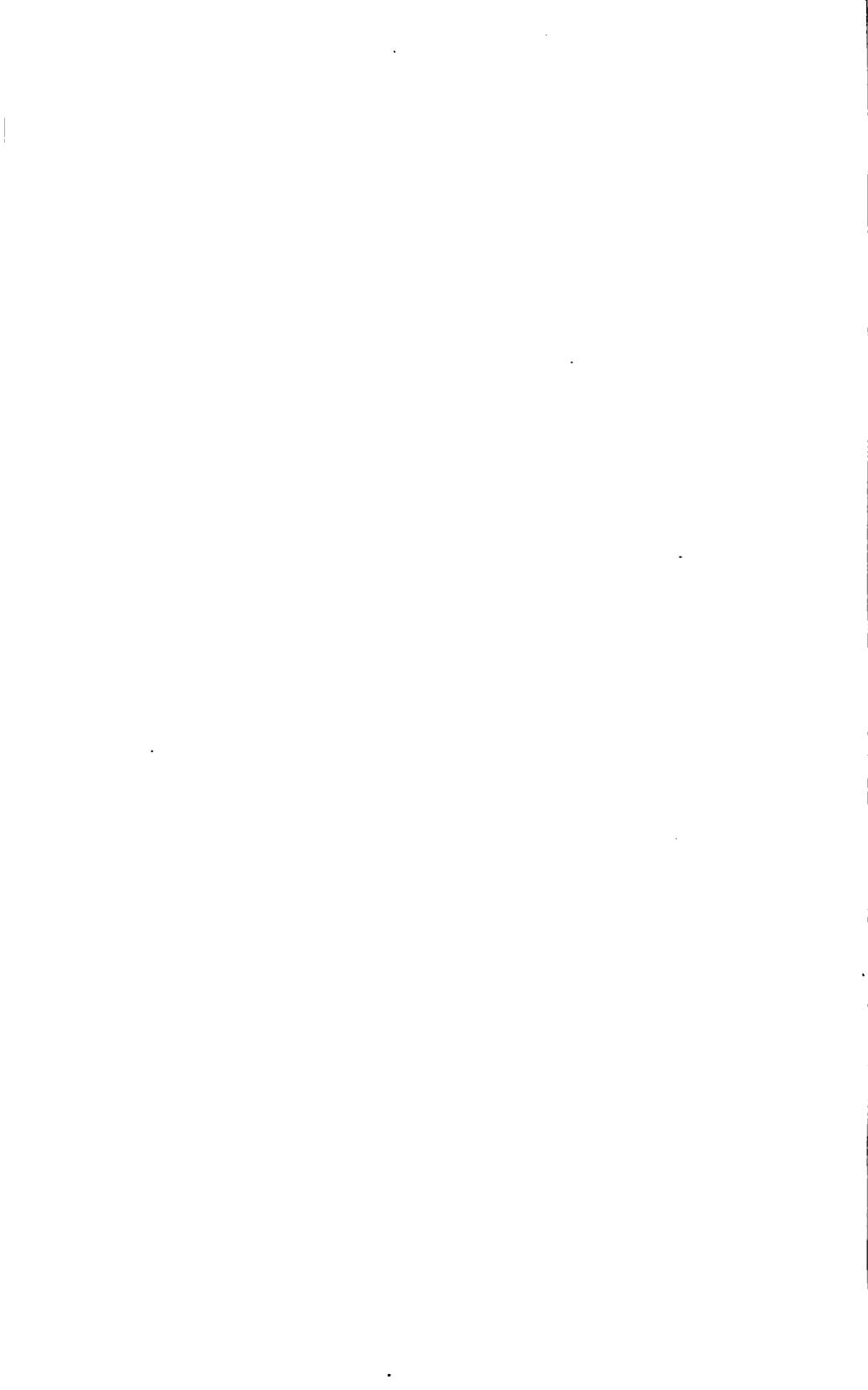
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NOTE

*As these pages are passing through the press I have seen, for the first time, a verbatim report of recent séances with Mrs. Piper, bearing date from December 7, 1898, to January 25, 1899. The "secondary personality" of Dr. Phinuit, by which she was controlled when in England, was often, from the point of view of Thought Transference, interesting; and however rowdy, at least never dull. The recent lucubrations are of the type which Dr. Dee, in the case of his medium the infamous Kelly, characterised as "Sermon-Stuffe," and have not even a single evidential statement to differentiate them from the usual twaddle of the average professional séance.*

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# PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN THE

## ERRATA.

Page 19, line 15, for "super-exaggeration" read supper, exaggeration.

„ 22, „ 24, omit "any."

„ 152, „ 6, for "confirmed" read conformed.

„ 157, „ 5, for "Purgatoris" read expurgatorius.

„ 207, „ 25, for "regulate" read relegate.

„ 257, „ 26, for "suffering" read sufferings.

### Psychical Research.

..... is one of the curious coincidences, the apparent accidents, which meet one in history and biography at every turn. There have been sporadic episodes of psychical phenomena and inquiry in England ever since England has been a nation. The followers of St. Columba must have brought stories of his second sight when they came, as Bede tells us, "to the Middle Angles, Mercians, and East Saxons, whose chief city was London, and instructed them in the liberal arts." Merlin, at the court of King Arthur, the Specularii of the Middle Ages, Cornelius Agrippa in the sixteenth century, Dr. Dee at the court of Elizabeth, Lilly and Aubrey towards the end of the seventeenth century, are all landmarks in the history of Psychical Research in England. The



## PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN THE VICTORIAN ERA

THE history of Psychical Research in the present reign is by no means conterminous, as some would have us think, with the history of the Society for Psychical Research. As a matter of fact, we have just passed the Jubilee of Modern Spiritualism, dating from the phenomena of the Fox sisters at Hydeville in 1848. Whether the phenomena were trickery or were genuine manifestations does not concern us in a chapter which deals with the history of opinions, rather than with the opinions themselves, and criticism of their authenticity is no part of our business at the moment. From the Fox episode we date the rise of Modern Spiritualism, and the whole consequent literature of its investigation.

That this should have so happened is one of the curious coincidences, the apparent accidents, which meet one in history and biography at every turn. There have been sporadic episodes of psychical phenomena and inquiry in England ever since England has been a nation. The followers of St. Columba must have brought stories of his second sight when they came, as Bede tells us, "to the Middle Angles, Mercians, and East Saxons, whose chief city was London, and instructed them in the liberal arts." Merlin, at the court of King Arthur, the *Specularii* of the Middle Ages, Cornelius Agrippa in the sixteenth century, Dr. Dee at the court of Elizabeth, Lilly and Aubrey towards the end of the seventeenth century, are all landmarks in the history of Psychical Research in England. The

interest, however, was never widely diffused, and was centred about individuals rather than in the subject as a whole. Even the curious and well-attested story of the Epworth Ghost of 1716 would never have received the attention since bestowed upon it, had not the Wesley brothers become famous. The "Cock Lane" incident of 1762 is best remembered as having been investigated by Dr. Johnson, and even the exciting story of the Tedworth Drummer had been forgotten, till later references sent us back to Glanvil's picturesquely simple story.

In 1825 Hibbert published his "Philosophy of Apparitions," and one feels that Psychological Research was on the way, when, about the same time, the phenomena of the seeress of Prevorst also attracted attention on the Continent, and to some degree in England.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this at our doors, and of very much more of like kind on the Continent, modern interest in the subject of occult phenomena is not consequent on any of these things, but came to us ready-made from America. Obviously, the ground must be prepared before the seed can take root, and a glance at surrounding circumstances may suggest why the episode of the Fox sisters should have aroused a degree of interest which far more dramatic stories had failed to attract.

In the first place, a special feature of the Hydeville phenomena was the claim of the Fox girls to the power of communicating with the departed. This was something quite different from the examination of spontaneous apparitions on the one hand, and from the evocation of the dead, in Witch of Endor fashion, on the other. It was equally removed from the various methods of divination formerly practised by witches and fortune-tellers and seers of various kinds. It attracted very large numbers, as emotional appeals

always do. The idea of communication with those who are gone can be indifferent to none; it must attract or disgust, it must be food for heart-hunger or offend the most tender sensibilities of all who consider it. The "spirits" did not say much that was of interest, or even, as we should say now, much, if anything, that was evidential; but, as Mr. Lang has said in some such connection, the miracle of Balaam's ass was not that she said anything in particular, but that she said anything at all. Professors Flint, Lee, and Coventry at Buffalo "explained away" the raps as due to ingenious dislocation of the joints of the hands and feet; but it does not seem to have mattered greatly, for the Fox following increased till, in twenty years, so *The Spiritualist Magazine* estimated in 1867, the spiritualists in America amounted to two-fifths of the entire population.

It took four years for the movement to travel to England, where it arrived in 1852 in the person of Mrs. Hayden, a professional medium from Boston, and it "caught on" at once. The cause already suggested would, of course, equally apply over here, and there were others as well.

As has been already said, the soil was prepared. People were much occupied about this period with what they called Odic Force, or Electro-Biology, or Mesmerism. Mesmer had been dead thirty years, when, in 1845, Reichenbach published his work on Odic Force; but as early as 1841 Braid had read an address on what we now call Hypnotism, at the British Association, and this had been published in 1843. The physiologist Herbert Mayo and the ingenious Dr. W. Carpenter lent their powerful aid in keeping alive public interest. There was no real connection whatever between the phenomenon of Mesmerism (then, even more than now, when we allow so much for suggestion, considered a *physical* fact), and the spirit-

rappings of Mrs. Hayden, but they all belonged to the region of the marvellous, and even in our own day there are people of confused ideas who consider hypnotism as a psychical phenomenon.

Another important fact which prepared the way for Mrs. Hayden was the publication, in the previous year, of Dr. Gregory's "Animal Magnetism," which contained what we should now consider some effective spiritualistic stories, and obtained the wider acceptance that they were recorded by a man well recognised in the world of science.

The Fox phenomena do not seem to have been lineally descended from the rappings of the Cock Lane Ghost, or the table-tilting practised by the German Jews of the seventeenth century, still less the *Baguette divinatoire*, which, according to Chevreul, was sometimes used, as raps and tilts are now, as a means to spell out words. The Fox sisters were ignorant girls, by no means likely to know the literature of the subject.

There was yet another reason for the hold which the new Spiritualism had upon people of all classes. "All could have the flower when they'd got the seed." One medium made many, and such is human vanity, or mental activity, or whatever the quality may be, that when a subject is prominent and interesting, every one likes to be "in it."

A less obvious reason may, perhaps, be found in some degree in the fact that Spiritualism soon came to be regarded as a form of faith, as presenting at least the possibility of a new revelation. There was a great deal of talk about religion in those days, and great changes were going on, not only in the form of the Anglican revival, but in various minor, and even incidental, directions. Much that was old had passed away, and "the new was powerless to be born." The craving for a working creed was in the air, and it seems likely that, to some, the possibility of a revelation was very real.

Of Mrs. Hayden we know little—personally she does not seem to have been very important, but she paved the way for the reception of a man who seems likely to remain the most interesting presentation of the spiritualistic problem, David Dunglas Home. He is one of the very few mediums, of any prominence, who have never been effectually “exposed,” and there seems no reason, beyond the inherent improbability of the phenomena, why his good faith should be doubted for a moment. His narrative of his own experiences (“Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism,” 1877) is of the most intense interest, not only on account of the subject dealt with, but because of his vivid, if somewhat self-conscious, treatment both of fact and theory. It would be in vain here, and is, indeed, unnecessary, so well known is his history, to describe his career or to dwell on the social and scientific position and importance of the witnesses to his phenomena. One cannot for the moment conceive that such as these should have combined to tell lies in the wholesale manner one would have to suppose necessary did one seek to explain away the stories they tell us; nor, on the other hand, can we reasonably assume it to be all “glamour,” that they were in fact hypnotised and believed themselves to have seen what never really happened. This, indeed, would be only to substitute one mystery for another not less perplexing.

About the same date, 1855, the first Spiritualist newspaper appeared in England, *The Spiritualist Telegraph*, published at Keighley in the West Riding of Yorkshire, very near where Charlotte Brontë was even then conjuring with weird problems of another kind.

Naturally the prominence of the subject aroused eager controversy. Gasparin in Paris, commenting in his *Tables tournantes*, expressed his conviction that certain alleged physical phenomena did occur, but

were not necessarily the work of "spirits," and Dr. Carpenter, with his theories of unconscious cerebration, and Faraday, experimenting on unconscious muscular action, also contributed to the presentation of the hypothesis, that the medium was himself unconsciously the agent in table-turning and spirit-writing. These critics were, in fact, the first to lay down the theory of "subliminal activity," a theory new only in name, upon which Mr. Myers so eloquently discourses; just as we owe the theory of telepathic hallucination to St. Augustine, and that of the "suggestion" of phenomena to Bulwer Lytton.

To suppose the entire phenomena of the new Spiritualism to be mere fraud, would be to suppose a greater miracle than the existence of something we do not understand, which after all is not uncommon. The very recital of the names of the persons interested in the new Spiritualism is a guarantee that it attracted the attention—not only of the idle, the superstitious, the incapable of observation, which was inevitable—but also of those who had abundance of important occupation, and who would not have expended time over what was not of considerable interest. Miss Martineau, Professor and Mrs. de Morgan, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Bulwer Lytton, the Howitts, the S. C. Halls, Archbishop Whateley, Dr. Chambers, Thackeray, T. A. Trollope, Lord Crawford, Lord Adare, Mr. (now Sir William) Crookes, to quote only a few well-known names, were all persons who had other things to do, and were not likely to be attracted out of mere idleness and curiosity.

Some argued in favour of "spirits," some of a force unknown, some of sub-conscious activity. The methods, in many cases, were not difficult to account for, even apart from fraud, which no doubt often existed, among professional mediums for gain, among amateurs from vanity or hysteria. Amateurs, then as now, were often

among the worst offenders, with less excuse for dishonesty, and with more danger to the public, as the more difficult to "expose."

Then, as now, it was not the manner of the alleged communications, but the content, that was of interest to the intelligent; for, after subtraction of what could be explained by thought-transference and sub-conscious activity—which investigators were capable of subtracting even then, although the Society for Psychical Research was yet unborn—there was often a residuum, however small, which could not be accounted for.

There have been many occasions, too, where there can have been absolutely no question of fraud, where even the physical fact has been beyond explanation by the most expert. Not to touch upon the fathomless mystery of Home's performances, we have the testimony of accomplished conjurers, such as Houdin and Maskelyne, that the phenomena of lesser mediums even were unexplainable by trickery or unconscious muscular action. Mr. Maskelyne has asserted that he could imitate any spiritualistic phenomenon, *given his own apparatus*, which, however, would in many cases exceed a ton in weight (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 18th, 20th, 23rd April 1885).

Mrs. E. B. Browning, one of the most thoughtful of the early observers of the movement, has well put this aspect of the case in a letter to Dr. Marston, quoted in *The Arena*, August 1892:—

"For theories, we get over no difficulty, it seems to me, by escaping from the obvious inference of an external spiritual agency. When the phenomena are attributed, for instance, to a 'second personality, projected unconsciously and attended by an unconscious exercise of volition and clairvoyance,' I see nothing clearly but a convulsive struggle on the part of the theorist to get out of a position he does not like, at whatever expense of kicks against the analogies

of God's universe. When all is said, '*Solve the solution,*' we have a right to cry. And, although, of course, sensible men in general would rather assert that two and three make four than that Spirits have access to them, we, women and poets, cannot be expected to admit that two and three make four, without certain difficulties and hesitations on our own side."

There were, moreover, others, besides women and poets, who felt the same difficulty.

In 1863 Mrs. de Morgan published "From Matter to Spirit, the Result of Ten Years' Experience in Spirit Manifestations," with a long and valuable introduction by her husband, Professor de Morgan, the distinguished mathematician. The book was published under initials only, and all names of persons concerned were suppressed, but the real authorship soon became known, and was, of course, in this case, a guarantee of the sincerity of the statements.

A few years later a still more important book at once removed the question to a higher intellectual level than it had hitherto reached. In 1871 appeared "Psychic Power: Experimental Investigations of W. Crookes, Dr. Huggins, Serjeant Cox, and Lord Lindsay," and in the same year, "Psychic Force and Modern Spiritualism, by W. Crookes." Three years later the same distinguished author produced his "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism," reprinted from the *Quarterly Journal of Science*.

The most determined sceptic, the most bigoted opponent, was now obliged to acknowledge that, whether legitimately or not, the problem of the phenomena called "spiritualistic" was one which scientific men of the highest eminence considered worthy of their attention. There are, and must always be, certain aspects of these questions which appeal to the merely emotional, the mere seeker after excitement; but a study pursued by Sir William Huggins

and Sir William Crookes cannot but appear to be at least reputable and worthy of attention. For the first time the physical phenomena were submitted to mechanical tests, and Home and others were treated as material for laboratory experiment.

A less important but nevertheless serious investigation was begun in 1867 by the Dialectical Society, which attempted to organise committees for special investigations. The inquiry seems to have been inconclusive and the organisation appears to have been very imperfect, though doubtless there were difficulties which we are not likely, with our added experience, to appreciate fully. Mr. Russel Wallace appears to have been on the committee, but not Mr. Crookes; and why the special committees should have been anonymous it is hard to say. Only a vulgar curiosity can desire the names of the "mediums" examined (unless, of course, they were professional, when their success or failure is a matter of commercial interest), but the names of the inquirers whose conclusions we are asked to accept should certainly be supplied. In discussing a new medical discovery we expect the names of the doctors as a guarantee of good faith, although those of the patients may be of no moment.

The expectation that the new Spiritualism would bring in a new revelation seems, to some of us who are outside of it, to have been foredoomed to disappointment. Those within would perhaps speak differently. W. Stainton Moses, an Anglican priest, left his Mother Church for what he considered higher teaching, and possibly others may have done the same. In England the tendency of Spiritualist teaching has been towards Unitarianism; in France, to Reincarnationism. For a long time the English Church practically ignored the problem that was occupying so many of her members; but when it became evident that, for good or ill, it was, for many, a religious

question actually affecting their faith, Spiritualism was very properly, though not with much practical result, considered at the Church Congress of 1881. It was treated there as such subjects seem fated to be treated in most places, with wilful and determined ignorance. Most people were thankful to say that they knew nothing about it, and, after all, such people are probably less of an obstruction to intelligent inquiry than a good many, equally ignorant, who are satisfied that they know all about it; on the one hand, we have those who are convinced of its wickedness and folly by the reading of third-hand prejudiced statements; on the other, those convinced of its truth by half-a-dozen examples imperfectly observed.

It is a game in which very few people play fair, which very few take up in a sportsmanlike spirit. It is the lookers-on who have brought things to this state, for it has passed into history that, in psychical research, inquiry into a subject is equivalent to the desire to believe in it. If you examine into the noises heard in a house alleged to be haunted, you are a believer in ghosts; if you experiment in automatic writing, you believe yourself to be in correspondence with Julius Cæsar, or your deceased cook, or some other person, as the case may be.

Consequently the subject was somewhat coldly received as a matter for discussion at the Church Congress. It was ably and dispassionately put forward by Dr. Thornton, now Archdeacon of Middlesex, and supported, among others, by Canon Basil Wilberforce, the one as a critic, the other as a partisan.

Dr. Thornton, whose position was that of inquiry as to "The Duty of the Church in Respect of the Prevalence of Spiritualism," admitted frankly that, as a Churchman, believing in the Communion of Saints and the Life Everlasting, he had no difficulty in believing that, in the order of God's providence,

communication with those who were gone before was quite conceivable, but there were other aspects of the teaching of Spiritualism to which he demurred. The theory of its votaries was, he believed, "that by intercourse with the spiritual world man will advance in knowledge, purity, and brotherly love"; and this he believed to be opposed to the teaching of the Church, and to tend in fact to the views of Arius, Plotinus, and Nestorius.

What was, perhaps, even more to the point, he submitted further that, while entirely admitting the fundamental principle of Spiritualism—the possibility of spirit-communication—"I fail to see that the phenomena which they allege as proofs of spiritual agency and converse are by any means convincing." He believed—and with what is to some of us very obvious reason so far as a great deal of "spiritualistic" phenomena is concerned—that they are "manifestations of a simple human force . . . whose conditions are as yet unknown, as those of chemistry were a hundred years ago."

Canon Wilberforce responded with his accustomed eloquence and earnestness, and the very fact of such a discussion being possible showed, as Mr. Stainton Moses wrote at the time, that "The Church of England, in her greatest and most representative assembly, has recognised her duty as a leader in respect of Spiritualism as a present fact."

Not much visible result came of it, but the presentation of the subject marks an historical land-mark, just as when the phenomena of the Divining Rod were discussed by the Royal Society, those of Hypnotism at the British Medical Congress, or those of Psychical Research at the British Association. Moreover, the fact helps to illustrate our present position, that not only a very wide, but an organised and intelligent interest in Spiritualism and Psychical Research has

existed longer than the younger among us realise, and that, in spite of a recent "boom," these later years have done far less for the subject than we, who have worked but lately, are apt to flatter ourselves. We have invented a great many new words, but, as Alice says in "Wonderland," they are only "what the song is *called*." Long before the existence of societies to systematise and theorise, there was real scientific investigation, at least not inferior to anything that has been done since.

Without necessarily sympathising either in its methods or in its conclusions, one ought to discriminate between the faults of Spiritualism and those of spiritualists, and not to condemn principles because their exponents jar against one's taste. That they should do so is no new thing. Twenty years ago Mrs. Howitt wrote: "The petty cliques and low aims and spites and failures of spiritualists, the lying mediums and lying spirits who speak through them, confirm everything that the outsiders say of Spiritualism being from the devil: if anything can kill it, it will be the follies and contemptible meannesses of the spiritualists themselves."

Mrs. Howitt speaks as a believer in the existence of the "lying spirits," and as one who knows of personal "meannesses," in a fashion of the truth of which the mere looker-on cannot judge; but the follies are self-evident in nine out of ten of the "experiences" put before the public, mainly for the advertisement of the professional or semi-professional medium. Those who employ them (mainly silly women of fashion or other variety of idleness) have only themselves to thank. It is the fools who make the knaves.

The rule of the Society for Psychical Research of paying nobody for services of any kind other than their editor, secretary, and auditor, is one of the best features of its management, and one which is absolutely essen-

tial as the only possible, though still imperfect, test of absence of self-seeking. So long as Mediumism, so-called, is a trade, and psychic gifts, or what pass for such, have a commercial value, so long, as in all trade and commerce, will there be false representation and extortion; so long, too, will there be the anomaly that it is illegal to cheat servant-girls of half-crowns at a country fair, and legal to cheat society-ladies of guineas in Bond Street. So long, too, will it be impossible to take up a treatise on Palmistry or Astrology (which are alleged to be serious sciences, and should therefore maintain the dignity of such), without finding a notice that a written delineation or horoscope may be had for five shillings, or a guinea, or whatever the sum may be.

It is a delicate, but nevertheless important point, in reviewing the history of psychical research in the present reign, to inquire why Spiritualism should have lost the social and intellectual status to which it undoubtedly at one period attained? The superficial and perhaps general answer would be that it has now "found its level," and that its reception by men and women of science and refinement was merely temporary. Such an answer, however, even to one who is not, in the ordinary understanding of the word, by any means a spiritualist, appears insufficient.

It would be in vain to deny that the spiritistic explanation of psychic phenomena still obtains among a considerable number of the same class of people whose early acceptance of modern Spiritualism has been described; but we hear little or nothing of their views. During the last fifteen years at least, unless we accept as spiritualists Mr. Myers and Professor Oliver Lodge, there has been no single published work of importance among English spiritualists by any one whose name is known in any other connection. Nevertheless, it would be easy to show that Spiritualism has a con-

siderable and, it is alleged, an increasing number of adherents. There is, however, a Secret-Society air about the whole thing, for which the spiritualists have only themselves to thank. If the alleged facts of Spiritualism are to be investigated at all, the thing should be done on much wider lines. Committees of investigation consisting of well-known and reputable persons should be established; no statements should be published without inquiry into the facts alleged; no mediums allowed to advertise who have ever been exposed, or who are, in any sense, "suspect"; rules of evidence and conditions of séances should be drawn up, and no statements published as to phenomena which have occurred without strict adherence to such regulations.

If men like Sir W. Crookes and Dr. Alfred R. Wallace and Sir W. Huggins found phenomena worthy of accurate scientific investigation twenty years ago, equally valuable material may exist now, or may come into existence any day, and spiritualists whose names are known to the public ought to have sufficient *esprit de corps* to do all in their power to preserve a high standard of evidence and of accuracy in observation, and not leave a subject for which they profess regard in the hands of illiterate or at the best often emotional and incapable witnesses.

There are, however, in the Spiritualists' Alliance persons of position and repute, and if only a few would come bravely and honestly forward to support the very small band who do the work of their society, and to raise the standard and status of their cause, the thinking and intelligent public would soon be put in possession of what seems at present beyond hope, namely, material worthy of criticism, and statistics and observations upon which to pronounce judgment. If even those persons whose influence in the Society for Psychical Research is tending in the direction of

Spiritualism would betake themselves honestly to the group to which they belong, the group which has definite views to support, and is not merely one of research, it might be considerably to the advantage of both. It is generally a mistake to multiply agencies, and the establishment of Spiritualist opinions should be the work of the Spiritualist Society. If its methods do not meet the approval of those accustomed to something more technical, such persons would probably not be opposed if they imported money and influence to improve them.

"The Society for Psychical Research" was founded in 1882, greatly daring, but nevertheless protecting itself against the misinterpretation of the Philistines by the statement that: "Membership of this Society does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation, in the Psychical world, of forces other than those recognised by Physical Science."

To look back to the earliest pages of the "Proceedings," crude as they now appear, is like turning over an album of faded photographs. We feel even some sense of loss—loss of freshness and vigour, of that single-heartedness which goes when theories come, of that absence of prejudice which disappears in face of *parti pris*.

Now, when the Society is adorned with many names well known and highly honoured in science and literature, those of the little group of comparatively obscure workers have a certain pathos. Professor Balfour Stewart's is the only name on the list important in science; two doctors there were, and two members of Parliament; but even Mr. Myers, Mr. Gurney, and Mr. Podmore, whose names are now so honourably associated with psychical research, were then naturally at the beginning of things. Members,

associates, and officers, all told, numbered about a hundred, though within a year they were nearly trebled. Now they amount to about a thousand, but I believe that a large proportion of its members are still at the stage of inquiry, and are adherents of the Society mainly because it is professedly a Society for *research* and inquiry, and not for the propaganda of special opinions.

In its earlier years the field of research was broader than it has been of late. It began by having special committees of inquiry into certain subjects, six in number. (1) Thought Transference, (2) Mesmerism, (3) Reichenbach's Experiments, (4) Haunted Houses, (5) Psychical Phenomena, and (6) a Literary Committee for the collection, examination, and presentation of evidence. The work of Numbers 1 and 4 is now left practically to individual effort; 2 and 3 are now represented by the Hypnotic Committee, of which I have the honour to be a member; and Number 5, so far as I know, has ceased to exist. Number 6 exists, I imagine, as I had the honour of being co-opted on to it in 1893, but I have never been summoned to a single meeting, and, in fact, have never heard of it since. The work it proposes to itself strikes one as being the most important of all, as including all the rest, and as being of a nature which, if properly and conscientiously performed, ought to absorb the activities of many persons. It is obviously impossible for the public to judge of the comparative value of any evidence without seeing the evidence for that subject *as a whole*, and it ought to be possible for any subscribing member to obtain easy access to all documents, properly arranged and catalogued, upon any subject, or branch of a subject, which has been investigated. Doubtless it is a saving of trouble to those who are only amusing themselves with the subject, to have their evidence selected for them in the "Proceedings";

but as, naturally enough, it is generally selected in illustration of some theory or hypothesis, one is never assured that there may not be other evidence of which we never hear, presenting some entirely different view of the subject.

The work which the Society proposed to itself is thus set forth in its earlier publication :—

“To unite students and inquirers in an organised body, with the view of promoting the investigation of certain obscure phenomena, including those known as Psychical, Mesmeric, or Spiritualistic; and of giving publicity to the results of such research.”—“Proceedings of the S.P.R., vol. i., 1882–83.”

The organised body is now a large one, and a certain number of its members are active in inquiry; and *research* in its most rigid sense is still considered by many as the *raison d'être* of the Society.

So much is now known about hypnotism that, except as a means of exploring sub-strata of consciousness, most of us are content to leave its exposition to the doctors. The Spiritualists' Alliance did not exist at the time when this programme was drawn up, so the examination of spiritualistic phenomena could not be left, as it well might be now, to another body. Those of us who feel that inquiry into *spontaneous* phenomena is the proper sphere of the S.P.R. would be satisfied that such as involve the mechanism of trances, and mediums, and séances, and cabinets, and dark rooms, should be undertaken by those whose avowed concern they are, assisted, if desired, by certain representative members of the S.P.R., who might advise as to conditions of investigation, and establish a special committee for the sifting of evidence; for the honest spiritualist is quite as anxious for the exposure of fraud as any other honest man, and has often been the means of unmasking the fraudulent medium. It is, however, due to the frequenters of séances to explain to those

who do not so sacrifice themselves, that such functions are not to be lightly entered upon. Sir William Crookes and the friends of Mr. Home have described scenes of extreme interest, but such do not fall to the lot of later investigators. The séance of to-day is at best insufferably tedious, too often vulgar and profane.

It is of no use to disguise or try to explain away the fact that, whatever may be the special mechanism which goes to make a "Sensitive," the machinery will never work at its best under the observation of those avowedly sceptical or even critical. The Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino, may have been a fraud of the deepest dye for anything I know to the contrary, but she never had a fair chance in England. Even her cheating seems to have been badly done. The atmosphere was inimical; the poor thing was paralysed. We have all written verses in our time, but fancy being ordered to write a sonnet in the examination-room! "If you can write 'A Sonnet on a Harebell' at all, you can do it here," says the examiner, standing by the dusty and littered deal table; "if you can't do it, you are here under false pretences." And that is the way we talk to "Sensitives."

The S.P.R. has done much good and practical work, involving enormous labour, largely at the hands of certain among the half-dozen or so who are the real workers. Mrs. Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, and the late Mr. Gurney have accomplished tasks that are simply immense. They have given us a Census of Dreams and a Census of Hallucinations, the latter, mainly the work of Mrs. Sidgwick, a real object-lesson in the collection of evidence and the arrangement of statistics. They have given us, for some years past, a monthly "Journal for circulation among Members and Associates only," and over a dozen large volumes of essays and evidence, not to speak of the two laborious volumes of "Phan-

tasms of the Living," which made an epoch in the history of the inquiry.

We have re-classified and re-named<sup>1</sup> various ideas and systems which have gathered round the two central hypotheses which the industry of Mrs. Sidgwick and the ingenuity of Mr. Myers have rendered at least tenable—the hypotheses of thought-transference and of subconscious mental activity, neither of them new, but both somewhat elaborated and extended in their application. The earlier psychical researchers, when they got past the stage of talking about "magnetism," had only two hypotheses as to any alleged phenomenon:—That it was a lie; this being the superlative of mal-observation, careless record, second-hand evidence, super-exaggeration, and the like; or that it was Spirits. These rapped on tables, got into crystal balls, dictated automatic writing, appeared from behind curtains, and were universally active.

Now we postpone this second hypothesis as extreme, and only to be accepted after subtraction of others, these being,—Thought-transference, a frequent and often unexpected source of information from persons near or distant, and even, conceivably, from the Departed; and Subconscious activity, which includes possibilities of observation, and memory, and judgment, and comparison of facts—processes of which we are not conscious at the time they are going on in our own minds, and which, therefore, we may conceivably accept as coming from without, whereas in reality they are of our own subconscious initiation.

The labours of the Society have also taught us to accept the fact, insisted upon in the earlier days of the new Spiritualism by Carpenter and Faraday, though

<sup>1</sup> Some of these terms, such as *pan-anesthesia*, *hypnopompic*, *hyperpromethia*, *methectic*, *preversion*, are among the most striking of the phenomena of psychical research, and are mainly due to the erudition of Mr. Myers.

known long before, namely, that the means of the *externalisation* of the results of thought-transference or subconscious activity, or, if you will, spirit-communications, is not the real question at issue, but rather the *content of the message*; that crystal-gazing, or automatic drawing or writing, or table-tilting, or even audile or visual hallucinations, may be simply the result of certain habits of mind, may be purely automatic, or may be due to mere unconscious muscular action; that these "powers" are curiosities of psychology or physiology, and may exist quite independently of any "psychic" faculty of thought-transference or subconscious mental activities of any kind. Crystal-gazing, for example, is a fairly common power, and is often found in persons who have not the very least pretension to "psychic" gifts, a fact which should make those who have them the more careful and conscientious and modest in their claims.

The Society has also taught us something, but not nearly as much as some of us could wish, of the history and literature of the subject. The present writer had the honour of presenting, for the first time, a slight but more or less consecutive history of Crystal-gazing; Mr. Gurney published some very valuable contributions to the history of the Witch Superstition; and Mr. Myers, though not in "Proceedings," has given us a valuable sketch of Classical Oracles.

It has also devoted a good deal of money, and of space in "Proceedings," to the examination, often the exposure, of mediums, including a very detailed "blue-book," published as the result of Mr. Hodgson's personal inquiries in India into the character and phenomena of Madame Blavatsky.

At the present time it is engaging, temporarily let us hope, in the cult of hysteria, an inquiry which may more suitably be left to the medical profession. If we are going to prove that psychic gifts are the concomi-

tant of brain-lesion or other disease, it will be high time to disestablish our Society.

Surely if any subject of inquiry demands absolute sanity, the *mens sana in corpore sano*, it is Psychological Research, and one cannot but regret the extreme cost of human suffering which is involved in the investigations at present occupying Mr. Myers and Mr. Hodgson. The phenomena presented by Mrs. Piper, the American medium, are among those classified as "induced." At the "suggestion" of a fee, she passes through a state apparently of epilepsy into one of trance, in which her utterances are regarded in the light of Intimations of Immortality. One is told that the convulsed countenance, the gnashing teeth, the writhing body, the clenched hands, are "purely automatic" and very beneficial to her health, and as Mr. Hodgson has induced this condition eighty times in three months, he should certainly be able to judge. Mrs. Piper, whom I saw very frequently when she was in London eight years ago, is a gentle, quiet woman, of very domestic tastes, simple, sincere, and possessing considerable faculty of thought-transference, a woman whom it was especially distressing to observe in her induced secondary personality of "Dr. Phinuit," coarse, cunning, and of evil-speech. "'Tis a dangerous thing to play with souls, and matter enough to save one's own."

Mention has already been made of the Spiritualists' Alliance, which is understood to represent those persons interested in psychic inquiry who are already convinced of its spiritualist interpretation. This, however, is not a necessary condition, for the prospectus announces only that—

"This Alliance has been formed for the purpose of uniting together persons interested in the study of Psychological or Spiritualistic Phenomena; of providing them with opportunities of investigation; and of affording

them information by means of papers and discussions."

This, it will be seen, is on sufficiently broad lines to include even the inquirer and the person who, as yet, only wants to know what there is to inquire about.

Though the Alliance did not spring into existence till two years after the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research, it was, so to speak, built on the ruins of an earlier one, founded by a very earnest investigator, the late Mr. Burns, a publisher of spiritualist literature.

It is surely desirable that there should be one society for inquiry into spontaneous phenomena only, a society definitely for inquiry and not for propaganda. About two-thirds of the persons one meets with "do not in the least believe in what you call psychic phenomena," and are intolerant of the very mention of spiritualism, and think "all these stories utterly ridiculous." "BUT," they continue, when suitably encouraged, "well, there was just that strange thing that happened"—and so on. If they like to take the S.P.R. as a halfway house to Spiritualism, as some have already done, that is their concern; but we seem likely to be left, before long, with no any means of discussion without *parti pris*, of comparing experiences and collecting evidence, without being compelled to pigeonhole them according to certain theories; with no meeting-ground for the majority who are still at BUT; with, in short, nothing corresponding to the S.P.R. of old days, the Society which gave us such papers as Mr. Edmund Gurney's on "Hallucinations," Mr. Hodgson's on "The Possibilities of Mal-Observation," Mrs. Sidgwick's on "The Evidence for Premonitions," for "Phantasms of the Dead," for "Thought-Transference;" when we had discussions so business-like as that of "The Calculus of Probabilities applied to Psychical Research," by Mr. Edgeworth, or "The Experimental Comparison between

Chance and Thought-Transference," by Colonel Taylor; and what Mr. Lang has called the eminently "sportsman-like" addresses of Professor Sidgwick on "The Canons of Evidence;" the days when Mr. Myers was unfolding to us his ingenious theories, when they seemed helpful and lucid enough to most of us, without his recent appeal to the support of hysteria and brain-disease.

There is much to be done without this, many elementary questions still to answer, for such of us as confess ourselves still in the infant school of psychical teaching; much to learn from traditions distant in time and space, from primitive folk-lore and the savage races of our own day, from the wisdom of the East and the chronicles of Egypt, from the local traditions, to go no farther, of our western and northern counties, or of Scotland and Ireland and Wales, and Brittany.

Has the Society ever published one well-attested or carefully investigated case of alleged "haunting," a case observed by, say, half-a-dozen competent adult witnesses, and reported at the time of occurrence? Are we any further than we were twenty years ago in the interpretation of clairvoyance? or in that of the acquisition of knowledge not in the mind of any living person? or of premonition, or of almost any of the facts of those spontaneous phenomena which are the basis of the stories which begin with BUT? Are we, in short, in a position to help those who have not accepted the spiritistic interpretation, and who are interested in that residuum, including the second sight of the Highlands, premonitory dreams, prevision of all kinds, which the theories of thought-transference and sub-conscious mental activity are inadequate to explain?

If the Society for Psychical Research would do any or all of this, it can only be by leaving the hypothesis of Spiritualism to the spiritualists, the cult of hysteria and alexia and agraphia to the specialists

whose function they are, and the induction of morbid states to the students of the Salpêtrière, who, by the way, unless we are misinformed, have in considerable degree abandoned that form of vivisection as not much more useful than the other.

Looking back on the history of Psychological Inquiry in the present reign is not wholly cheerful nor wholly encouraging. Much has been done, but rather in systematising the known than in bringing nearer the unknown. The Spiritualists and the Theosophists are happy in their dogma, and the patient and philosophic are content in their waiting; but a good many have only found themselves in a *cul de sac*, where they sit down helpless and unhelpful, holding out no hand to those of less experience who follow in their footsteps.

One of the most important events of the entire fifty years under review, is the utterance of Sir William Crookes at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1898. This allusion to Psychological Research, although it covers three octavo pages in the printed report, was nevertheless only an allusion; for, as he himself pointed out, the inquiry is not yet at the stage when it can "come within the range of one of the Sections of the British Association."

To those among us who would fain not have to join the cry "Solve the Solution"; who are inclined to exhaust all normal causes before resorting to the super-normal; who find spontaneous phenomena of more evidential value than those which are induced; who would seek to apply every suggestion of physical science rather than the extreme hypotheses of Spiritualism—to such the mature conclusions of the President of the British Association are supremely encouraging.

Reviewing his researches of thirty years, Professor Crookes retracts no statement, withdraws no evidence, regrets nothing but "a certain crudity" in his earlier

expositions, "which, no doubt justly, militated against their acceptance by the scientific world." The text of his discourse, the statement which he proceeded to support, was of the deepest interest and full of suggestion.

"Were I now introducing for the first time these inquiries to the world of science, I should choose a starting-point different from that of old. It would be well to begin with *telepathy*; with the fundamental law, as I believe it to be, that thoughts and images may be transferred from one mind to another without the agency of the recognised organs of sense—that knowledge may enter the human mind without being communicated in any hitherto known or recognised ways. . . . If telepathy take place, we have two physical facts—the physical change in the brain of A the suggester, and the analagous physical change in the brain of B the recipient of suggestion. Between these two physical events there must exist a train of physical causes. Whenever the connecting sequence of intermediate causes begins to be revealed, the inquiry will then come within the range of one of the Sections of the British Association."

Sir William Crookes began with Katie King and ends with telepathy; Mr. Myers and Dr. Hodgson began with telepathy and end with Mrs. Piper. He recommends experiment in ether waves, and they cultivate hysteria. "It is unscientific," continued the President, "to call in the aid of mysterious agencies, when, with every fresh advance in knowledge, it is shown that ether vibrations have powers and attributes abundantly equal to any demand; even to the transmission of thought;" not that Sir William Crookes is of those who consider the problem settled by the introduction of a new term.

He continues: "A formidable range of phenomena must be scientifically sifted before we effectually

grasp a faculty so strange, so bewildering, and for ages so inscrutable as the direct action of mind on mind. This delicate task needs *a rigorous employment of the method of exclusion—a constant setting aside of irrelevant phenomena that could be explained by known causes, including those far too familiar causes, conscious and unconscious fraud.*” [The italics are my own.] Sir William Crookes’ position may be summed up in the familiar words of one of the very few men of science whom one may venture to describe as even greater than he—Sir Isaac Newton.

“To myself I seem to have been as a child playing on the seashore, while the immense ocean of truth lay unexplored before me.”

There is so much in this subject of psychical research which appeals to our highest hope, our tenderest associations, our most sacred memories, that we feel from the heart what science teaches to the intellect, that only in realising with profound humility how very much is unexplored, dare we look forth with eyes of profoundest reverence and trust to the immense ocean of Truth which lies before us.

## I

### HAUNTED HOUSES

CHARLES KINGSLEY, who loved much, hated Cousin Cramchild. She was a good deal *en evidence* when he wrote "The Water Babies," and when people were very serious indeed on the subject of education. We are getting a little cured of that particular way of boring each other now, and we relegate the "Instruction," which is often mistaken for her fair sister Education, as knowledge for wisdom, or "rough" cats for thoroughbred Persians, to the long-suffering victims upon whom we expend so extraordinary a sum out of the rates.

Cousin Cramchild, nevertheless, is still with us. She has no imagination, no soul, and she hates poetry and folk-lore and psychical research, and she talks about ghosts, and hauntings, and messages, as she used to talk about Water Babies.

"But there are no such things as Water Babies."

"How do you know that? Have you been there to see? And if you had been there to see and had seen none, that would not prove that there were none. If Mr. Garth does not find a fox in Eversley Wood—as folks sometimes fear he never will—that does not prove that there are no such things as foxes."

It is an incontrovertible axiom that one cannot prove a negative, and if you or I find no ghosts in Silverton Abbey and elsewhere, it does not prove there are no such things as ghosts.

Among a certain class of sceptics—the Cousin

Cramchild class—one is reminded of a story told of the great artist Turner.

A literal person, of the kind to “peep and botanise upon his mother’s grave,” remarked of one of Turner’s sunset pictures, that he had “never seen a sunset like that.”

“No,” said the man of genius, “I daresay not. Don’t you sometimes wish you had?”

Of all departments of psychical research there is, perhaps, none which commands more general interest and attention than that of haunted houses. It often happens, when dealing with the “occult,” that we have to begin by explaining what we mean and why our subject is interesting. But here is a subject which most people think interesting, even when they do not know what it means.

As to knowing “what it means” in the sense of accounting for the phenomenon, few of us would venture to lay claim to that; but it is well, at starting, to make it clear what in the present case our title of “Haunted Houses” is intended to mean.

In that monument of industry, Mrs. Sidgwick’s “Report on the Census of Hallucinations,” the term “haunted” is used in its widest sense, the local visitations, not only of the dead, but of the living. For lack of space, and for that reason only, I resist temptation, and narrow our term “haunting” so as to exclude phantoms of the living, and confine myself to phantoms of the dead, or what (though the term is one which begs the question) are commonly known as “ghosts.” For the same reason I exclude the hauntings of places other than habitations, such as cross-roads, churches, churchyards, battlefields, the sites of gallows, the scenes of outdoor murders, as well as hauntings by creatures other than human, or post-human; fairies, elves, phantom-animals, boggarts, banshees, kirk-grims, gabble-retchets, and the like.

Further, I would not classify a house as "haunted" merely because a vision had been seen in it, on some few occasions, of some person or persons, dead or living; otherwise, for such of us as are habitual "seers," it would be true in another sense than that of Longfellow's, that "all houses wherein men have lived and died are haunted houses."

In many cases, the person seeing, rather than the place, seems to be the motive-cause of what we call "hauntings." What we have to deal with here are those houses which are alleged to be habitually visited by phantoms supposed to be those of former inhabitants.

Probably there are few persons who could not point out a house with which some such story is connected. A house gets the reputation of being haunted almost as easily as a dog gets "a bad name"; and in either case, hanging, or its equivalent—desertion—is often its ultimate fate. If a house remains for a few years unoccupied, so that its chimneys fall, its roof becomes lichened, and its garden-paths moss-grown, it is sure to get the reputation of being haunted, and the condition, which at first was the cause, soon gets talked of as the effect of its evil reputation. If a travelling tinker takes advantage of its deserted condition, and lights his fire under the shelter of its outhouses, there is the added phenomenon of ghostly lights, and perhaps noises. Some sight or sound, easily explained if occurring elsewhere, is interpreted in favour of the theory; the "oldest inhabitant" recalls some tradition of a forgotten crime, suspected or perpetrated, and the "evidence" is complete.

Where, however, the house has been in continuous occupation, when the commonplace details of domestic life have been uninterruptedly carried on, the problem of the origin of the story becomes a little more difficult. The thing must have had a beginning; there must have

been a day when the occupants first recognised that their home had become "no canny," and, however much the story may subsequently grow and strengthen with perpetual restatement, whatever may be the degree of exaggeration and misunderstanding and unconscious self-deception, it is interesting and instructive to examine, when we can, the beginnings of such traditions, the seed out of which the full-grown blossom is ultimately produced. Unfortunately, the blossom is the more interesting and romantic of the two; in fact, the seed is seldom very exciting. The sheeted ghost, smelling of sulphur or mildew, who clanks chains and reveals secrets in a hollow voice, is now relegated to "Christmas Numbers"; he exists in his full beauty in the old-fashioned annuals—the Keepsakes, and Forget-me-nots, and Garlands, where we have him in company with the One-Handed Lady and the Smuggler's Revenge.

The ghost of the Society for Psychical Research and other collectors of first-hand evidence, is on the whole comparatively thin and pale; but if, on the one hand, recent systematic inquiry lends us some help in *explaining* the ghost, on the other it makes it the more possible to preserve a reputation for sanity, without being obliged to *explain him away*. We have now several possible hypotheses other than lying, indigestion, insanity, a morbid state of health, rats, bats, owls, hot-water pipes, bell-wires, a snail on the window, the wind in the chimney, vibration, ordinary sounds misinterpreted, or the result of fear and expectation. At the same time it is impossible to emphasise too strongly the absolute duty of every ghost-seer to examine every one of these hypotheses, and fifty others which his friends will undoubtedly suggest, with the utmost care and conscientious scrupulosity, before allowing it to pass into history that he has "seen a ghost."

Before generalising further, let us carefully consider a single example. I take for illustration an experience

of my own, not because it is in itself of especial interest, but because it has come under my personal notice, and because it is connected with a place no less historical than Hampton Court. I do not offer it as evidential; it is not susceptible of proof, there is no possibility of corroboration, it rests entirely on the word of the narrator; but as the same may be said of a very large proportion of "ghost stories," and as it is at least first-hand, it will serve as well as another as a peg upon which to hang my observations.

I recently found myself the guest of a lady occupying a pleasant suite of rooms in Hampton Court Palace. For obvious reasons I cannot specify the name of my hostess, the exact date of my visit, nor the precise whereabouts of her apartment.

Of course, I was familiar with the Hampton Court ghost-legend, as told by Mr. Law in his valuable history of the Palace, as well as with more recent stories related in sundry magazines. I examined the scene of the occurrences, and was allowed to ask questions at will. The "ghost," I was told, visited habitually in a dozen different rooms—not, however, in the bright, dainty drawing-room in which we were chatting, and where it was difficult to believe that we were discussing recent history.

As a matter of fact, it was very recent indeed. But a few nights earlier, in a certain small but cheerful bedroom, a little girl had been awakened out of her sleep by a visitant so dramatic that I wondered whether the child had possibly gone to sleep again after her original fright, and dreamt the later and more sensational part of the story.

My own room was quaintly pretty, but somewhat peculiar in arrangement, and lighted only from the roof. I have seen "ghosts" before, have slept for months together in haunted rooms; and though I find such visitants somewhat exciting, I cannot say that my

prospects for the night filled me with any degree of apprehension.

At dinner and during the evening ghostly topics were avoided; there were other guests, and music and chat occupied us till eleven o'clock, when my hostess accompanied me to my room. I asked various questions as to my neighbours above and below, and the exact position of other members of the household, with a view to knowing how to interpret any sounds which might occur. About a third of the ceiling of my room was skylight, a servant's bedroom being situated over the remainder. Two sides of the room were bounded by a corridor, into which it opened, a third by the wall of the state apartments, while the fourth opened by folding doors upon a room for the time unoccupied (except by a cat, asleep upon a chair), out of which there opens a door leading by a secret passage to the bank of the river.

I ascertained that the folding doors were locked; moreover, a heavy table stood against them on the outer side, and a wardrobe on the inner. The bedstead was a small one without curtains; indeed, the room contained no hangings whatever. The door into the room opened so near to the head of my bed that there was space only for a very small table, upon which I took care to place two long candles and a plentiful supply of matches, being somewhat addicted to late and early reading.

I was very tired, but a sense of duty demanded that I should not sleep through the witching hours, so I sat up in bed and gave my best attention to Lord Farrer's problem, "Shall we Degrade our Standard of Value?" in the current number of the *National Review*, and on the principle of always trying to see both sides of a question, thought of several reasons why we should not, with the author, come to a negative conclusion. The matter did not, however, excite me to the pitch of wakefulness, and when I finished the article, as the

clock struck half-past one, I considered myself absolved from further responsibility, put out my lights, and was asleep before the next quarter sounded.

Nearly three hours later I was suddenly awakened from dreamless slumber by the sound of the opening of a door against which some piece of furniture was standing, in, as it seemed, the empty room to my right. I remembered the cat, and tried to conceive by what kind of "rampaging" she could contrive to be so noisy. A minute later there followed a thud apparently on this side of the folding doors, and too heavy for even the prize animals of my home-circle, not to speak of a mongrel stray, newly adopted and not yet doing credit to her keep. "A dress fallen in the wardrobe" was my next thought, and I stretched out my hand for the match-box, as a preliminary to inquiry.

I did not reach the matches. It seemed to me that a detaining hand was laid on mine. I withdrew it quickly and gazed around into the darkness. Some minutes passed in blackness and silence. I had the sensation of a presence in the room, and finally, mindful of the tradition that a ghost should be spoken to, I said gently, "Is any one there? Can I do anything for you?" I remembered that the last person who entertained the ghost had said, "Go away, I don't want you!" and I hoped that my visitor would admire my better manners and be responsive. However, there was no answer—no sound of any kind; and returning to my theory of the cat and the fallen dress, though nevertheless so far influenced by the recollection of those detaining fingers as not to attempt to strike a light, I rose and walked round my bed, keeping the right hand on the edge of the bedstead, while, with my left arm extended, I swept the surrounding space. As the room is small, I thus fairly well satisfied myself that it contained nothing unusual.

I was, though somewhat perplexed, about to grant

myself licence to go to sleep again, when in the darkness before me there began to glow a soft light. I watched it increase in brightness and in extent. It seemed to radiate from a central point, which gradually took form and became a tall, slight woman, moving slowly across the room from the folding doors on my right. As she passed the foot of my bed I felt a slight vibration in the spring mattress. At the further corner she stopped, so that I had time to observe her profile and general appearance. Her face was insipidly pretty, that of a woman of from thirty to thirty-five years of age, her figure slight, her dress of a dark, soft material, having a full skirt and broad sash or soft waistband tied high up, almost under the arms, a crossed or draped kerchief over the shoulders, sleeves which I noticed fitted very tight below the elbow, and hair which was dressed so as not to lie flat to the head, either in curls or "bows," I could not tell which. As she appeared to stand between me and the light, I cannot speak with any certainty as to colour, but the dress, though dark, was, I think, not black. In spite of all this definiteness, I was, of course, conscious that the figure was unsubstantial, and I felt guilty of absurdity in asking once more, "Will you let me help you? Can I be of use to you?"

My voice sounded preternaturally loud, but I felt no surprise at noticing that it produced no effect upon my visitor. She stood still for perhaps two minutes, though it is very difficult to estimate time on such occasions. She then raised her hands, which were long and white, and held them before her as she sank upon her knees and slowly buried her face in the palms, in the attitude of prayer—when quite suddenly the light went out, and I was alone in the darkness.

I felt that the scene was ended, the curtain down, and had no hesitation in lighting the candle at my side.

I tried to examine the impression the vision conveyed. I felt that it was definitely that of reproach, yet of gentle resignation. There was no force, no passion; I had seen a meek, sad woman, who had succumbed. I began to turn over in my mind the illustrious names of former occupants of the chamber. I fixed on one—a bad man of the worst kind, a bad fool of that time of wickedness and folly, the Regency—I thought of the secret passage in the next room, and began to weave an elaborate romance.

“This will not do, here and now,” I reflected, as the clock struck four, and as an act of mental discipline I returned to my *National Review*. I read a page or two of “The Poor Man’s Cow,” and though I delight in cows—more, perhaps, than in poor men—I could, under the circumstances, feel no enthusiasm about credit co-operation. I turned to Mr. Myers’ article on “The Drift of Psychical Research,” which I had already read; it seemed at least more to the point.

I read:—

“. . . Where telepathy operates, many intelligences may affect our own. Some of these are the minds of living persons; but some appear to be discarnate, to be spirits like ourselves, but released from the body, although still retaining much of the personality of earth. These spirits appear still to have some knowledge of our world, and to be in certain ways able to affect it.”

Here was, so to speak, the text of my illustration. I had quite enough to think about—more than I needed for that occasion. I never heard the clock strike five.

Let us try to examine this, a type of many ghost stories.

Elsewhere I have classified my visions of persons, whether seen in the crystal or otherwise, as—

1. Visions of the living, clairvoyant or telepathic,

usually accompanied by their own background, or adapting themselves to mine.

2. Visions of the departed having no obvious relations to time and space.

3. Visions which are more or less of the nature of pictures, such as those which I voluntarily produce in the crystal from memory or imagination, or which appear in the background of real persons as illustrative of their thoughts or history. This is very often the case when an impression reaches me in visual form from the mind of a friend who, it may be, imperfectly remembers or is imperfectly informed as to the form and colour of the picture his mind conveys.

Again I emphasise the fact that I am speculating, not dogmatising—that I am speaking from internal evidence with no possibility of corroboration, and that I am perfectly aware that each reader must take this for what it seems to him worth. Such being the case, I venture to classify the vision under class III. Again, to borrow from Mr. Myers, I believe that what I saw may have been a telepathic impression of *the dreams* (or I should prefer to say “*thoughts*”) of the dead. If what I saw were indeed veridical or truth-telling—if my readers will agree to admit that what I saw was no mere illusion, or morbid hallucination, or imagination (taking the word in its commonly accepted sense)—then I believe that my visitor was not a departed spirit, such as it has before now been perhaps my privilege to meet, but rather an image of such, just as the figure which, it may be, sits at my dining-table is not really the friend whose visit a few hours later it announces, but only a representation of him, having no objective existence apart from the truth of the information it conveys, a thought which is personal to the brain which thinks it.

I have already said that, preconceived notions apart, or as far apart as in subjective analysis it is possible to

put them, I had no impression of reality. I recognised that what I saw and felt was an externalisation of impressions unconsciously received, possibly from some discarnate mind. But further, and this I cannot hope to establish as anything but mere personal sentiment, my whole being, and experience, and hope, and aspiration, protest against the notion that for years, sometimes, it has been alleged, for centuries, those who have suffered here should be compelled to revisit the scene, often to re-enact the tragedy of their lives. That, for example, the criminal should be doomed to have before his eyes the earthly surroundings of his crime, that he should perpetually rehearse the foul deed, is in some degree thinkable; but that the victim, often it would seem, the innocent victim, should, for no obvious purpose, be debarred from "the rest that remaineth," should not await, at least in peace, "the consummation of all things," is an idea which, by subtracting from the hope of the future, adds yet another sorrow to the present and the past.

I have not dwelt upon the possibilities of thought-transference from the living. What I saw had been seen by no one else, and the "hauntings" of these particular rooms are quite apart from the historical ghosts of the Palace, Jane Seymour and Mrs. Penn, the mother and nurse of Edward VI., who haunt certain rooms in the clock court, as well as from that of Queen Catherine Howard, whose ghost shrieks up and down a certain gallery, as is written in Mr. Law's valuable volumes.

As the figure which visited me was not dressed in the Tudor fashion at all, and as I heard none of the orthodox sounds of jingling glass and knocks at the door, I do not think I need personally discount much, either for thought-transference from those about me, or for expectation.

Speaking for myself, on that very complex question of expectation, the expectation of phenomena in my

own case tends rather to discourage than to force experiences. Of the danger of expectation I am entirely aware, and, in fact, am probably only too much alive to its possibilities, so much so that I am conscious that the critic in me often absorbs the energy and stimulus which ought in justice to belong to the seer.

We talk and write so much about ghosts and hauntings that at first sight it seems curious we should know so very little about them. But there are certain obvious impediments to the study of these—one might perhaps say, of all psychical phenomena. The material, however plentiful, is not to be commanded; ghostly visitations are seldom continuous, though now and then one hears of a ghost who keeps an anniversary. Personally, I regret that I know of none such; but in most cases you may watch for a score or a hundred nights without seeing anything. Not that this proves there is no ghost; indeed, in all probability, he will come back on the twenty-first or the hundred-and-first night, and remain till the night preceding your return!

The theory of haunting, invented by Mr. Podmore, is one, I think, of frequent, but by no means of universal application. He thinks that the story of a haunting is begun by some subjective hallucination on the part of a living person, which lingers on in the atmosphere, and is telepathically transmitted to the next occupant of the room or house in question. Thus, for example, future occupants of my room at Hampton Court Palace should, on his theory, be likely to have visions of a kneeling woman in a dark dress, possibly sensations of detaining hands, and sounds of opening doors, and a falling body; and this, whether I really saw, or only imagined that I saw, or only mistook what I saw, or even (should they read this) am telling lies as to what I saw.

In another instance I have lately inquired into, that of a house in Norfolk, said to be haunted by a

certain "Old Fadanny," the infection, so to say, was, I believe, more direct. There is first-hand evidence for very mysterious sounds about the house, and careful inquiry in the neighbourhood has elicited the statement that as much as eighty-five years ago the house was "noisy." Whether there is any means of explaining these sounds away I am not prepared to conjecture; it is the sort of problem which demands minute acquaintance with the geography, architecture, and even the manners and customs of the neighbourhood. There is, however, no question, that when my kind host took possession of the house, rumours of hauntings were in the air, and were probably known to that mysteriously omniscient race—the servants.

The first witness for the ghost was a little boy of six, who testified that he had seen "Old Fadanny." The title was of the child's bestowal, and was evolved in the unaccountable way in which a child's mind works. Without resorting to the extreme hypothesis that a nursemaid had been so wicked as deliberately to threaten the child with the ghost, it is quite conceivable that the expectation of some such visitant was telepathically present in his thoughts, and a child's natural powers of visualisation will account for the rest. I have a vivid recollection of certain tigers who dwelt, in my youth, under the lace hangings of my mother's dressing-table, and whose paws projected beyond the pink lining, and made brown patches on the carpet. The child minutely described an old man with a cap, whom several witnesses have seen since, all of them being in a state of great alarm.

During my visit to the house I saw nothing—not, as I have already said, that this proves anything at all—but I certainly heard the mysterious noises, not, however, in the degree to which other witnesses have testified. For the reasons already stated, as well as for others which I need not particularise, I am inclined

to make a present of the "Old Fadanny" evidence to Mr. Podmore.

A third house which I have lately been permitted to investigate is one upon which I have not been able as yet to form any opinion. A more "ghostly-looking" place it would be difficult to find. It might well be the original house of Hood's weird poem :—

" For over all there hung a cloud of fear,  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted ! "

It is buried in trees, reeking with damp, it has mysterious passages and doors in unexpected places. It knows nothing of sunshine, and little of fresh air ; the rooms are, for domestic purposes, dismally large ; there are superfluous steps which betray you with a sense of shock ; it has been used for a lunatic asylum, and reminiscences of Charles Reade's ghostly novel inevitably recur to the mind ; in short, not to have a ghost in such a house as that would be waste of a magnificent opportunity.

I, alas ! watched through the witching hours in vain, but others have been more fortunate. Eleven servants have refused to stay in the house, the daughters of my host have exiled themselves from home, the master of the house has been disturbed at his studies, the mistress in her sleep ; visitors have hinted at " another room " ; dogs and cats refuse to sit alone ; finally, after but three years' occupation, my friends have decided to remove elsewhere.

The Norfolk farmhouse, the abode of Old Fadanny, is, on the contrary, as bright and pleasant a spot as any one could desire to dwell in. So, too, is another " haunted house " with which I have been all my life familiar. It is one as to which I, and many others, could tell countless stories ; not, however, at this time,

for I feel doubtful as to whether it falls properly under our classification, though one speaks of it, in general terms, as a "haunted house." There is no association of the things seen and heard with any former occupants, though it may be instructive to note that the nearest house (standing in grounds which "march," as the Scots would say, with those of the house in question) has an exceedingly definite and local "ghost." Here, however, there has been great variety as to the ghosts seen and heard; so much so that it might be more correct to say that it is a house, the occupants of which become haunted, rather than that it is a haunted-house. Visitors see the doubles of distant friends; servants describe the persons of former visitors whom they have never seen. Even as a child of eight and upwards, I have frequently had, in the "haunted" room, visions which we should now classify as telepathic—intimations of the death of persons in whom at that age I felt no interest; vivid, I might almost say *intense*, intuitions as to persons and events, otherwise beyond my power of criticism, and which I now know to have been justified. The house has repeatedly changed hands, my friends, like other previous and subsequent occupants, found it a very undesirable habitation, and were glad to get rid of it on almost any terms. No tenants could be induced to remain, and the property has finally been sacrificed at considerable pecuniary loss.

Such a house might perhaps be described as being in a haunted atmosphere. This question of atmosphere is so exceedingly subjective that the sensation is difficult to analyse. It is one of which all "sensitives" are conscious—both as to places and persons, and I am inclined to think that in both cases the emotion is telepathic. Most of us know, in some degree, the overwhelming sensation of the presence of Westminster Abbey, or, whether we chance to be very loyal or no,

of hearing "God Save the Queen" sung by a thousand voices; of the sight of a life-boat; of a relic of Prince Charlie; of a war-horse that has been in action; of the colours used at Waterloo or Balaklava; or of the mast of the *Victory*. We may dismiss the emotion as merely "cosmic," but, I venture to think, that we are, some of us, overwhelmed because we are, for the moment, the subject of the emotions of others as well as of our own.

I remember as a child hiding with a companion in a dark closet, in the course of a game of "I spy." "Do stop laughing; they'll hear you," said my play-fellow. "How can we? you're laughing yourself," I rejoined. "Let us think of dear grandmamma," he proposed. The old lady had, indeed, died shortly before; but the suggestion did not operate. In despair of putting my gaiety under eclipse, I turned my thoughts to the Pyramids, and was sobered immediately. Croly's "Salathiel," or York Minster, or my music-master, of whom, in spite of his wife and family, I always thought as "a lonely man"—a child's tribute to genius—were all subjects for reflection equally overwhelming. Psychologically the child-mind is a clue to much we lose sight of in the increased complexities of later life, and I cannot but think that there are persons and things and places surcharged with accumulated emotion of which the sensitive is, so to speak, the heir. And this, I fancy, may be a clue to certain of the sensations of haunting.

For myself the loneliness of the wildest moorland has in it more of welcome companionship than Bond Street or Hyde Park. I can conceive of no desert so dreary as the Strand; the sense of impending catastrophe, of suspended apprehension, is ever present in the streets of London; the presence of surrounding humanity with all its unknown sin and sorrow, and unsatisfied longings, is paralysing to mind and body. All around there is a cry for help one is powerless to

answer, a demand for sympathy one knows not how to direct. Whereas, in the haunts of Nature, among her wild creatures, where she stretches out friendly hands to those who love her, one finds voice and utterance, and support and stimulus; here in the heavy atmosphere of humanity one is helpless, and blind, and dumb.

It may possibly be, unconsciously, for this reason, that in the Hebrides, when passing at night any spot reputed to be haunted, it is considered wisdom to get as near as possible to the sea, which has in it the element of change rather than the lingering atmosphere which surrounds what is more permanent. Moreover, for the islander, the sea is a friend, a familiar companion, a source of livelihood, a great living power in his life.

The ghost, whatever ghosts may be, is always with us—among classics and savages, Christian and heathen, before the “blessed Reformation” and after—in spite of science and common sense, of medicine and the Church, of his *reductio ad absurdum* at the hands of the Christmas number, of Mr. Podmore, and even of Presbyterianism. He has been relegated to animism and the astral; he has been called a “telepathic impact,” and a “morbid hallucination”; he has been explained as the creation of smugglers and coiners, and of people “who have a spite”; he has been “laid” by hypnotism, and with bell, book, and candle; he has been materialised, and de-materialised, and rationalised; he has been tabooed and referred to the Horse Marines, and alleged to be an associate of Mrs. Harris (“which I don’t believe there never was no such person”); but houses are still “haunted,” and the provincial newspaper still chronicles the ghost.

It is very encouraging to the ghost-hunter that so serious and impressive a volume as the “Report on the Census of Hallucinations,” should conclude its

discussion of "Local Apparitions" with such a paragraph as the following:—

"The cases we have given, in addition to others of the same kind to be found in previous numbers of the "Proceedings," constitute, we think, a strong body of evidence, showing that apparitions are seen in certain places independently by several percipients, under circumstances which make it difficult to suppose that the phenomena are merely subjective, or that they can be explained by telepathy, without considerable straining of our general conception of it.

"It appears, however, that there is in most cases very little ground for attributing the phenomena to the agency of dead persons, but, as we have said, in the great majority of cases they are unrecognised; and in these cases, if they really represent any actual person, there is often no more reason to suppose the person dead than living."

The caution is not superfluous. The more absolutely that we believe in the reality of occult phenomena, the more jealous we are of that which is spurious, counterfeit, or even doubtful—the more we feel the significance of that saying of Tacitus, "Truth is established by investigation and delay." We hesitate over nine-tenths of the stories which reach us, in proportion as we believe unhesitatingly in the significance of the tenth.

As a matter of fact, the public seems to have been singularly reticent in confiding its stories of hauntings to the Society for Psychical Research, or the officials of the Society have been as singularly reticent in confiding their information to its members. The interest of the subject of haunted houses was acknowledged by the early appointment of a committee of inquiry, which was, to say the least, unfortunate as to its results. At the end of a few months they discarded a subject, of which the literature and well-attested

records are especially abundant (see, for example, Mr. Andrew Lang's recent volume on "Ghosts"), and which required years of patient research. They found only twenty-eight cases which they considered really worth inquiry, and these rested upon no better evidence than an average of one person and a half to each. Ten years later the subject cropped up again in the form of an elaborate story, resting on the evidence of two or three ladies, two servants, a charwoman, and a little boy. A recent case very carefully recorded from day to day for three months, and resting on the evidence, first and last, of nearly fifty persons, has recently been rejected as "not up to their evidential standard."

If the stories of romping spirits who throw the furniture about, and pull people's hair, and break the windows are true, it is a pity—but pity 'tis we haven't yet proved they aren't true. Mr. Podmore thinks he has, and in a very useful article in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," he demonstrates with detail that they are, generally, naughty little girls who want to make themselves conspicuous.

Whether girls or spirits, the phenomena are silly and degrading, and as I know nothing of my own knowledge to the discredit of Spirits, and a good deal to the discredit of girls, especially at the hobledehoy, pig-tail age, personally I feel an *à priori* inclination to believe it to be girls.

Mr. Podmore quotes, besides certain others mentioned incidentally, eleven cases carefully investigated by himself and other members of the Society for Psychical Research.

Perhaps the most interesting of all is the one he gives first, and which he calls "the Worksop case."

It occurred in February 1883, and was investigated in the April following. The seven chief witnesses were

separately examined, and their testimony is given in full. Four others corroborated.

The phenomena were all of the romping-spirit variety. The kitchen furniture was thrown about, hot coals rolled downstairs from a room in which was no fire; carpet, harness, mantelpiece ornaments, candlesticks, flew about and smashed themselves. Again and again these things happened. Here is a specimen of the occurrences:—

“The women being very frightened, and White, the owner of the house, thinking that the disturbances presaged the death of his child, who was very ill with an abscess in the back, sent Tom (who was afraid to go alone) with Ford to fetch the doctor. Mrs. White meanwhile took one of the children next door. Rose approached the inner room to fetch another, when things immediately began to fly about and smash themselves in that room. After this all appear to have been absent from the house for a short time. White then returned, with Higgs, a policeman, and whilst they were alone in the kitchen, standing near the door, a glass jar flew out of the cupboard into the yard; a tumbler also fell from the chest of drawers in the kitchen, when only Higgs was near it. Both then went into the inner room and found the chest of drawers there turned up on end and smashed. On their return they found Rose, Wass, and Tom White in the kitchen [? and Mrs. Wass], and all saw a cream jug, which Rose had just placed on the bin, fly four feet up in the air and smash on the floor. Dr. Lloyd and Mrs. White then entered, and in the presence of all these witnesses a basin was seen to rise slowly from the bin—no person being near it except Dr. Lloyd and Higgs. It touched the ceiling, and then fell suddenly to the floor and was smashed. This was at 12 P.M. All then left except Tom White and his brother.

The disturbances continued until about 2 A.M. when all grew quiet, and the Whites slept. At about 8 A.M. on Saturday the 3rd, the disturbances began again.

"White left the kitchen to attend to some pigs; and in his absence, Mrs. White and Rose were left alone in the kitchen. A nearly empty port wine bottle leaped up from the table about four feet into the air, and fell into a bucket of milk standing on the table, from which Mrs. White was filling some jugs, &c.

"Then Currass appears to have been attracted to the scene. He entered with White, young Wass, and others, and viewed the inner room. They had but just returned to the kitchen, leaving the inner room empty, and the door of communication open, when the American clock, which hung over the bed, was heard to strike. (It had not done so for eighteen months previously.) A crash was then heard, and Currass, who was nearest the door, looked in, and found that the clock had fallen over the bed—about four feet broad—and was lying on the floor. Shortly afterwards—no one being near it—a china dog flew off the mantelpiece, and smashed itself in the corner near the door. Currass and some others then left.

"Some plates, a cream-jug, and other things, then flew up in the air, and smashed themselves in view of all who were in the kitchen—Rose, the Whites, and Mrs. Wass.

"White then lay down on the sofa; but disturbances continued during his siesta. In particular, some pictures on the wall next the pantry began to move, but were taken down at once by his brother. At about 2 P.M. a Salvation Army woman came in, and talked to White. Rose only was with them in the kitchen. A candlestick flew from the bin, and fell behind the Salvation Army woman, as she stood near the pantry door. She left the room in terror. . . .

The clock was a heavy American one, it was thrust out from the wall in a horizontal direction so as apparently to clear a four foot bedstead which lay immediately beneath it, and the nail from which it depended remained *in situ* on the wall."

Mr. Podmore is perfectly candid as to facts telling against his hypotheses of girlish tricks. We have such sentences as the following:—

"I looked all over the house in daylight, but could discern no holes in the walls or ceilings, nor any trace of the extensive and elaborate machinery which would have been required to produce the movements by ordinary mechanical means. . . . Lastly, to suppose that these various objects were all moved by mechanical contrivances argues incredible stupidity, amounting almost to imbecility, on the part of all the persons present who were not in the plot. That the movement of the arms necessary to set the machinery in motion should have passed unobserved on each and every occasion by all the witnesses, is almost impossible. Not only so, but Currass, Higgs, and Dr. Lloyd, all independent observers, assured me that they examined some of the objects which had been moved, immediately after the occurrence, with the express intention of discovering, if possible, any clue to an explanation of the matter, but entirely failed to do so. These men were not over-credulous; they certainly were not wanting in intelligence; and they were not, any of them, prepossessed in favour of White. But they each admitted that they could discover no possible explanation of the disturbances, and were fairly bewildered by the whole matter."

Locally, two explanations contended for acceptance, one that it was "electricity," which goes a long way with some people, especially when combined with a "spring;" the other that they were produced by White himself, a small horse dealer, the tenant of the house.

Small horse-dealers cannot, as a rule, afford to play tricks with such remnant of character as they may possess, and according to his own account White was the loser by about £9 in broken crockery. Small horse-dealers have, doubtless, also queer notions of fun, but smashing their own household gods, except, perhaps, after a horse fair and an evening at the Red Lion, is not likely to be among them. Moreover, the poor man was obviously distressed and anxious about his child, who was lying very ill at the time.

The three witnesses, too, who separately corroborated the substance of White's statements, found this theory untenable. Even the policeman, "a man of good intelligence, and believed to be entirely honest . . . though fully alive, as becomes his official position, to White's indifferent reputation, was unable to account for what he saw."

Here is Mr. Podmore's argument:—

"And, indeed, if we scrutinise the account as it stands, we shall find various discrepancies and contradictions in the evidence. (1) Thus, according to White, Higgs and he went into the front room first to see the damage done there, and on their return to the kitchen a glass jar flew out of the cupboard. But according to Higgs' version, it was after seeing the glass jar fly through the air that White and he went into the inner room. (2) White's account is that two or three witnesses were present when the glass jar flew out; Higgs says 'that no one else was in the room at the time.' (3) There seems to be a doubt as to whether Rose entered the kitchen during Higgs' visit. White does not mention her entrance at all. Higgs says they found her in the kitchen on their return from the inner room. (4) Currass says he was in the inner room on the morning of the 3rd when the clock fell. White says that Currass was in the kitchen. (5) Again, White cannot remember where Rose was

at the time of the incident; whilst Currass says that she was near the inner door. (6) White and Currass agree that Coulter was not present when the American clock fell and was smashed. Now Coulter, whom I saw, and who impressed me favourably as an honest man, stated that he was present when the clock fell, and also during the immediately succeeding disturbances in the kitchen.

“Such are some of the discrepancies which appear in the evidence even as prepared and taken down from the lips of the witnesses by a too sympathetic reporter. It is probable that more and more serious discrepancies and contradictions would have been found if there had been no speculation and consultation and comparison in the interval of five weeks; and if each witness at the end of that time had written an independent account of the incidents.”

In the face of this, what are we to conclude? If it isn't electricity, or White, or from beginning to end an invention, is it spirits? Heaven forbid. If this is the sort of thing we are encouraging spirits to do, the Society for Psychological Research ought to be put down by Act of Parliament, and spiritualist papers burnt by the common hangman. We have quite enough mischief and vulgarity and silliness on this side Jordan without setting our wits to devise communication with the other, if *there* we find such “spirits” as these, which, again, Heaven forbid!

For myself, I believe the explanation is still to seek. We have gradually subtracted from the “spirits” a good deal attributed to them even ten years ago, and before another ten has passed Mr. Myers may have had to invent a grand new Greek word to express “the movement through space of material objects without muscular effort on the part of the agent.”

Meanwhile, Mr. Podmore finds a series of little girls to account for the performances (with the occasional

variety of a little boy). What are all the children coming to ?

The case at Ham was reported at great length at the time of its occurrence two or three years ago. It was a horrid story, and one of the details, the throwing of two cats into the fire, was worthy of the alleged French Satanists. There was the usual romp of the furniture and hideous imbecile phenomena attested, on one occasion, by ten persons, besides the owner of the house and his family, which included a certain Polly, as usual, the apparent nucleus of the whole business.

The case caused tremendous excitement in the neighbourhood, especially among uneducated persons.

It is a miserable story, and makes one wonder whether we may be wrong in spending precious time over such investigations at all, and whether, when we leave the School Board to teach the orphan boy to read, and teach (not at all effectively) the orphan girl to sew, we are forgetting that

“God’s possible is taught by His world’s loving—  
And the children doubt of each.”

And then, poor little diseased souls, we “investigate” them !

Let us summarise Mr. Podmore’s criticism of the eleven cases. The remarks in square brackets are my own.

I. Witnesses uneducated. Phenomena very surprising. Allow for lapse of memory, for mal-observation, and note discrepancies in some [mainly irrelevant] details.

II. Trickery confessed and detected. Group with I. [Neither confession nor detection a certainty.]

III. Group with I. [Trickery probable, at least in part.]

IV. Trickery detected and confessed [though not apparently an adequate explanation of all the phenomena].

V. Trickery detected [not confessed].

VI. Witnesses educated. Evidence contemporaneous. “Not difficult to explain as trickery.”

VII. Group with I.

VIII. Trickery detected, not confessed.

IX. Group with VI. Trickery confessed, not detected.

X. Group with VI.

XI. Group with VI.

In four cases trickery was detected, in three confessed. That is to say, in three cases we know, and in two others we allege trickery, five in all. Mr. Podmore philosophises, "There is, therefore, strong ground for believing in trickery as the true and sufficient explanation in all these eleven cases."

Another way of stating the case, if he will permit it, is this. Out of eleven cases we may dismiss three (2, 4, 9) as non-evidential, always supposing that, even in these three, we have not a probable residuum of the real, which may have suggested the artificial.

Of two more (5, 8) we may perhaps say the same. This leaves six, including the important Worksoop case, to be accounted for, at least as to some of their details.

There seems, I venture to suggest, room for some hypothesis other than that of naughty girls or mischievous spirits. Personally I think neither impossible, but the almost uniform presence of some morbid condition which Mr. Podmore has insisted upon, may perhaps indicate the direction of our search for a third alternative.

Mr. Myers has argued that the "sensitiveness" of genius is not far removed from the hysteria of the morbid Elizas and Pollys of whom we have heard, and again that genius is the power of externalising the more subtle parts of our consciousness. While absolutely assured that for seership of the higher kind we need a sound mind in a sound body, and that to that soundness the Seeing quality is an actively contributing factor, I think it, nevertheless, conceivable that the useless, degrading, and mischievous phenomena such as we have been considering, may be encouraged

by some morbid state of health, such as Mr. Podmore has diagnosed in his naughty girls, a state of vicious self-consciousness, dislocation of physical conditions, and lack of self-restraint, as unwholesome in its source as it is degrading in its expression, but which, nevertheless, may have some relation to that great question of human faculty, which it is the object of psychical inquiry to explore.

The lady from whom I received the following story, which, if it need explanation at all, is easily explained as "telepathic," has made careful inquiries as to all evidential points. The percipient, Miss A., has had many and varied experiences which, as a devout Roman Catholic, she regards rather as valuable sidelights on some of the great teachings of the Church than as matter for romantic wonderment or scientific investigation. I hold all the names and addresses of the persons concerned, but their publication is not necessary. The original documents are in the possession of the Society for Psychical Research, but have never been published.

It will be seen that in one particular this account is, evidentially, of high value, namely, that the story of the vision was written down and spoken of before the coincidence was known. This, of course, is absolutely the only condition of first-rate evidence, and for various reasons is very rare.

"During the year 1868 I was received by Father C. into the Holy Catholic Church, and subsequently became much estranged from my family, who were then what is termed plain low-church people. The good old priest succeeded in introducing me to some excellent noblemen's families in England and France, where I was most kindly received and welcomed, and I there found the true and unselfish friends, many of whom I still retain. Father C. continued to be my director, counsellor, and guide.

What, then, was my grief at receiving a letter from him in 1870, telling me that he, being a missionary, had been ordered abroad, out of Europe, and that probably he would never return. He asked me to meet him *en route* at the 'parloir' of his monastery, where he had obtained permission to see me for ten minutes. My sorrow at parting was increased by the knowledge that the loss of my anchor and adviser would make me feel more than ever dependent on myself. He had been so true and faithful to me, and I loved the dear old man like a second father. He promised to write to me as soon as he arrived at his journey's end, to answer my letters, and even at that distance to advise me to his best. Our prayers for each other were to continue daily, and once a month he would offer the sacrifice of the Mass for me.

"Time passed, but no letter came to me from Father C. At first I felt pained and hurt, thinking myself forgotten. One evening I returned to the Château des B., in Dauphiné, from a very pleasant excursion, followed by a dinner party, went to bed tired, and soon dropped to sleep. I was aroused, just at the dawn of day, by the *presence* of some one near my bed, sat up in a start, and before me stood the Father C., dressed in his soutane, and the water streaming from it. Before I had time to speak he disappeared. I felt no fear, but got up and examined the spot where I had seen the dear old priest. All was dry, and everything in my room as I had left it the day previously.

"Then, to convince myself that I was awake, not dreaming, I wrote down on a sheet of paper what I had seen, with the date and the time, 3:30 A.M. On going down to breakfast the next morning I told my friends what had occurred, but they treated the event lightly.

"Shortly afterwards I received a letter from another priest informing me that the Father C. had been

drowned. His body had been found, and his watch had stopped at 3:15 on the day I had seen the vision. In my daily prayers for the repose of the souls of the faithful departed, Father C. has always a special remembrance, and I doubt not that I have still a place in his, and that through his pious supplications on my behalf, and those of the holy souls in purgatory, I am enabled to obtain many temporal and spiritual graces which, alone, I should be unworthy to have granted.

“J. M. A.”

The lady who was good enough to inquire into this story, writes:—

“Before sending this account to the Society for Psychological Research, I sought carefully for any published account of the accident. With some difficulty I found a notice recording that Father C. was drowned in riding across a swollen ford in New Zealand, while on his way to visit a dying person. I kept no copy of this account, so can only give you my recollection. It did not state the hour at which death took place, but the date seemed to tally with that stated in Miss A.’s account. I suppose the difference of time would be twelve hours, and that the death must have been in the afternoon.

“(Signed) M. F. C.”

“September 1896.”

The same friend has been kindly responsible for careful inquiry into the following story. I give the narrative in her own words; her account is perfectly clear and succinct, and requires no additions of mine:—

“June 15, 1896.—The scene of the disturbance is an old tenement left over from the barracks built in 1795, and partially demolished a number of years ago. From its position and construction, this detached building shows signs of having served as the barrack hospital. Its upper storey of one long room was sub-

sequently used as a comb factory, and, later still, the place has been divided off into two cottages, with doors opened out into a new road running along the old barrack boundary wall.

“Nearly two years back, one of these cottages was taken by Mrs. B., a widow, well known to the narrator as a person of simple-minded and truthful character, and having a kind of old-world dignity and repose more common formerly than nowadays in the manners of all classes of society, and particularly characteristic of the country people rather than of dwellers in modern towns. During her past life, Mrs. B. has had some few ‘Borderland’ experiences, but not of the persistent kind here to be described.

“The first night of taking possession, only the two daughters of Mrs. B. occupied the cottage, sleeping in the front room downstairs. They were alarmed at hearing footsteps come down the passage outside, but were afraid to open the door, and as the house was found securely locked up in the morning, they attached no importance to the sounds. Later, however, they recognised the same steps, as of a person halting and using a stick, which were the most common form of the disturbances.

“A few days afterwards, a girl of ten, a grandchild of Mrs. B.’s, came running upstairs, calling out to her grandmother that the furniture in the back room was ‘being lumbered about,’ and that some one must have got in; the child had heard the noise from the front room, but nothing to account for it could be found.

“Next, Sarah B., a young woman of about twenty-two, heard a loud crashing, as of a heap of bricks thrown on the floor of the front room where she was sitting. Mrs. B., being rather deaf, did not hear all the sounds mentioned, but she distinctly heard on one occasion what appeared to be a turning out of papers on the floor of the sitting-room; also, a loud, heavy

thud on the floor close to her, which she describes as 'like the butt-end of a gun,' sharply grounded. She seemed to feel something moving about like a dog brushing against her skirt, as she sat by the table. The most usual sounds, heard by the family in general, were knockings against the partition dividing the living-rooms from the entrance passage. These knocks were constantly given in a peremptory way, and the handle of the door (front room) turned and shaken; on opening the door nothing to account for the noises was seen. It should be stated that, although the other cottage (half of the tenement) was empty for some little time, rumblings and draggings, as of the moving of furniture, proceeded from it on several occasions.

"The footsteps alluded to as having occurred on the first night continued at intervals during the whole of Mrs. B.'s tenancy; they were heavy steps, accompanied by the sound of a stick or crutch, and passed along the passage and up the stairs generally in the evening and the night. Mrs. B.'s son heard knockings at the head of his bed, in the room occupied by his brother and himself at the back. The front bedroom was occupied by Mrs. B., Sarah, and a little child of three, belonging to Mrs. B.'s eldest daughter, who went out as a nurse, returning occasionally to her mother's house. About this room footsteps continually seemed to move.

"Several times the coverings were pulled off the bed when both of Mrs. B.'s daughters were sleeping in it, as if by some hand unseen. A rumbling on the floor, as if a heavy body were rolling 'like a cannon ball,' alarmed them all one night. Another night Sarah B. heard voices in the back room, occupied by her brothers, which she describes as 'a jangling'; she thought they were having an altercation, for the voices sounded angrily though she could distinguish no words. Next morning, when she inquired if they had been quarrelling, they were much surprised, and said that

they had slept soundly the whole night, hearing nothing, and had, certainly, nothing to do with the sounds in question.

“In the front room the little grandchild was playing one day alone. She came down complaining that an old man was there, that he ‘came and pulled her skirt.’ More than once after this the child asked ‘why that old man came and looked at her over the foot of the bed?’ When Mrs. B. was lying ill upstairs, the child, who was in the room, said that she saw the old man sitting there, and she ran down to Sarah B. crying, ‘Auntie, why don’t you drive away the old man, he is sitting on granny’s chair leaning his hand on the table.’ The child was not frightened at first on seeing ‘the old man,’ but afterwards, when she seemed to realise that no actual person was visible, she was terrified on seeing this semblance.

“During Mrs. B.’s illness she saw, one winter evening, what she describes as the shadow, or projection, on the wall of a figure, a woman with her hair hanging down her back, holding an infant. Only half of this figure was visible. Mrs. B. has been questioned by several persons most searchingly as to this appearance, which she is positive in declaring was distinctly as described. She called Sarah to move the candle, to take away some clothes hanging behind the door, in case any shadows from these might have deceived her eyes; but, she states, that after trying vainly to discover any cause for this curious appearance, she saw it again during the course of the night.

“The only other figure seen by Mrs. B. was one afternoon, equally during the winter: she came out into the passage, where the footsteps were frequent, and saw a man of a large build, in a dark coat, his back towards her. He moved towards the door into the yard, and disappeared. She called Sarah, and they opened this door, but found no one. There is no exit

from this yard, which can only be entered from the house by the door where the figure was seen.

"Sarah B. came into this passage one day from the back room, and saw a female figure before her, moving towards the front room. At first she took it for her mother, but a glance showed her that such was not the case. The figure went into the doorway of the front room, stooped, as if to pick up something, and vanished. On following, Sarah saw no one.

"A son of Mrs. B. went into the yard towards the washhouse one evening, and saw the lines hung with spectral linen, which shortly vanished. This is perhaps the most eccentric of the appearances, but I am informed that it had been seen by previous servants. Of this, however, I can give no direct evidence, the people having gone away, and it can only be said that the young man who dislikes the subject of the 'hauntings' doggedly holds to his story of this odd experience.

"The eldest daughter, who goes out nursing, asserts that while in bed one night she suddenly saw the vision of a large white sheet stretched out on the wall. It remained for some minutes, seeming as if fastened by two forks, then vanished.

"Several neighbours heard the knockings on the partition on various occasions. On one occasion, six persons being in the front room, three of the number heard a 'moaning' or 'groaning' in the room. One day, while the B.s were at tea, Sarah saw, through the open door, a white figure come down from the ceiling into the passage and melt away into the floor. She turned pale, and her mother asked if she were feeling ill. The girl told her mother that she had seen something strange.

"The repeated noises affected the nerves of the two women, who were generally alone with the little child, so that they took to sitting in the evenings with a relative who lived near, and only returning when the

son came home late from his occupation. The whole family sat up for several nights in the hope of discovering some cause for the disturbances, but without result. They spoke to the landlord, who, not unnaturally, was vexed at such allegations; but, as Mrs. B. says, they do not pretend to say that the house is 'haunted,' only that they have had in it the experiences they describe, to whatever causes they may be due. Through the account, given by a visitor at one house, who was interested on hearing of the phenomena, Colonel Taylor, of the S. P. R. came down and looked into the matter, noting the apparent good faith of the witnesses, and being especially interested in the naïve testimony of the little grandchild, but failing to gain personal demonstration as to the noises, &c.

"It is to be remarked, however, that Sarah B. stated next day that almost directly after showing out Colonel Taylor she came from the back room and found the floorcloth of the diagonally-shaped passage, which was laid down in two pieces, the one crossing the other, completely taken up and neatly rolled up, the tacks being removed.

"On the day of the agent's visit I met accidentally a former tenant of the cottage, a respectable agricultural labourer named W., of whom I inquired whether he ever heard any unusual sounds while he lived in the house. On his answering that he had done so, I suggested that, without giving me any information, he should presently meet Colonel Taylor at our house, and tell *him* anything he had to relate.<sup>1</sup> W. came, an hour later, and stated that after five weeks' tenancy he gave up the cottage, and had been constantly disturbed by knockings on the partition, these being so violent as to shake the pictures on the inner side; also the door had been thrown open, and on his shutting it, before he

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Taylor tells me that he was satisfied as to the honesty of the witnesses, but the S. P. R. has never published the story.

had time to go away, it was again pushed open after its handle had been turned, and with such force as to strike him sharply on the shoulder. He also spoke of ball-shaped lights seen upstairs, with no ascertainable cause, and said that his daughter, now dead, constantly complained of these lights, and once called him up, saying that a light was showing from under his door so bright that she was afraid of fire. He had no light in his room at the time.

"*June 16.*—The tenants succeeding the B.s, who gave up the house nine months ago, in consequence of its unrestfulness, only remained a short time, and I was informed, at second-hand, that they could scarcely sleep; they did not at anyrate own to hearing noises, but said there was such an uncomfortable sensation when they attempted to get a night's rest. The man, I was told, 'went and got drunk to see if that would do any good,' but as such a circumstance is unfortunately not uncommon among the British democracy, I do not look upon it as a feature in the case. The next servants said they knew nothing of the supposed disturbances, but they soon left.

"This morning I have interviewed the wife of the present tenant, named H. She is a young woman with little children, and 'had heard that a man who lived there some time ago used to say the place was haunted, but she didn't believe in anything of the kind.' On being told that it was no question of belief, but simply that I had heard there were noises in the house, and would feel obliged by her telling me any experiences of the sort, she said that they certainly had heard 'voices' talking in the upstairs room, but no knockings. This corresponds to the 'janglings' mentioned in an earlier paragraph. I do not expect to get any further evidence from Mrs. H., because the neighbours are mostly very sceptical, and laugh at any idea of abnormal sounds, so when my visit is mentioned it will probably

be vain to inquire further. I am convinced that I have gathered all she has to relate.

“(Signed) C. F. M., Member S. P. R.”

It has since been ascertained that the tenant of the cottage previous to the Mrs. B., who was so much and so frequently disturbed, was very lame, and was obliged to walk with a stick, so that it seems as if the walls had, as it were, retained a familiar sound, just as in some places we have stories of “rehearsing ghosts,” phantasms which seem to repeat some more or less simple action common to them when in life.

My friend adds:—

“Also, from two old persons, I have heard that there was a soldier who attempted to desert from the regiment at the time the barracks existed, that he was captured, and tried to escape from the building lately occupied by Mrs. B., and that he was shot dead as he climbed over the wall close by. It was said for years after that the pathway below was haunted. I have tried to get further information, but I am told that the shooting of a deserter would not, in the beginning of the present century, when the event is said to have happened, have been held to demand a coroner’s inquest.”

There is the story, told, I believe, without prejudice and without exaggeration. There are two ways of summing up evidence such as this. We may say, on the one hand, that the whole account rests on the personal veracity of a set of uneducated cottagers, unaccustomed to exact observation or careful statement, that the witnesses are mainly frightened women, and that there is no corroborative coincidence of any kind.

To this one can only reply that education is not necessarily synonymous with candour, that in common details of everyday life, the uneducated, like children, are often more attentive to passing circumstances and

more exact as to trivial incidents than are those whose minds are otherwise occupied; further, that both Mrs. B. and her daughters showed at least quite as much good sense in the matter as do most women, or men either, in similar circumstances, and that the corroborative coincidence exists mainly in "Christmas Numbers." Its absence is, of course, the worst feature of the story, and one much regrets that no legend of crime connected with a crutch, a man in a dark coat, a woman with a baby, and the family "wash" has not been unearthed in the interest of the *raconteur*, to whom the story is at present useless. If it had, there would be plenty to say the story "was too good to be true," and that either it or the legend had been invented to add dramatic completeness to the other.

On the other hand, the phenomena have been testified to in some form or another by Mrs. B., two daughters, a son, a grandchild of ten, and another of three; by several neighbours ("six at once" is a good "collective" example), by a former tenant of the cottage, and by two sets of later ones. The B.s gave up the cottage, which appears to have otherwise suited them, at the end of little more than a year, three sets of successors have divided about nine months' tenancy among them, and their predecessors left at the end of five weeks.

The phenomena are audile, tactile, and visual. Four, if not more, different figures have been observed, and some of the manifestations alleged were of a kind as to which any assertion must be consciously true or false. One might, when drowsy, fancy a sheet upheld against the wall; it is conceivable that some effect of light and shade might produce an hallucination of speckled linen or of balls of light, echo might account for footsteps, and abstract fright might produce the sensation of "something queer" about the house, and a corre-

sponding disinclination to sleep. But when reasonable beings say that their clothes were pulled off the bed, or that "something like a dog" brushed against their skirts, they must know whether they are inventing or not. Those who know Mrs. B. and her daughters are of opinion that they are not. Colonel Taylor told me himself that the child's evidence was given with every appearance of simple truth.

One of the latest uses of Suggestion is for the cure of hauntings. I used it with some effect myself in a house alleged to be haunted in an eastern county nearly two years ago. Perhaps I ought to say that the story I am about to quote is one I should myself describe as "a cure by suggestion"—I won't undertake to say whether the persons most concerned might not express the case differently.

I cannot quote documents, because the associations of the story are so disagreeable to the occupants of the "haunted house," that I cannot distress them by asking permission to do so. The documents exist, however, and I have seen them, but I tell the story (correctly, I believe) only as I heard it from Colonel Taylor, who examined the evidence and visited the house concerned.

A curious feature of the story, is that the house is a perfectly new one, modern in style, cheerfully situated, in no way suggestive of the "no canny" in any form, built for themselves by the present occupants. The body of a relative, who died at a distance, rested at the house before burial, but beyond that very simple circumstance the wildest imagination can suggest no reason for the presence of any haunting spirits.

Mr. Z., the occupant, is a professional man, very pious, very much respected, so anxious for association with all that is good that during the building of the house, and also since its occupation, he has constantly petitioned, at family prayers, that a blessing might rest upon it, and all evil influences be averted. This fact

suggests, among other things, that the possibility of evil presences is in his mind, and may have acted as a self-suggestion, just as allowing the mind to dwell upon any particular condition of the body will often, in the case of suggestible temperaments, suffice to bring about that condition, or a resemblance of it. Readers of "Three Men in a Boat" will remember that the narrator, having foolishly invested in a "Medical Encyclopædia," found that he had symptoms of every disease it described, except housemaid's knee. Mrs. Z. also has been anxious about the spiritual condition of their new home.

The family, as well as the house itself, is young and cheerful, and consists of Mr. and Mrs. Z., four young children, a governess, four maids, and two men-servants. Early in their occupation of the house, a female figure had been seen by the governess, and separately, by the nurses, in the children's room. The usual inconveniences followed; servants refused to stay, the governess was a good deal scared, and Mr. and Mrs. Z. dreaded that the children might be next affected. At this juncture, Colonel Taylor was asked to investigate the circumstances. He set to work in characteristically methodical manner—examined the premises with an eye even to such detail as window-fastenings, the transparency of the blinds, and so on; tested the possibilities of outside trickery, a hypothesis which he found practically untenable; established himself in the haunted nursery, on the night when the figure most commonly appeared, armed with a camera, so arranged as to focus the corner in which she was wont to manifest; prepared a piece of magnesium tape, set matches ready, and sat up till half-past three in the morning.

Nothing occurred within the range of his observation, but the governess, sleeping in the next room, was disturbed by the usual phenomenon.

There is a general absence of motive which makes

the story perplexing—motive on the part of a ghost, motive, and indeed, as it appears, opportunity, for personation, and motive for inventing stories on the part of the persons disturbed. The statements seem to have been made in all good faith, and the alarm appears to have been genuine.

The satisfactory thing is that the cure has been effected, and effected by the finest of all medicines—the bread-pill. The inventor of that invaluable remedy, probably a double-dyed humbug, conferred a blessing on humanity, which should prevail with the Recording Angel, even of such quackeries as his. He little knew that he was educating the race for the reception of Suggestion, a remedy which causes no ill effects, no disturbance, no indigestion, which is potent without being debilitating, cumulative without being poisonous.

Colonel Taylor administered, with beneficent effect, a bread-pill, the more effective that it was prescribed with suitable circumstance, and administered as a veritable function.

Not satisfied with his preliminary researches, he, next morning, invited his hostess to conduct him once more over the house, already explored from cellar to attic. He had not gone into detail as to the box-room and its contents, and Mrs. Z.'s travelling boxes, the chest containing, let us suppose, the summer clothes and the muslin curtains, the deck chairs for the garden, the extra mats and blankets were all simple enough. The house was new, and there was not the usual accumulation of rickety tables, chairs without castors, jugs without handles—the melancholy record of the passage of time, and of housemaids.

But one piece of spare furniture stood suggestively in the corner of its adoption, a wooden bedstead, an ugly unsanitary anachronism, a splendid text for a suggestion. Its origin was obscure, vague, easily represented as mysterious.

"Clear out this room," prescribed the specialist, 'clean it, whitewash it, put back all else, if you will, but *burn that bedstead.*"

It may have been a fetish, a *point de repère* of evil, filled with the germs of thought-transference, the microbe misnamed "psychometric," the bacilli of astral and elemental forms; or the order may have been merely a suggestion, a bread-pill; but when the bedstead was burnt, that ghost was laid.

That is an instructive story, a valuable suggestion to the investigator, with a moral which he who runs may read. I have known a lady who "couldn't" travel by railway, cured by wearing a brown paper cross on her spine, and many a patient in whom rheumatism has been prevented by carrying a potato in his pocket. That sometimes fails, partly, I think, because it isn't sufficiently known that the potato must be a stolen one. A potato is easily bought or begged or borrowed, but stealing requires energy and invention, and results so important as the cure of disease endured or expected, are not to be arrived at by any primrose path of dalliance.

The lady who tells the following thinks it just to the original owners that the name of the house should not be mentioned, a request with which I gladly comply. This again is a story of which the *pièces justificatifs* have been deposited with the S. P. R., but which the percipient kindly gives the permission to publish—I believe for the first time. It will be noted that this story is what is called one of "collective evidence," that is, that the figure was seen by three separate persons, as well as, possibly, by the dog.

"In the year 1863 we were living in Norfolk, and had never heard any rumour whatever of our house being haunted. I slept with my sister. One night I awoke, and to my surprise found the room quite light, and on the further side of the bed, looking over my

sister at me, was a short old lady, in a large green poke bonnet, staring at me, with very round grey eyes; her hair was put quite back, and a wide piece of black velvet tied across her forehead. I saw all these particulars quite plainly, as at first I did not feel frightened. She was not at all unpleasant to look at; her face was very short and round. I don't remember any more of her dress or appearance than I have mentioned. As she stayed so long looking at me, I began to feel nervous, and tried to wake my sister, but could not, and I was afraid to speak. I hid my head under the bed-clothes, and fell asleep. Next morning I mentioned what I had seen to an old friend of my mother's, who was staying with us; she then told me that an old lady in a large poke bonnet, exactly like the one I described, had appeared to her a few nights previously, but she had not mentioned it, thinking it might make us nervous. My mother desired that nothing should be said to the younger children or servants. The following February, my youngest sister, a child of seven, came running into the room, saying she had met such a funny old lady on the stairs, with a large bonnet. She stared at her very hard. The child was not at all alarmed. Once again she appeared to my mother, seeming to pass into the room, but only for an instant. After this we left the house in the winter, as this caused an uncomfortable feeling.

"We made inquiries in the village, and heard that part of the house was very old, and formerly little more than a cottage, in which an old couple named Larwood lived. They used to quarrel fearfully, and one winter's night the old man turned his wife out of doors in the snow. She swore that, dead or alive, she would return. February was the month she appeared in, and always in the old part of the house.

"(Signed) KATHERINE WAY.  
FRANCES E. BAKER.

"September 1895,"

(Note by the second signatory, the sister who was in the room visited by the apparition, but who did not see it.)

“Do you remember ‘Nap,’ poor George W.’s dog, that was sleeping in the Dell room, and he found him shivering with fear, and perfectly wet with fright? George said he had never known him like it. I mention this in case you would like to add it.”

“[Copy from original document in possession of  
S. P. R. M. F. CLIFTON.]

“August 30, 1896.”

I like a story that has a dog in it, and for this reason, partly, I tell the following:—

I was staying, with a friend and a dog, in a remote island off the west coast of Scotland. The dog is a Dartmoor terrier of unblemished lineage, an excellent sportsman, and of high courage; he once, in defence of his mistress, fought for twenty minutes with a large retriever, and when assistance was at length obtained, and the gardeners came to the rescue, was in a state of high fury at being separated from his antagonist, in spite of the dozen wounds he had received on head and neck, and for long after never saw a big black retriever without bristling with hope that at length the chance of retaliation had come. In short, he is not a coward.

We had walked across the island, one fine August evening, and arrived, about sunset, at the lonely farmhouse where we were to receive a night's hospitality. In front of the house is a long grassy slope stretching down to the sea, at the back is a rocky plain, out of which rises abruptly a small steep knoll, perhaps forty or fifty feet high. The dog trotted happily along till we came within a few yards of the base of this hill, when, for the first and only time in his life, he suddenly turned tail, and fled, in very obvious terror, in the direction from which we had come.

There was absolutely nothing to account for it; not a living thing was in sight; an intense silence brooded over the scene. We pursued the dog and called him back, and at length he reluctantly accompanied us to our destination. We speculated as to the possible interpretation of his conduct, and as to what he could have seen, the idea that he had seen something being the less surprising to us that, only a few days before, we had observed his conduct in relation to a bare rock which he refused to climb, though he sat for some time apparently watchful of something upon it, which appeared greatly to interest him, and which seemed to be in motion, as he changed his place or turned his head from time to time, as if the better to observe its movements.

We passed a cheerful evening. A piper was brought in to play reels and strathspeys, which were danced for our entertainment by the neighbours and farm-servants. It was as pleasant and merry a sight as one could wish, that picturesque dance in the great stone kitchen, and the atmosphere of cordial hospitality and sincere desire to give pleasure, so characteristic of every highland home, soon removed the somewhat eerie sensation with which our visit had begun.

My friend and I and the dog shared a room on the ground-floor, but tired as we were with a very long walk, there was little sleep for us that night. The sounds in the rooms adjoining ours were abundantly sufficient to keep the weariest traveller awake, and "dog-tired" as he was, kept even the terrier on the alert. We at first thought our hosts were guilty of very late hours, an idea which later ripened into some irritation at the amount of noise they made so thoughtlessly in passage and kitchen, pacing up and down and dragging heavy furniture over the bare floor, with the specially unpleasant sound produced by the moving of wood over

stone. As time went on we became really annoyed—we were very tired, and so much noise seemed unnecessary! With the early dawn silence fell upon the house, broken only by the scream of sea-birds as they passed overhead from their home in the cliffs.

We learnt next morning that the entire household slept on the upper floor, had retired to bed at an early hour, and that no one had been restless during the night. We ventured to say something, tentatively, as to the midnight disturbance, but were met with the suggestion that it might be some young men trying to attract the attention of the servants, on their way back from the late story-telling, which is the great evening amusement of the islanders. We received the explanation with politeness, but with some incredulity. Time is an unconsidered trifle in the islands, but even there the most gallant of young men don't go on trying to attract the coy attention of farm wenches for three hours at a stretch.

Later, we learnt from another but very sufficient authority, that such experiences were by no means uncommon in connection with the house in question, and that, though its occupants were anxious to ignore the fact, it had long had the reputation of being "haunted." Gruesome old-time stories of wrecks in the wild bay below, of lights hung out from those very windows to attract passing vessels on to the murderous rocks, and of horrible scenes now willingly forgotten by the descendants of their perpetrators, were held sufficient to account for any possibilities of restless and wandering spirits.

On inspecting the house by daylight (we could not spare another night), I was at once struck by the relation of the knoll already mentioned with the surrounding country, and felt convinced, for reasons I need not now specify, that it was of artificial con-

struction, and in all probability a burying-place of some remote period.

If such were the case, and I were right in my conjecture, there should be the remains, or at least the tradition, of some of the "standing stones," characteristic of the sites of immemorial burying-places. I made many inquiries, but could hear of no one who remembered anything of the kind, till one day, in the purely accidental fashion in which most things of interest turn up, I was casually told that such stones had existed in considerable number, but had been broken up *to build the house of*, to save the trouble of hewing and dressing other stones easily obtainable but a few feet further away.

Even that uninstructed person, the writer of "occult" story books, could hardly fill up the picture of a more gruesome habitation, than a house, built of gravestones, at the foot of the burial mound of an extinct people, wherein lie the whitening bones, or it may be the cinerary urns, or the empty stone coffins, or the bodies bound about with birch bark, of dead men, who, like their successors on the same spot, may have gained their ends in the great struggle for life by cruelty and treachery, which even now, in far other days of week-day labour and Sabbath kirk-going, may perchance keep them far from rest and peace.

As one stands above that little bay in the pageant of such a sunset as is the ever-recurring glory of those grey western islands, looking out over an expanse of water stretching away and away to the shores of the New World, and back to the peaceful little white-washed farm-buildings nestling under the shelter of that grass-grown hill, it is, for the moment, difficult to reconstruct in fancy those fierce old days of the adaptation of man to his environment, or even those, so near to our own times, when all that he had learned from the experience of ages was how most

easily to grasp from hands, dying or dead, such conveniences of life as were necessary to his degree of cultivation, to see once more the heroes of another cycle, or the brutal wreckers of another century.

And what do such stories show? Little beyond our own ignorance and the necessity, if we would know more, of a very careful study of a wide range of well recorded, well attested, well considered material. When we have proved that abnormal sights and sounds do really exist in any given house in which they are alleged, we have not proved that they are super-normal, and the fact that we cannot explain them by no means proves that they are unexplainable. Tales such as these must be either true or false, and before basing any theory upon them, we should be very careful to see that they are wholly true; to subtract for expectation and self-suggestion and mal-observation as carefully as for fraud, conscious or unconscious. My own theory, so far as I have any, being that the phenomenon of so-called "Haunting" is one on which we are all profoundly ignorant, and on which our chief duty at present is to provide evidence more abundant and more varied. I have seen too many "ghosts"—I won't say to believe in them, but most certainly too many to dogmatise about them.

Of all departments of psychic inquiry this is perhaps the oldest, the most widespread, to many the most interesting. We are the heirs of all the ages, and in the chronicles of Egypt and of Assyria, of Greece and Rome, in the Sagas, and in the sacred books of the Hebrews and of the Hindus, in the traditions of Australia and the West Indies, of the Incas and the Vikings, in every village of our own land, in the legends alike of families and of nations, we may read of hauntings, curiously persistent as to the type, strangely appealing in all ages to individual conviction.

We are getting very expert in this *fin de siècle*; expert, above all, in the art of "explaining away." Thought-transference, subconscious activity, hypnotism, modern discoveries, all serve as texts for "explaining away."

But there is a good deal in Mr. Tom Sawyer's theory, at least in relation to a large percentage of apparitions!

"Ghosts, you gander! Why it ain't nothing but air and heat and thirstiness pasted together by a person's imagination!"

## II

### ANOTHER THEORY OF HAUNTINGS

1. The Basis of Belief in Odic Force and Fairies.—2. Philology as Evidence.—3. The Variety of the Fairy Folk.—4. The Ways of Ghosts.—5. And of Fairies.—6. Their Naughtiness.—7. Analogies of Ghosts and Fairies.

1. THERE are few things so good for one's mind as enlargement of notions; prejudice shows want of elasticity, dogmatism shows consciousness of a weak cause. Sir William Crookes has lately given us a charming phrase, he has said he has "a mind to let." It is a pendant to Professor Lodge's dictum about the people who don't believe in Thought Transference, "they are simply ignorant."

It would be a good mental exercise to practice believing—say for an hour at a time—in some harmless delusion such as ——. I could name fifty, but so can every one else, and it is not worth while. Some profane person will probably say Theosophy, or Homœopathy, or the Hanoverian Succession, or the Primrose League, which would of course be absurd as illustrations. We might establish a new society for believing in other people's views, but it would not be quite kind to the other people, they would be so dull, poor things, with no one to contradict them.

Personally, I am going to begin with Odic Force. I propose to study the subject in such detail as is possible—the more willingly that Colonel de Rochas has just collected the evidence for us in the form of a

preface to a new edition of the lectures of Reichenbach.<sup>1</sup> He traces the history of various forms of divination, conceivably the effect of Odic force, and illustrates his thesis with a delightful number of quotations from miscellaneous writers dear to readers of the historical side of "occult" literature. If any one can make Odic force believable, it would be such a writer as this, and if one's subliminal self rebels, and begins to argue about unconscious muscular movement, it must be suppressed. It might be a good plan to take lessons from a barrister in How to believe in the innocence of the criminal for whom he holds a brief. I don't believe he does believe. He must take a mental dose of fern-seed, which makes his subliminal self invisible for the moment, like people who want to see fairies.

But this is not Odic force ; it is much more difficult to believe in Odic force than in fairies.

I wonder if I could believe better out of doors. I'll take Reichenbach and a fur cloak and steal up to the Fairies' Knowe just up the burn side. I must go alone ; I can't believe enough for two yet, and if any one came while I was believing, I should have to argue about it. The dogs can come. They are quite in tune with Odic force. The black Pomeranian is a feather-pate, but she is called Spooks, and a name goes a long way. When she came she was called Snooks, but we changed a single letter in compliment to this house, where such things are so abundant that we call it the Spookeries. The other dog, the Dartmoor terrier, is a seer, and has figured in print before now.

Off they scurry, straight up the hill. It is a fine old garden, and one may wander for an April day without transcending its limits. But this is the

<sup>1</sup> "Les effleuves odiques. Conférences faites en 1866 par le Baron Reichenbach, précédées d'une notice historique sur les effets mécaniques de l'Od." Par Albert de Rochas. Paris.

prettiest bit of all. We leave the tennis-lawns on our left, the upper one just now has a fine fairy-ring—

“A green-sour ringlet, whereof the ewe not bites”—

a big circle of paler green showing on the myrtle of the mossy sward, where the little people dance at night, round and round, and hand in hand, to the fairy music of the burn that tinkles by in a series of tiny cascades. There, under the big elm tree, are some fairy mushrooms, where they “sit out” between the dances; and there are some patches of a kind of grass I never saw before, which the gardener calls “fairy flax.” Just below, the fairy bells will soon be abundant among the stones by the burn side—the stately fox-gloves that toss their bells on the evening air and summon the elves to their merry-making. How one longs to see the “fairy rade,” the procession of little people coming down the brae! Often at sunset here, two shadowy ladies come across the park, and down by the side of another brook much like this at the other end of the avenue. But they are dim and sad, and when they speak their voices are mingled with weeping. I am glad they never come here—here, where all is so merry and gay, and I would rather see fairies than ghosts any night.

Of course, “there are no such things as fairies.” Dear Cousin Cramchild, how can you prove a negative? It is all a question of evidence; but what is the evidence for Odic force? Let us sit down here—no, not on that “fairy butter,” it is a pity to spoil it—and consider the question. I am forgetting about Odic force.

When divining-rods turn, and musical-boxes play themselves, and tables rap, and pendulums mysteriously register your power, and lights appear at your finger-ends, then it is Odic force. It must be, because it can't be anything else; and Reichenbach says so.

Similarly, when daisies close at the touch of tiny wands, and dainty music rises up out of the ground, and little hammers are heard in the hill side, and elf-fires dance about in the hollows, it is fairies. It must be, because it can be nothing else, and all the poets, from Thomas the Rhymer to Mr. Andrew Lang, say so. Who would dare to contradict Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Drayton, and Gawain Douglas, and Ovid, and Herrick, and Chaucer, and Milton, and Pope, and Browne, and Lilly, and Ben Jonson, and Gay, and Wharton, and Collins, and Tennyson, and half the ballads in Percy, and half the music of Wagner, and many a book we love when we are young, which is perhaps the time when we can discern most surely?

I will undertake to say that many more people have seen fairies than have seen Od, and a great many people think nothing is true if they haven't seen it; but that is their fault. If they cannot see, their betters may. For instance, there is that branch wagging meaninglessly, where other branches are still, and there is no wind. No doubt a little fairy is astride it, playing horses. Why else have the tiny tree-creepers, who were gliding in their mysterious acrobatic fashion round that lime tree, suddenly taken fright and flown away? and why won't the chaffinches up there come down for the crumbs of the biscuits I brought out for the dogs? and why has the squirrel, who has been fixing me with eyes like boot-buttons, suddenly lowered his tail ready for flight? What have they all seen that I cannot?

*“Certes it is a faërie, or elles a vanité.”*

No, it is only that scoundrel kitten, who knows I don't want to take him for walks, and always hides under the bushes for the first quarter of a mile, and then turns up to every one's confusion. Now he has gone to torment the dogs. He always wants to stalk every-

thing, and that is no use for rabbit-hunting in broad daylight. He is spoiling their sport and he has spoiled my argument. They are bad sportsmen—the cats!

They are all pointing, the kitten too, though he hasn't a notion why. They have caught sight of the ploughman who is painting a rich brown over the faded fields. He has come to the upper end of a long slanting ridge, and is standing beside his patient horses leaning his arms on one warm grey back, apparently idle. Perhaps he is thinking of his nooning due in half-an-hour's time. He is far from home, and perhaps has forgotten to bring himself a "piece." No matter, he knows how to get a good meal. He is saying aloud three times—

"Fairy, fairy, bake me a bannock and roast me a collop,  
And I'll gie ye a spurtle off my gad-end;"

and when he has done four more furrows it will be ready for him.

It is not a bit of good trying to believe in Odic force to-day. 'Tis the voice of my subliminal consciousness. I hear it complain that it wants to talk about fairies, and circumstances are certainly contributing in the same direction. For anything I know the whole question may be a mere affair of names; and Reichenbach and the poets, and the children, may all be talking about the same thing, only he calls it *Od*, and we call it *Fairies*.

2. There is, however, no apparent philological connection. The word *Od* comes from a Sanskrit root, and means "all penetrating," but I know of no Sanskrit derivation for "fairy." However, there is so wide a choice of roots that one can make the word mean almost anything.

It may be derived from  $\phi\eta\rho$ , a Homeric name for centaurs (*cp.* the German *thier*); or from the last syllable of *nympha* (*cp.* *fay fée*); or from a Hebrew

word, *peër*, to adorn; or from a Saxon word, to fare, to go; or fairy folk may be "fair folk," *i.e.*, pretty folk, with no allusion to returning from fairs, which we repudiate.

Or again, it has been said that fairies came into Europe with the Crusaders, who first knew them as *Peris*, called by the Arabs, *Feri*; the *Fata Morgana*, so well known in romance, is said to have been originally *Merjan Peri*, celebrated in Oriental story.

But if fairies were not known in Europe till the time of the Crusades, what becomes of all the tales of good King Arthur, who belonged to Fairy-land himself, and in whose reign flourished, among other great men, Jack the Giant-killer, and him of the Beanstalk, and Tom Thumb? What of the Elves, and Dwarfs, and Trolls, and Nises, and Mermen, and Maidens, of Scandinavia? What of the Dwarfs of Ireland who have always worn red instead of green like most other little people? What of the Trows of Shetland, and the Kobolds of mid-Europe, and the Pixies of the west of England, and the Boggarts of Yorkshire, and the Brownies and the Kelpies of the north, and the Good People in red and green, and the Leprechauns and the Cluricauns in Ireland, and all the colonies of every sort and kind in Scotland?

Are the Men of Peace, the *daoine shi*, to be relegated to such a day-before-yesterday period as the Crusades? Is the Highlander to be deprived of his birthright of a "lang pedigree," and his fairy to be relegated to a period of history that every University Extension student can get up in a ninepenny manual?

Surely again, it is a mere question of names, and the crusading story only means that when the noble warriors came back, they gave a new name to the old familiar phenomena, just to "show off" that they'd picked up a little Arabic. Spenser gave the word a glorious setting, and we've accepted it as

indigenous ever since. Perhaps, though, it has somewhat even now of a literary smack. I have talked fairy-lore pretty well all over England and Scotland, and except in the Highlands, where English of any quality at all is the English of books, I have nowhere heard the little people called among the peasants "fairies." In the Highlands, as in Spenser, I have heard the word as an adjective; "very fairy" means illusive, *cp.* Chaucer, "Her to behold it seemed faerie," or "It was of faerie as the people seemed."

By the way, the poets often use "fairy" as equivalent to "fairy land." Chaucer gives us

"Though he were come agen out of faërie."

Moreover, one sometimes finds "fairy" used in a generic or collective sense, as we now say "gentry," "cavalry." Drayton gives us

"The feasts that underground, the fairy did him make."

3. But enough of names. Using the word "fairy" as covering the whole ground, one is struck by the great variety of such beings in Europe, even in Great Britain alone. Elves, and Dwarfs, and Trolls, and Nises, and Kobolds, and Pixies, and Brownies, and the Good Neighbours of Ireland, and the Men of Peace of Scotland, are all (as are others not enumerated) diminutive; but I feel less certain about the size of Kelpies; and Mermen and Maidens have been mistaken for human beings. Kelpies, perhaps, are the lineal descendants of Water-nymphs, and belong to mythology rather than to fairy lore; and Mermaids are practically Sirens and need not count. Still they all have something in common, and are differentiated alike from the human and the animal in a sense in which fauns and dryads and satyrs—perhaps in consideration of the tail one ought to add Mermaids—are not.

The more one thinks of it, the more difficult does it become to understand where mythology ends and folk-lore begins. Perhaps one may find a line of demarcation in the super-human and the sub-human. Fairies surely know nothing of Olympus, the knowe on the meadow or on the moor is their sacred mount, and the long grass serves them for forest-glade. They are innocent and childlike, they are the children of Mother Earth rather than of the god Pan, or when they do mischief, and we find them at it in "L'Allegro" and the "Midsummer Night's Dream" and elsewhere, it is mainly of the schoolboy type, and comes of high spirits and an open-air life.

It is curious how impossible it is for us to get clear of our jargon of psychical research. Think of calling these toys of Nature "phenomena," and talking of super and sub in such connection! And yet there is, in our ideas about them, something of anthropomorphic instinct, something cosmic in tendency. If it is the instinct of the human animal to postulate an after-life, to venerate or worship or propitiate an Eternal Being, to believe in and fear some hidden life in the Unseen, it is equally his instinct to believe in fairies. Let the South Sea Islander call them Vuis, and the Buddhist Elementals (or is it only the Theosophist?), and we of Europe any of the names already enumerated, the belief is practically universal both in time and space, and the fairies of every land and age have at least this in common, that they are phenomena of Nature, sub-human, and yet imitative of the human race.

Possibly a reason why, in the Spookeries in which our lot is cast at the moment, one's subliminal consciousness (who is a kind of partner Jorkins) insists on discussing fairies, is that very characteristic of their being *sub-human*.

Keightley who, as all students of "Fairy Mythology" know, is very learned upon the subject, distinguishes

between the fairies of romance who are super-human, and the little beings descended from the dwarfs of Northern Mythology, who are sub-human. There is a story in Hunt's "Popular Romances of the West of England" about the haunting of a house in which the author himself lived, and of which the chief phenomenon was knocking, audible to the entire household. Contrary to the usual rôle in such cases it was the servants who reassured the master, he being merely a "foreigner" while they were local. "Beg pardon, sir," says old Mary, "wherever there is a lode of tin you are sure to hear strange noises. None of the young ladies need be afraid. There are no spirits in the house, it is very nearly a new one, and no one has ever died in the house." The haunters were not post-human, but fairies of the mine, so that sub-human hauntings seem to be recognised in the west.

4. The time has not yet come for discussing the phenomena of the Spookeries,<sup>1</sup> yet in general terms something may be said of the train of thought which is always here with us. The following lines describe the general state of things. The author has never been here, and had heard nothing in detail of the phenomena, so that his "situations" may be taken as mere generalisation, about equal in accuracy to the dialect, of which he is in truth alike innocent. If neither means much, so much the better for our mystery. I quote them without permission.

"Gin a body meet a body grinnin' like a ghaist,  
 Gin a body fear a body, need the hizzie baist?  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane ava hae we :  
 Yet whiles o' night I get a fright  
 At what I canna see !

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<sup>1</sup> Since discussed in *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1897.

Gin a body meet a body moanin' like a wraith,  
 Gin a body grip a body, need she tak' a skaith ?  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane ava hae we :  
 Yet whiles o' night I get a fright  
 At what I canna see !

Gin a body see a body greetin' like a wean,  
 Gin a body ken the body, need she stoik her e'en ?  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane hae we ava :  
 Yet wae is me ! I'm fasht to dree  
 What winna gang awa.

Gin a body meet a body looking like a priest,  
 Need a body squeeze a body in a muckle kist ?  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane ava hae we :  
 Yet whiles o' night I hae a fright  
 At what I canna see !

Gin a body meet a body looking like to dee,  
 Wad the unco' thirling body gar a body gee ?<sup>1</sup>  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane hae we ava :  
 Yet whiles o' nights I wak' wi' frights  
 That winna gang awa.

Gin a body hear a body skirling frae the knowe,  
 Gin a body daur a body, need she hide her pow ?  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane ava hae we :  
 Yet whiles at night I get a fright  
 At what I canna see !

Twixt mirk and light o' ilka night a bogle comes to me,  
 But what her name and whaur her hame I wadna speer to see !  
 Ilka shielin' has a squealin'  
 Nane hae we ava :  
 Yet whiles o' nights I wak' wi' frights  
 That winna gang awa."

Now, though the writer knew nothing about it,  
 so that (by permission of Mr. Podmore) we may

<sup>1</sup> *Cp.* perhaps gee-up, to hasten.

venture to suppose the allusion telepathic, there does stand in the dining-room (the butler keeps the dessert in it), a muckle kist, strong, of carved black oak, said to have once contained the "demd moist body," doubled up, with a knife through it, of the family chaplain, and it is only natural if he walks, reciting his office aloud. The lady, too, who did the knifing, is quite justified in "moanin' like a wraith," and trailing silken skirts about the house. (It is mere hypercriticism to observe, that though on the site of an older one, this house did not exist at the family-chaplain period.)

We have no legend of any ghost that "grips a body," but one of considerable muscular force has been reported to grip at bed-clothes. The poor wretched woman shivering in terror at her husband's probable displeasure at the chaplain's disappearance, would be almost justified in so doing. Then, too, there is a young lady belonging to a certain Religious Order, who more than once has been observed "greeting like a wean," but doubtless somebody, a successor of the family chaplain perhaps, has vexed her.

There is a good deal, too, of "skirling frae the knowe," but that the naturalist of our party attributes to owls, of which, it seems, we have at hand two varieties. It is also true that "'twixt mirk and licht, o' ilka night, a bogle comes to me," and some others. It doesn't seem to do her any particular good, indeed she does not take the smallest notice of us, and we are inclined at times to believe that she was born of self-suggestion, and persists by favour of telepathic infection, though she has been good enough, with some mechanical assistance, to give a detailed account of herself which, on internal evidence, we believe to be exaggerated.

Such are the ways of ghosts. They seem very absurd and useless, but we can get out of that by

saying that what we see and what we hear is no real sight or hearing, but merely post-mortem thought-transference, externalised by the sensitive in fashion visual or audile according to his personal tendency; exactly as he might externalise the telepathic information that I propose to be in town at Easter by stating the fact in automatic writing or by seeing me, in a crystal ball, crossing the park in a hansom. That is how we account for the ways of ghosts when we want to be clever and reasonable, and show our superiority to superstition.

But when we come to many other things which seem absolutely unintelligent, inconsistent, casual, irrelevant, beyond the usual human allowance of such attributes—are we to call these post-human also—to suppose that our ghost is thought-transferring a nightmare? Or are such things sub-human merely? Which brings us back to fairies.

5. If we call fairies “sub-human,” which seems a clumsy sort of word to apply to such dainty sprites, are we not more or less “evening” them with elementals? or, not to appear to hold any brief for any special form of teaching—let us say Vuis? Vui being Melanesian (I believe) for spirits non-incarnate.

I have very vague ideas, beyond this essential point of difference from spirits dis-incarnate, as to what “elementals” are supposed to be, but, so far as one can gather from others more informed, I take them to be in appearance animated gargoyles, grotesque and mischievous rather than hideous and malicious, not to be confounded with the “evil spirit” theory, which appears to suppose for its completeness a degree of evil which can only be post-human.

“The Icelanders solve the problem by saying that one day when Eve was washing her children at the running water, God suddenly called her. She was frightened, and thrust aside such of them as were not

clean. God asked her if all her children were there, and she said, "Yes," but got for answer, that what she tried to hide from God should be hidden from man. These children became instantly invisible and distinct from the rest. Before the flood came on, God put them into a cave and closed up the entrance. From them are descended all the underground people."—*Eddaloere*, by MAGNUSSEN.

The Spriggans, who are mischievous Cornish fairies, are descended from the old giants of Cornwall. They are still very strong, but have been getting smaller and smaller ever since the birth of Christ. The Knockers, who are mining fairies, are descended from the old Jews who used to work the Cornish tin mines, or, according to Charles Kingsley, from those who crucified our Lord.

The old "stone-throwing ghost" is continually cropping up in all parts of the world, but surely anything so unmeaning as his performances are more reasonably (if we talk of reason) ascribed to the sub-human than the super-human? Surely it is an unworthy future for any human soul to look forward to, that of practical joking. Here, in this very place, there are phenomena of almost daily and nightly occurrence of a nature that would bore a schoolboy! At the beginning of his holidays—say on a Sunday afternoon—he is capable of a runaway knock, but what is one to think of a "ghost" that goes on thumping at a door at intervals for twenty years? If the next life is, as one hopes, a period of education, of training, surely it must be sadly ineffective if a wretched ghost can keep up so poor a joke for a whole generation! Even if it be a part of his discipline, like the poor gamblers in "Letters from Hell," who had to go on eternally gambling, there is some unfairness in our having to share it, in his being condemned to make several excellent bedrooms disagreeable, to the inconvenience of his own descendants.

6. Now if, on the other hand, we admit the Vui hypothesis, one can offer no moral nor intellectual objection. The fairies of Shakespeare seem to have occupied themselves a good deal with looking pretty, but we have naughty sprites as well as her Daintiness Queen Mab.

“She comes

In shape no bigger than an agate stone  
 On the forefinger of an Alderman,  
 Drawn with a team of little Atomies  
 Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep :  
 Her waggon spokes made of long spinners' legs ;  
 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers ;  
 The traces, of the smallest spider's web ;  
 The collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams ;  
 Her whip of cricket's bone ; the lash of film ;  
 Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,  
 Not half so big as a round little worm  
 Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid ;  
 Her chariot is an empty hazel nut,  
 Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,  
 Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.”

Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to “The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,” says that the Brownies of Scotland are “freakish and mischievous elves,” and, moreover, that Brownie lurked in the daytime in the remote recesses of old houses, which he delighted to haunt. The bogle, too, delights rather to perplex and frighten mankind than either to serve or seriously to hurt them. Such creatures, he says, were (as some people say of cats) attached rather to places than persons, so that they would, presumably, remain in a house even when it was let to strangers.

The other Scot, Reginald, whom King James VI. is careful to call an Englishman, him of the “Discoverie of Witchcraft,” talks of fairies, whose nature is to “make strange apparitions . . . being like men and women, souldiers, kings, and ladyes, children and horsemen clothed in green,” and that they are given to

"fooling with servants and shepherds in country houses pinching them black and blue." King James I. (and VI.) says there are "many vaine trattles" on the subject of "phairies," which he thinks the very "divell"; partly, no doubt, because he considers they were "rifest in times of Papistrie." The great god Pan, according to Milton and Virgil, and poets generally, died one winter's night when wise men from the East left all their magic lore to follow the beckoning of a certain star, and "the high and mighty Prince James" doubtless considered that after the "Blessed Reformation" not a phairie of all his children should survive.

There is a mischievous Puck who plays pranks on French sailors. He opens the knives in their pockets, sings their hair, ties up the cords that hold the sails, draws up anchors in a calm, and tears in pieces the sails that have been carelessly tied, behaves, in short, rather like the lodging-house cat. We have also Puck, who is a regular Vui.

"I am that merry wanderer of the night ;  
 I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
 When I, a fat and bean-fed horse beguile  
 Neighing in likeness of a filly foal.  
 And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl  
 In very likeness of a roasted crab ;  
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
 And on her withered dew-lap pour the ale."

"Sometimes a horse I'll be, sometimes a hound,  
 A hog, a headless bear, sometimes a fire,  
 And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn."

Puck is evidently the same with the old word "Pouke," the original meaning of which would seem to be "devil," "demon," or "evil spirit." We first meet with it in the "Vision of Piers Ploughman," where it undoubtedly signifies "the grand adversary of God and man." This notion may have arisen from the general naughtiness of Pucks, and their addiction to tricks.

Golding, also, must have understood Pooke in the sense of "devil," when, in the ninth book of his translation of Ovid, he applies it to the Chimæra:—

"The country where chymæra, that same *pooke*,  
Hath goatish body, lion's head and brist, and dragon's taylor."

Spenser, too, employs the word:—

"Ne let house-fires nor lightning's helpless harms,  
Ne let the *pouke* nor other evil sprites,  
Ne let mischievous witches with their charms,  
Ne let *hob-goblins*, names whose sense we see not,  
Fray us with things that be not."

*Epithalamion*, v. 340.

Pooke easily became "Puck" (perhaps also "Pug," with his ugly little black face). In Friesland, the Kobold is called "Puk." The Devonshire fairies are "Pixies," in Cornwall "Piskays"; the Irish have a "Pooka," and the Welsh a "Pwcca." The fungus puff ball is in some places called a "Puck-fist," while the Irish are said to call it "Cos-a-Phooka"—Puck's foot. In Worcestershire, farmers returning home from market are sometimes found next morning rather drowsy, in ditches and bogs, which they describe as being "Poake-ledden," while in Devonshire the same phenomenon is called "Pixy-led." By the way, both Shakespeare and Drayton describe this phenomenon, and their county comes next to Worcestershire.

Burton, talking of being Pixy-led, says the fairies who do it are commonly called Pucks. He is as intolerant as King James, and thinks "none of them better than terrestrial devils."

Well, then, Bogle is in some parts called Puckle, and we call a naughty boy "a little Pickle," and in Scotland we call a sly, artful child "Pawkey," and the Germans call a clown a Pickle-häring." The word Spook is obviously first cousin to Pouke or Puck. In

German it is "spuk," in Swedish, "spöke," in Danish, "spöge." Philology will prove anything, from the origin of nations down to spirit-identity. Why, therefore, should not this lovely spot (may Puck and Bogle flourish!) be called, so far as many of its phenomena are concerned, not the Spookeries but the Puckerics? I dare not take liberties with Melanesian, nor coin a word from Vui.

A little wretch like that is quite capable of various of the freaks which are giving us all sorts of trouble—of pretending to rustle about in silken skirts, or to walk with a gouty foot overhead in locked-up rooms, or to fall with heavy thuds against doors ajar and not burst them open, or to read aloud in the dead of night, or to play bowls in the hall at two o'clock in the morning; but what fun could this be to the meanest soul disincarnate, even by telepathic deputy?

The sub-human creatures have their own notions of a joke. There is one going on overhead now. I've watched it for days, and it never palls on its perpetrator. A squirrel—a pair, probably—have their home in a tall pine-tree overhead. They made themselves a sort of little platform just where a big branch joins the trunk. Then came St. Valentine's Day, and the rooks got married in thousands. One pair, prospecting for a desirable site, came flying about this tree, calling "Maud, Maud, Maud," like Tennyson's birds in the high Hall Garden. They swooped down on the little platform and called, "Two sticks across and a little bit of moss. It'll do, It'll do, It'll do," and when the squirrel objected, they fetched several hundred relatives, who all quoted Tennyson at the same time. I watched them through opera-glasses. They demolished the little platform, and made a great untidy nest, with as much fuss as if they'd just retired from business and were building a villa in the suburbs. Whenever both go out to lunch at the same time, the squirrel races up

and pulls out some of their sticks and breaks them into little bits, and now, on a lower branch, there is quite a litter of his leaving. They come back very cross, but the squirrel can get to the underside of the big branches and they can't, so he laughs and eats beech-nuts, and doesn't care a bit. This is *his* joke. He is scuttering down now, and the dogs are barking at him from below, which is their joke. That infamous kitten is rushing up the trunk. I won't have the squirrel chivied, that is beyond a joke.

Even the solemn Milton made his fairies naughty and troublesome. The "lubber fiend" in "L'Allegro" was quite a Vui. The lady who "was pulled and pinched, she said," never, so far as we know, considered the house haunted in consequence. She knew it was a Vui. Many of the sights and sounds with which we are familiar are just what are made by fairies. Waldron (whom Scott describes as a scholar and a gentleman) in his description of the "Isle of Man" (p. 138), says:—

"As to circles in the grass, and the impression of small feet among the snow, I cannot deny but I have seen them frequently, and once I thought I heard a whistle, as though in my ear, when nobody that could make it was near me." The author of "Round about our Coal Fire" (p. 42) writes:—

"When the master and the mistress were laid on their pillows, the men and maids, if they had a game at romps and blundered upstairs, or jumbled a chair, the next morning every one would swear 'twas the fairies, and that they heard them stamping up and down stairs all night, crying: 'Waters lock'd, waters lock'd,' when there was not water in every pail in the kitchen."

I can remember quite well, as a child, being once in the kitchen, when a strange noise of scratching occurred in the deep ash-pit under the grate, which,

as is the north-country custom, was cleared out only when full. The cook's notion of dispersing the mystery was to rush outside with a bowl of milk which she had that evening "forgotten to put out for the boggart."

In the Vale of York I used to stay in an old country house that was noisily haunted by a "bar-geist," who had a liking for ringing bells at odd times in the dead of night. We children had a philological theory that he was a "boy-ghost," and knowing more of the nature of boys than of ghosts, and having witnessed some comic scenes consequent on his little games, we thought his conduct quite natural. We knew where he lived, near a well in the cellar, and he once materialised in the bath in the form of a newt, to our great joy. We kept him for weeks, but one day, having been taken out into the garden to sun himself, he vanished, while we were occupied with "Balbus" who "was building a wall," leaving behind him a primary personality in the form of an empty skin.

Sir Walter Scott tells us that the bar-geist, or barguest, is the north of England equivalent for Puck and Brownie, and Shellycoat, who of course lives in the water, and that they are all naughty and ill-behaved on occasion, though Brownie is the best of them. At night, if he is well treated, he does what the Americans call "chores," which may account for the sounds of moving furniture, and dragging packages, so common in haunted houses.

When our psychic dog sees a ghost he is silent and observant, also a trifle depressed, but when it is only "phenomena" non-externalised, he barks and growls, and we know that dogs do bark at Vuis. In a note in Grimm (*Deut. Mythol.*, p. 426) there is a story of a man who was going alone with his dog among the hills, and came upon a hill-smith (the normal Scandinavian Vui) at work, using a stone as an anvil. "He had on him

a light grey suit and a black woollen hat. The dog began to bark at him, but he put on so menacing an attitude that they both deemed it advisable to go away." Richardson (in his "Table Book," iii. 45) tells us that he knew an old man whose dog had *pointed* a troop of fairies, and, though he could not see them, he plainly heard their music, sounding like a fiddle or a very small pair of pipes.

Cardan, quoted by Burton, describes the phenomena of the Spookeries as well as if he had stayed with us for weeks. He says there are fairies called by the Italians "foliots," who frequent "forlorn houses." "They will make strange noises in the night, howl sometimes pitifully, and then laugh again, cause great flames, and sudden lights, fling stones, rattle chains, shave men, open doors and shut them, fling down platters, stools, chests, sometimes appear in the likeness of hares, crows, black dogs, &c." Of which read Pet. Thryæus the Jesuit (in his Tract *de locis infestis*; part 1, et cap. 4), who will have them to be "devils, or the souls of damned men that seek revenge, or else souls out of Purgatory that seek ease."

No one in this house has been shaved that I know of, though some have had their hair lifted. Some of our visitors can testify to sudden lights and mysteriously opened doors, and the appearance of a black dog, a dear little "King Charles."

In an island of the Hebrides where are many fairies, so many that I dare not begin to talk of them now, I have been in a cave which leads you away and away under the hills, to the other side of the island. We knew there was no exit, and we did not venture far, for we knew also the story of the piper who went in with his dog and who can still be heard under the cliffs, far away, piping for the fairy dancers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is an interesting intermediate class of them in popular tradition. The Hill-people (Högfolk), are believed to dwell in caves and

Among the hills in Nether Lochaber, are three or four places where, any summer's day, you may put your ear to the ground and hear the fairy-music, and if you are so materialistic as to say it is the tinkling of underground water, may you never have so undeserved a privilege again.

Our Vuis are reported to have now and then played upon the drawing-room piano, which is quite consistent with their customs.

Aubrey tells a story which reads like an S. P. R. report. "Anno 1670, not far from Cirencester was an apparition; being demanded whether a good spirit or a bad, returned no answer, but disappeared with a curious perfume and most melodious twang." He adds, with an S. P. R.-like craving for distribution of responsibility, "Mr. W. Lilly believes it was a fairy." We have melodious twangs, and in one room at least, a strange perfume.

7. There are several reasons why Vuis should at times be mistaken for ghosts. There are two facts common to both. One is that they both occasionally dress in white, and the other that a veridical vision of either is not necessarily collective, *i.e.*, I may see both spooks and pucks, both ghosts and fairies, when you, poor afflicted child of earth, see neither.

Of course the proper dress for fairies is green. Every one knows that. Nevertheless, some who know no better, mainly, it is said, resident in Norfolk, do wear white. Trolls, I gather from a bottle stopper

small hills; when they show themselves they have a handsome human form. The common people seem to connect with them a deep feeling of melancholy, as if bewailing a half-quenched hope of redemption.

Afzelius is of opinion that this notion respecting the Hill-people is derived from the time of the introduction of Christianity into the north, and expresses the sympathy of the first converts with their forefathers, who had died without a knowledge of the Redeemer, and lay buried in heathen earth, and whose unhappy spirits were doomed to wander about these lower regions, or sigh within their mounds till the great day of redemption.—"Fairy Mythology," p. 79. KNIGHTLEY.

carved in the Black Forest, may wear a red cap, and Shakespeare's fairies wear anything that occurs to them.

In the Highlands I heard of fairies; they live in a green hillock in the Island next America (were I not here, would I were there, this sunny April day!), who wore blue, to my perplexity, but I find that green is sometimes by a euphism called "blue" for reasons which are interesting to folk-lore, and not to be discussed here and now.

An Ogilvie in green, must never be seen, nor a Graham, nor the men of Caithness, but in the case of the Caithness men it is because they wore it on Flodden's fatal day, and not because of the wee fair folk.

Sir Walter Scott says, that "on the moors they have been sometimes observed in heath brown or in weeds dyed with the stone-raw or lichen," and he reminds us of "the elfin grey."<sup>1</sup> The lichen dye or

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Sinclair, in his "Statistical Account of Scotland," 1792, iv., 560, says: "A belief in fairies prevailed very much in the Highlands of old; nor at this day is it quite obliterated. A small conical hill, called Sten, was assigned them for a dwelling, from which melodious music was frequently heard, and gleams of light seen on dark nights."

"In the autumnal season, when the moon shines from a serene sky, often is the wayfaring traveller arrested by the music of the hills, more melodious than the strains of Orpheus. Often struck with a more solemn scene, he beholds the visionary hunters engaged in the chase, and pursuing the deer of the clouds, while the hollow rocks in long-sounding echoes reverberate their cries. There are several now living who assert that they have seen and heard this aerial hunting and that they have been suddenly surrounded by visionary forms, and assailed by a multitude of voices." (*Ibid.* xii., 461.)

"Sith-bhreog, the same as sigh-brog, a fairy; hence bean-sighe, plural mna-sighe, women fairies; credulously supposed by the common people to be so affected to certain families that they are heard to sing mournful lamentations about their houses by night, whenever any of the family labours under a sickness which is to end by death: but no families which are not of an ancient and noble stock" (of Oriental extraction, he should have said) "are believed to be honoured with this fairy privilege."—*Note in O'Brien's Dictionary, Hib.*

"My grandmother has often told me of fairies dancing upon our

crottle is still well known in the Highlands, and no better dye exists.

Not only at this day in Norfolk, which might argue degeneracy, but in the "Sad Shepherd" they wear white.

"There in the stocks of trees white fays do dwell,  
And span-long elves that dance about a pool  
With each a little changeling in their arma."

The trees were lime-trees, of course, though the poet does not specify. I wish I had time to talk about changelings. I know a number of first hand, collective, veridical, well-attested stories about them. *And I know the spell to counteract the change.* I tried it once on a baby, but it didn't work, which of course was the baby's fault. It was an ugly cross little thing ever since the day when —. Before that, its grandfather told me, "it was a very ceevil child."

There are perhaps no traditions more vivid or of more recent evidence as to fairies, than one finds in the Highlands. There is no phenomenon of Puck-

green, and that they were little creatures clothed *in green*.—"Round about our Coal Fire," p. 42.

"The Brownie was a very obliging spirit, who used to come into houses by night, and, for a dish of cream, to perform lustily any piece of work that might remain to be done; sometimes he would work, and sometimes eat till he bursted; if old clothes were laid out for him, he took them in great distress, and never more returned."—Heron's "Journey through Part of Scotland," 1799, ii., p. 227.

There is an account of Oberon's clothing in Poole's "English Parnassus," too long to quote.

"Notwithstanding the progressive increase of knowledge, and proportional decay of superstition in the Highlands, these genii are still supposed by many of the people to exist in the woods and sequestered valleys of the mountains, where they frequently appear to the lonely traveller, clothed *in green*, with dishevelled hair floating over their shoulders, and with faces more blooming than the vermil blush of a summer morning."—"Statistical Account of Scotland: Sir John Sinclair," 1792, iv., p. 462.

"A Pück," says Grimm, "once served in a convent in Mecklenburg, for thirty years, in kitchen and stable, and the only reward he asked was 'tunicam de diversis coloribus et tintinnabulis plenam.'"

like spooks which one may not find there. Martin tells us of some beliefs of the inhabitants of his time, which illustrate so many points under discussion that it is worth while perhaps to quote them:—

“In this island of Lewis there was an ancient custom to make a fiery circle about the houses, corn, and cattle, &c., belonging to each particular family. A man carried fire in his right hand, and went round, and it was called *dessil*, from the right hand, which, in the ancient language, is called *dess* (pronounced *jess*). There is another way of the *dessil*, or carrying fire round about women before they are churched, and about children before they are christened, both of which are performed in the morning and at night. They told me that this fire round was an effectual means to preserve both the mother and child from the power of the evil spirits, who are ready at such times to do mischief, and sometimes carry away the infants, and return them poor, meagre skeletons; and these infants are said to have voracious appetites, constantly craving for meat. In this case it was usual for those who believed that their children were thus taken away to dig a grave in the fields upon quarter-day, and there to lay the fairy skeleton till next morning, at which time the parents went to the place, where they doubted not to find their own child instead of the skeleton.”—Martin’s “Western Islands,” p. 116.

Again, speaking of the Shetland Isles, Martin says:—

“It is not long since every family of any considerable substance in those islands was haunted by a spirit they called *Brownie*, which did several sorts of work; and this was the reason why they gave him offerings of the various products of the place. Thus some, when they churned their milk or brewed, poured some milk and wort through the hole of a stone called

Brownny's stone." Ibid., p. 334, he says: "A spirit, by the country people called Brownny, was frequently seen in all the most considerable families in these isles and north of Scotland, in the shape of a tall man; but within these twenty or thirty years past he is seen but rarely. There were spirits also that appeared in the shape of women, horses, swine, cats, and some like fiery balls, which would follow men in the fields; but there have been but few instances of these for forty years past. These spirits used to form sounds in the air, resembling those of a harp, pipe, crowing of a cock, and of the grinding of querns, and sometimes they thrice heard voices in the air by night, singing Irish [*i.e.* Gaelic, or as Dr. Johnson called it 'Erse'] songs; the words of which songs some of my acquaintance still retain. One of them resembled the voice of a woman who had died some time before, and the song related to her state in the other world. These accounts I had from persons of as great integrity as any are in the world." Speaking of three chapels in the Island of Valay, he says: "Below the chapels there is a flat thin stone, called *Brownny's Stone*, upon which the ancient inhabitants offered a cow's milk every Sunday, but this custom is now quite abolished." —Ibid., 391.

There is no need to dwell upon the absence of collective evidence, in regard either to Pucks or Spooks. If every one present saw them at the same time, we should say they were "mere matter"; as this rarely happens, the critic says they are "no matter." After all, it doesn't matter. It is the critic's loss. The same holds good in all matters of Second Sight. There is a queer story, something like that Mr. Lang has republished for us about the Rev. Mr. Kirk, which illustrates this point. I could quote fifty, but select this as the most reputable. No one but the Robert Elsmere of *Psychical Research* would dispute a letter to a bishop.

“An account of Anne Jefferies, now living in the county of Cornwall, who was fed for six months by a small sort of airy people called fairies; and of the strange and wonderful cures she performed with salves and medicines she received from them, for which she never took one penny of her patients. In a letter from Moses Pitt to the right reverend father in God Dr. Edward Fowler, Lord Bishop of Gloucester. London, printed for Richard Cumberland, 1696.” Morgan tells us that the copy from which he reprinted it had, at the bottom of its title page, this N.B. in manuscript: “Recommended by the Right Rev. to his friend Mrs. Eliz. Rye.” He means, no doubt, the above Bishop of Gloucester, who, it should seem, had tacked to his creed this article of belief in fairies. This tract states that “Anne Jefferies (for that was her maiden name), was born in the parish of St. Teath, in the county of Cornwall, in December 1626, and is still living 1696, aged 70. She is married to one William Warren, formerly hind to the late eminent physician, Dr. Richard Lower, deceased, and now to Sir Andrew Slanning, of Devon, Bart.” That A.D. 1645, as she was one day sitting in an arbour in the garden, there came over the hedge, of a sudden, six persons of a small stature, all clothed in green, which frightened her so much as to throw her into a great sickness. They continued their appearance to her, never less than two at a time, nor never more than eight, always in even numbers, two, four, six, eight. “She forsook eating our victuals,” continues the narrator, in whose family she lived as a servant, “and was fed by these fairies from the harvest time to the next Christmas day, upon which day she came to our table and said, because it was that day she would eat some roast beef with us, when she did, I myself being then at table. One day she gave me a piece of her (fairy) bread, which I did eat, and think it was the most

delicious bread that ever I did eat, either before or since. One day, these fairies gave my sister Mary a silver cup, which held about a quart, bidding her give it my mother, but my mother would not accept it. I presume this was the time my sister owns she *saw* the fairies. I confess to your lordship I never did see them. I have seen Anne in the orchard dancing among the trees; and she told me she was then dancing with the fairies."

It is odd they should always come in even numbers. *Numere Deus impare gaudet.*

But one might as well begin to talk of Universal History as to exhaust what can be said of these gay irresponsible little beings, even in this one aspect of schoolboy pranks.

Here on the fairies' knowe I look down on a fertile valley with a glorious river of sporting renown gleaming like silver at the foot of the opposite hills. The hills themselves are of royal purple, and they stand out clear against the bluest of April skies. Far away to the west, snow-covered mountains rise, dazzling against the blue; elms and birches are veiled in tenderest green; near by, hundreds of golden daffodils dance even for me and the dogs, as they danced long ago for Wordsworth and Dorothy. A few late snowdrops and crocuses show white and purple in the shadow of the pines, and I know that at the foot of the bank fragrant violets are hiding among their cool dark leaves.

Beast and bird are at their gayest. Just now a golden mist filled the air for a moment, a flock of yellow-ammers on their way to the rickyard. The rabbits are frisking gaily, despite the dogs, for they know of a certain quarrel I have had as to traps, and other unsportsmanlike methods, and they know who won the day. Rhododendrons and azaleas gleam in crimson and gold on the slope above me, and the sun is so hot that the kitten is stretching himself full

length on the gravel, making a little gridiron of his outline with legs and tail outstretched.

With wide green lawns around, and cheerful sunlight all about it, stands a substantial roomy house, not more than a century old. It is, above all else, comfortable and home-like, and for us it has been a scene of hospitality and good cheer, mental and physical. We have had good talk and good company, and books, and music, and pleasant friendships, and Gloire de Dijon roses, and good fires, and kindness from man and beast, and the days have sped quickly and happily away. It seems but yesterday we glided over the snow in swift toboggans, and now I am writing on the self-same hill in glorious sunshine.

And yet, it has seemed, when we let our fancy stray, that we now and then caught a glimpse of another world than ours, of mysteries dim and faded, of passions weary with despair, of a cold grief-laden air which struck a chill into the hearts of all. Only a few minutes' walk from here lies another glen, such as this in outline, where, alike in snowy dusk and rosy sunset, we may look each night on the sad grey shadow of an old-time human sorrow.

But here, to-day, in the sunshine, such things are hard to remember, and the fairy world seems nearer at hand than the land of shades.

Has the ploughman finished that fourth furrow, I wonder? and are his collops ready? Come along, little dogs, let us go in to luncheon. "*I am half sick of shadows,*" said the Lady of Shalott.

### III

## ON THE FACULTY OF CRYSTAL-GAZING

1. How to Begin.—2. Unconscious Observation.—3. Unconscious Reception.—4. Possible Clairvoyance.—5. Another Hypothesis.—6. Earlier Theories and Experiments.—7. Recent Experiment.

THE art of crystal-gazing, though it has been practised among all the most highly-civilised nations of the world for the last three thousand years, is yet in its infancy. It is an art to which no corresponding science has as yet been assigned. As yet we do not know whether psychology or physiology, or physics pure and simple, shall dictate the laws of our investigation and pronounce judgment on the successes we achieve. All that we can do is to continue to experiment, and inquire, and record, and hope that by comparison of results some law may in time be evolved. The days when crystal-gazing flourished, either as a religion in Egypt, Greece, or Rome, a philosophy in the Middle Ages, or a part of state-craft in the courts of Catherine de Medici and James I., were not days, as ours are, for asking *why* and *how*.

Even now, the aspect of the question which appears to be of greatest common interest is the personal one. One is invariably met by two questions—"How did *you* begin?" and "How can *I* begin?" I will therefore risk the charge of egotism by answering the first, in order that I may lead up to the other, which, not only to the inquirer, but to all interested in the subject, is of supreme importance, for it is only by the accumu-

lation and comparison of evidence that any general conclusions can be obtained.

It was my privilege when a child in the school-room to spend an occasional half-holiday in very good company. The Carlyles were there, and lively little Miss Jewsbury, and many others whom I would fain remember and whom I should better appreciate in these latter days, for, in sooth, I then thought them all noisy and mostly shrill, and as the Sunday afternoon wore away in talk which I but little understood, the chances dwindled of my being taken to hear the music of St. Mark's, Chelsea, and, after all, I liked that best.

One lucky day I too became a person of interest. I had lately acquired—out of the hoards of a great-aunt—a ring which I wore, and still possess, with some pride. It is, in truth, not much to look at—a little gold snake with some chipped blue enamel and a queerly-shaped head, but it met the eye of some antiquarian present, who produced quite a sensation by the exclamation: “Bless my life, the child's got a Borgia ring!”

Collectors are proverbially unprincipled, and, defenceless as I was, I consider the fact that the ring remains in my possession as one of the finest victories of a chequered career.

Threats I did not mind. “I should die in three days.” I had already worn it a week. “Well, then, in three times three; perhaps the poison was becoming attenuated.” In that case, I should have till Tuesday, and to-morrow I could take it off. “I might cause the death of my dearest friend.” I had not got a dearest friend.

Coaxing was equally ineffective, and bribery I treated with contempt. The ring was a keepsake, and I meant to keep it. At last—the suggestion came, I think, from Miss Jewsbury—some one said: “Perhaps she would like the crystal.”

The crystal was accordingly brought ; it was apparently a piece of glass about the size and shape of a hen's egg, and I did not feel in any degree dazzled by the prospect of possessing it. "Look at this," said the Collector. "This is a most curious and beautiful thing. If you look in it every day at the right time you can see pictures in it, not just ordinary pictures such as you see in a book, but real live things, children, and cats, and dogs, and flowers. You will get tired of your ring, but this will be always fresh and new. Look, it is full of soldiers in red coats."

Modern science would have called his speech "suggestion ;" the Recording Angel, I am inclined to believe, wrote it down a lie. The suggestion did its work ; there were the soldiers sure enough, just as I had seen them relieve guard at Buckingham Palace that morning ; there was the noble black charger with the white star and the beautiful kind eyes, standing by the sentry-box in which a kitten lay curled up asleep, and there the whole moving glory of scarlet coat, and white sheep-skin, and shining accoutrements, vague and dazzling to my unaccustomed eyes, as but three hours before. I exclaimed in pleasure and surprise, and the fate of my ring would have been sealed, but for the quickly following sense of a certain something, an intangible barrier separating, excluding, which only the experience of life can translate into terms of definite thought—the sensation of being measured by the limitations of others, and of being found false in the balances. I would keep my little ring, at least it would have no associations of blame for falsehood or for folly, and I went home with a sensation of victory. Had I known it, I had even something of the spoils of war : I had gained the knowledge that I possessed the faculty of crystal-gazing.

It did not occur to me then, as it well might have done to any more experienced person, that my newly

discovered power was but another form of a long familiar pleasure. Far away in the north, I used to climb from rock to rock till I reached a deep part of a moorland tarn, and then, gently passing my alpenstock back and forth in the water, I attained the sound and sensation of a moving boat, while, gazing into the clear brown depths below, I saw endless pictures of the lands to which I was sailing, interrupted now and then by water-maidens with wreathed heads and beckoning hands.

It was not till some years later that I was again interested in the crystal. Mr. Myers, of the Society for Psychical Research, put one into my hands, asking whether I had ever experimented with anything of the kind. Some pictures, unimportant as to their subject, soon presented themselves, and I was allowed to borrow the crystal for further experiment. For more than a year I gave the subject my most serious attention, carefully recording all experiences, and studying in the British Museum and elsewhere all literature, ancient and modern, which I could find bearing upon the subject. It may be interesting to remark that though much has been said and written about the crystal during the last three years, it was, at the time of which I speak, 1889, a somewhat difficult subject to investigate, as the very small amount of modern literature bearing upon it did so indirectly and incidentally only, and treated it rather as an effete superstition than a matter of present interest. A brief summary of my labours may be found in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," Part xiv., May 1889, and may serve to lighten the task of others wishing to study in the same direction.

In the years that have since intervened, during which I have made some hundreds of experiments with ever new purposes, and in ever fresh directions, I have seen little reason to modify my earliest con-

clusions so far as they go. I have found their possibilities of extension and inclusion greater than I supposed; though I would never for one moment desire to impose my views upon others, who have been led by thought and personal experiment to other conclusions. At present we know far too little about psychical or even, if as I hold, these be such, psychological phenomena, to dogmatise with even that moderate degree of safety which ordinarily attends dogmatism. But before discussing the nature and method of crystal-gazing, I will proceed to the second question—How can you begin?

Nothing is easier. Look about your room for any article having a polished surface suggestive of depth—something you can look not only at, but into; the back of a Japanese tea-tray, a glass ball of any kind, the stem of a glass vase without ornament or cutting, a plain glass bottle of ink, a tumbler of water—take any one of these, sit down in a shady corner, arrange the object so as to guard against reflections (a dark silk handkerchief is very useful for this purpose), and look into it quietly. Do not stare or inconvenience yourself in any way; if you are alone, so much the better, but if people are talking in the room they will not interfere with you, and indeed may possibly serve as stimulus and suggestion. If after a few minutes nothing happens, put your reflector away, and try again another time with any variation that may occur to you, changing your crystal perhaps, or experimenting earlier or later in the day, or in a different room, and do not be discouraged if you have no success for a long time. I have myself lost the power of crystal-gazing at times for weeks together, at others I cannot look steadily into any reflecting surface without seeing a picture of some kind. Indeed I have all my life seen pictures and visions without any crystals at all, but then I am an exceedingly good visualiser; which brings us to another point.

When friends consult me as to the probabilities in their favour, I ask them some such questions as these:—"Was King Alfred sitting to the right or left of the hearth the day he burnt the cakes? What was the breed of Mother Hubbard's dog? Was Miranda dark or fair? What colour was the cloak St. Paul left at Troas?—in short, are you a good visualiser? Do you make pictures of everything you think of or read about? When you remember places or circumstances do you *see* them? When you state that 'any two sides of a triangle are greater than the third,' do you feel conscious that there is a difference of kind between this statement and the fact that 'seven times nine are sixty-three,' that the one having an association with a definite form creates a picture in your mind, while the other is no more æsthetic than Bradshaw?"

If such questions are meaningless to you, if they do not produce an immediate and ready affirmative, then, so far as my experience goes, to attempt crystal-gazing is for you sheer waste of time.

Many theories have been offered to explain the phenomenon of crystal-vision. Psychologists of the Nancy School regard it as being the result of Suggestion. To suggest to a patient that he should see a picture in the crystal is a favourite experiment of hypnotisers, but a success in experiment of this kind by no means proves that the patient, in his normal state, is a crystal-gazer. Hypnotised patients may be made to see anything anywhere. As to the theory of self-suggestion, I think it probably comes very near the truth, as I hope soon to show, only that, in a great number of cases, I believe the suggestion is made, not by one's normal but by one's sub-conscious self. I can see no reason to suppose the necessity for self-hypnotism, and can only say for myself that I can see pictures when in my most wide-awake condition, at the dinner-table, while walking, talking, or carrying

on a lively discussion, playing the piano, or calculating accounts.

Another theory is that which may be found discussed in the works of MM. Binet and Féré, that the pictures seen are really a development of some real *point de repère*, some speck or shade or reflection in the crystal itself. I think this is probably very often the case, and for this reason, if it be desired to guard against such origin, let the crystal be a good one, perfectly clean and without flaws, and, as I have already said, the seer should guard against reflection as far as possible.

At the same time I cannot see why, for ordinary purposes, the nucleus of your picture should not be some slight reflection or speck in the ball, just as the pictures one sees in the fire are suggested by the outline of the glowing coals. There are special circumstances, such as those of experimenting as to the objectivity of the pictures when *points de repère* may cause inconvenience.

Mr. Myers again, counts crystal-gazing as a form of automatism, a means by which the sub-conscious self may send messages to the conscious self. I cannot see, however, how the theory of automatism can cover the whole field of crystal-gazing experience. I could lay my hand at this present moment on twenty crystal-gazers, three-fourths of whom, by their own showing, know no more of psychical phenomena than they do of Hindustani. If I understand Mr. Myers rightly, he would classify all crystal-gazing among automatisms, and, in his own words, "automatisms are message-bearing or nunciative, inasmuch as they present themselves to us as messages communicated from one stratum to another stratum of the same personality." I think that a great deal of crystal-gazing may be explained as the effect of a high degree of visualising power, producing imaginary or memory pictures, often,

but not necessarily, growing out of some *point de repère*, and having a greater or lesser degree of persistence, according as the mind can be fixed upon them, or, perhaps, according to the degree of exercise of self-suggestion.

Not that I would be understood to depreciate the value of the faculty as such, and, indeed, I would gladly stimulate every possible seer to its practice. The many psychological problems which it offers for our solution are of the very highest importance. Take the question of *memory*, for example. If it be true, as I myself believe, that we "dis-remember" rather than forget, it is well to cultivate all possible means of utilising our hoarded treasure. For example, I have forgotten the day of the month. I read *The Times* this morning, and I chance to remember that the first name in the births was Robinson. My power of visualisation enables me to create in the crystal a picture of the top of the first column, my memory helped by this association does the rest. I carry my eye along and see that the date is September 6.

Or again, my books have been re-arranged during my absence. I remember that, in a certain case, Tennyson stands on the top and some American authors on the third shelf; how was the middle one filled? The crystal picture is there in a moment, so rapid are the processes of memory and association. In the instant, as the picture forms itself, the familiar little olive green volumes of the Golden Treasury series take their place, and my question is answered.

In the same way the crystal will supply a lost address, a number, the whereabouts of some article one has laid down and forgotten. Such things are all very interesting, but, once granted a strong power of visualisation and the operations of memory and association, they contain no element of the psychical or the supernatural.

The crystal is also a powerful stimulus to the

*imagination.* If I am writing a story and it will not get on, I put my characters into the crystal and let them work out their own fates. They will go on for any length of time, especially if for crystal I use the open lid of the piano and play to them the while. All my favourite music has its illustrations which a very few notes suffice to evoke. Many crystal-gazers claim to be "psychics" because they can see pictures of persons and places unknown to them. It is, to any one with any power of fancy whatever, the easiest of all varieties of crystal pictures—supposing naturally that these pictures have no coincidence, for coincidence would suggest that they are clairvoyant, or at least telepathic. But of these more hereafter.

I venture to think that the mere fancy picture and the mere memory picture, such as mine of the Buckingham Palace soldiers, are the most elementary phenomena of crystal-gazing, and when I find at any time that the crystal can do nothing for me better than that, I conclude that I am tired, or too much pre-occupied, and put it away. One can remember commonplace events and build castles in the air without the intervention of a crystal.

Another reason why, as I think, all crystal seers should cultivate their faculty, is that it may possibly provide a means of expression for psychic powers hitherto dumb or unsuspected. I do not think that crystal-gazing, any more than hypnotism or automatic-writing, can create psychic power, whatever psychic power may be, but there are many instances in which such powers have remained dormant till accident revealed the special means of expression best suited to their possessor.

It by no means follows that the Sensitive will be able to see in the crystal, any more than that a crystal seer will become sensitive, but those who have the power of externalising information unconsciously received either

by the latent or sub-conscious memory, or by means of thought-transference from others, or possibly by clairvoyance, are very likely to find, in the crystal, a convenient vehicle for bringing to the surface what might otherwise never rise from the unconscious stratum into which it had been received, or to which it had sunk.

I shall be able to make this clearer by division into three heads. The pictures thus seen in the crystal may be:—

(1) Images of something unconsciously observed. Of those consciously observed and remembered I have already spoken.

(2) Images of ideas unconsciously acquired from others, by thought-transference, or other means.

(3) Images possibly clairvoyant or prophetic. It should, however, be carefully noted that many which are made to fall under this heading may possibly be capable of classification under (1) or (2).

#### I.—UNCONSCIOUS OBSERVATION

I think that most of us must be aware that we really observe more than we consciously register in our memories, a fact which is brought home to us constantly in a perfectly commonplace way. Perhaps some one asks if we have seen a certain building, or read of a certain event, and we profess entire ignorance of either. When, however, a description is offered us, some chance word or small detail arouses a train of association, and the whole scene or circumstance is recalled. "We saw it without particularly noticing."

Now, it is just the things that we see without noticing *at all* which the crystal is calculated to bring to our attention. I have myself seen in the crystal over and over again pictures of scenes, or of written words, as to which I could conscientiously have sworn in a court of law I knew previously nothing whatever.

But when I find that they relate to some subject which was discussed in my presence when I was absorbed in a book, or described in a newspaper, some other articles in which I am conscious of having read, or portrayed in a picture hanging on the wall of a room I must have entered, then I feel sure that, difficult as it is to realise the fact, I have made better use of my time than in my most conscientious moments I had intended.

One example of this has been often quoted, but I risk its repetition as a good instance of what I mean.

It had been suggested to me to try to see *words* in the crystal, a phenomenon very familiar to me now, but of which I then knew nothing. I was staying away from home, and one morning early, being unable to sleep, took up the crystal to occupy the time. I soon saw, as if in a cutting from *The Times*, the announcement of the death of a lady, intimate with near friends of my own, and which I should certainly have regarded as an event of interest and consequence under whatever circumstances communicated. The announcement gave every detail of place, name, and date, with the additional statement that it was after a period of prolonged suffering. I had heard nothing of the lady—resident in America—for some months, and was quite willing to suppose the communication prophetic or clairvoyant. Of this flattering notion I was soon disabused. An examination of the paper of the day before soon showed that the advertisement was there, just as I had seen it in the crystal, and though at first I was inclined to protest that I had “never looked at yesterday’s paper,” I presently remembered that I had in fact handled it, using it as a screen to shade my face from the fire, while talking with a friend in the afternoon. If any one likes to say that I could not have read and remembered an announcement of strong personal interest without being aware of it, I can only pledge myself to the absolute truth of the

story, and leave the explanation to those of wider experience than mine. I may add the fact that we have since discovered that the lady in question is alive and well, and that the announcement related to some one else of the same name, by no means a common one. I think this detail is of interest, as excluding the hypothesis of thought-transference from some one else already in possession of the news.

It is, indeed, often difficult to draw the line between the two classes, of unconscious information that we have ourselves acquired, and that communicated to us by others. I often amuse myself by trying to read in any improvised "crystal" at hand, the names, if unknown to me, of the persons I meet. I suppose many people have theories as to the suitability of names to their possessors; the other day a friend said to me, as she was reading a letter at breakfast, "Mrs. B.'s name doesn't suit her at all." On the broad white margin of a picture opposite to me I read the word "Cecil," assumed that the final vowels were hidden by the frame, and risked the answer, "No. It is Cecilia, isn't it." "No," answered my friend, "it is Cecil." We speculated upon the source of my information as to a lady wholly unknown to me, and were ready to assume it to be thought-transference from my friend. I am inclined, however, to suppose it equally likely to have been forgotten knowledge, unconsciously acquired, for we remembered that my friend had once before received a note from the same lady, and that this note had been lying about for some time, so that I may have unconsciously observed the signature, though, as she herself now did so for the first time, it is possible, of course, that I received my information through her.

Our unconscious memory is curiously selective. I was once perplexed by a string of words which presented themselves in the crystal, so inflated in language and so luxuriant in adjectives that I really began to

wonder whether I was about to get a "spirit" message at last. I afterwards learned that they formed part of a hotel advertisement familiar to railway travellers. It has since been pointed out to me, but is, so far as I have seen it, too high up to be within my range of conscious vision.

It is a curious phenomenon, which may be noted in this connection, that the sub-conscious self seems to be gifted, so to speak, with an extension of physical senses difficult to account for, unless on some theory analogous to that of the exaltation which enables the voiceless to cry out in a moment of danger, the wounded soldier to continue in action, or the paralysed to escape from a burning house. I have, for example, occasionally been able to reproduce in the crystal the titles of books in a bookcase, or of engravings on a wall, which after experiment has shown to be beyond my range of vision.

It is, perhaps, not wholly beside my question, which it at least illustrates, to observe that this kind of unconscious observation may be held to explain much of the marvellous element in *dreams*. The following is a good example, and I can vouch for the truth of the story.

A gentleman had a ring which he greatly valued as a cherished heirloom, which was carefully kept, when not in use, in a case on a dressing-table. One night he dreamt of seeing the ring in a certain spot in the strawberry-bed. On awaking, remembering his dream, to satisfy himself of the safety of his signet, he sought it in its accustomed case, which he found—empty! The dream having so far been fulfilled, he may, perhaps, be acquitted of the charge of superstition when it is added that his next search was in the strawberry-bed. There, in the very spot dreamt of, lay the ring. It was afterwards discovered that his little boy, in a moment of personal ambition, had taken

temporary possession of the treasure, and had lost it he knew not where. We may well imagine his anxious hours of fruitless search, his Spartan efforts to disguise his woe and eat his supper, and his adjournment to bed with the full intention of rising at dawn to hunt for the ring in every scene of the previous day's events, and his mixed feelings on beholding the lost treasure on his parent's finger when, probably a little late, he came down to breakfast after some rather unpleasant dreams. Now, in this case it is possible that the father's dream served much the same purpose as a crystal; for dreams are, perhaps, after all, but another form of automatism. The dream served to externalise information unconsciously acquired, and this acquisition may have been by either of the two methods with which we are concerned—unconscious observation or telepathy. Let us suppose the simpler case, that the father, picking, *en passant*, a tempting strawberry, had, unaware, observed the ring, and that this knowledge had been brought under the notice of his conscious self in the memory of his dream. It is, of course, equally open to us to suppose the information to have been acquired by thought-transference from the boy, but such an explanation makes a still further claim upon our resources. We should have to suppose, first, that the place where the boy dropped the ring was noted by his sub-conscious self, which I think, from personal experience, quite possible, and secondly, that, perhaps by the very force of his pre-occupation with the subject, he had transmitted this knowledge to some substratum of the mind of his parent, to whose conscious personality it had been externalised, as in the other hypothesis, by means of the dream.

As an instance of the superior keenness of the unconscious observation, I may quote the following incident. As a matter of fact, no crystal was concerned in the matter, but as already explained, I have all my

life seen visions analogous to those of the crystal without the use of any empirical method of externalisation.

I was house-hunting with a friend, and we stood in an upper room in about the twentieth house we had seen that day. There was a hanging cupboard in the room, with closed doors reaching from ceiling to floor. Suddenly it seemed to me that these doors stood open, and that I could see what was behind them.

"If you open those doors," I said to my friend, "you will find that the wall-paper inside is bright blue and of a small lozenge pattern, quite different from the rest of the room." He did so, and my statement proved to be correct. I think it would be quite absurd to suppose that such a trifling circumstance was the result of clairvoyance unless no other possible explanation be forthcoming. As a matter of fact, I had some months before gone over some houses in the same neighbourhood, suggested by the same agent, and though, so far as my conscious memory and observation went, the house was wholly strange to me, I think it more than probable that I had explored it on a previous occasion, and had then unconsciously noted the discrepancy in the wall-paper.

## II.—UNCONSCIOUS RECEPTION

One of the most curious and instructive facts which the study of the supernormal brings before one's notice is the extreme desire of the average human mind to register as "supernatural" whatever it cannot at once explain. People try to get out of the thought-transference hypothesis (not that thought-transference is such a simple affair) by saying, "I could not have learnt it from So-and-so because he assures me he was not thinking about it at the time." It ought by this time to have passed into an axiom that it by no

means follows that what is at the top of our minds will be likely to tumble out first.

For example, I take up the crystal and make up my mind not to influence the forthcoming picture. I may effect this in two ways—either by thinking fixedly of *nothing*, or by thinking fixedly of *something*. It may then happen that a picture will present itself of something I have done or thought of recently, but it is at least equally likely that it may refer to some circumstance of ten years ago, or to something not consciously in my mind at all. Indeed, in my own case, the image least consciously present is the more probable, but this may be an idiosyncrasy, for, unlike many with whom I compare notes, the same thing happens to me in dreams. I seldom dream of the same interests as are prominently before me by day, seldom of the place I am in, or the people I am with, but directly a new set of images and associations is presented to my waking thoughts, the old one is quite likely to reappear in dreamland.

If we grant the existence of thought-transference, the power of one mind to influence another, at all, and if we suppose that in a great number of cases it is not the conscious self but the sub-conscious self which effects this, surely I may assume that the sub-conscious self is likely to transfer to another person from the same stratum from which it transfers to the crystal.

For example, a lady of whose *entourage* I knew nothing asked me one day if I could tell her, from looking in the crystal, any news about a circumstance with which her mind was much occupied at the time. As I knew nothing of the nature of the circumstance, I began by creating a picture in the crystal of the lady herself, hoping to gather something from any surroundings that might follow, and asking her to *fix her thoughts on the particular fact* as to which she sought

information. All that occurred was, that her image, in the crystal, seated itself in a tall chair of the *prie-dieu* shape, covered with sage-green plush, beside which was a small black table covered with newspapers and books, among them being *La Nouvelle Revue*. All this proved to be true in every detail; she habitually used a chair of the kind described, and the table on which she accumulated her magazines was a black one; further, she had the day before been reading, in that very spot, the review in question. Now, all this was undoubtedly thought-transference of which she was the involuntary agent, but why she should transfer to my mind absolutely insignificant trifles when she was willing and anxious to suggest, as I was to receive, what was of real consequence and interest to her, would be difficult to say.

The incident reminds me of a circumstance in the visit to England of the American "medium," Mrs. Piper, of whose extraordinary powers of thought-transference, if of nothing more, I can bear witness with conviction. Confronted with a very prominent statesman, who at that time held in his hand some of the threads of European government, she was able only to state, after all due preparations of trance and evocation of "spirits," that he was "involved in money transactions with a person of the name of George." Truly phenomena of this kind are not to be commanded!

It is, however, very convenient when such things will happen at the right time! We are all familiar with the sensation of knowing or remembering an incident just too late. The following experience was of a pleasanter nature.

I was in the agonies of a musical examination. My paper was finished all but one question, the answer to which my memory refused to supply. The professor sat at a table on which, one by one, the students,

as they retired, placed their papers. I was almost the last, and I sat idle, pen in hand, in the despair peculiar to the examinee.

"Have you not finished?" he asked. "No," I sighed; "I can't do No. 7." He smiled sympathetically, and again I paused, while my eyes wandered round the classroom seeking for some association which might serve to recall previous lectures.

Suddenly relief came. There, on the blackboard, which but a moment before mocked my misery with its barren surface, there, in the professor's neat figures, was the counterpoint worked out! A hasty glance, and all flashed back into my memory, and the blackboard relapsed into blank negation as before. I should feel happier about that certificate if I were clear that I profited by a recrudescence of memory of my own, and not from the genial sympathies of the professor.

Pictures suggested by thought-transference may perhaps be classified somewhat as follows:—

(1) Those in which the idea is consciously and voluntarily transmitted.

(2) Those in which it is unconsciously transmitted.

These may be subdivided again, as (A) when the image is transmitted at some moment of shock or excitement, and (B) when it is consequent on a condition of *rapport*, being in many cases *symbolic*, as it were, of the atmosphere and surroundings of the agent.

Class 1 might perhaps equally well be called experimental, and Class 2 spontaneous.

The experiences of Class 1 are those which may be found by the hundred in treatises upon hypnotism and in the Brighton experiments of the Society for Psychological Research. For statistical purposes they are doubtless of great value. It is important to be able to estimate that, out of eighteen efforts to convey to the medium the image of the king of hearts, eleven were successful, four were failures, while three were correct as to

the suite, but produced the knave—a not unusual substitute, elsewhere than in psychical experiments. Personally I should be glad to learn that the Census of Hallucinations, or some other form of inquiry, had sufficed to satisfy psychical researchers in this direction, a direction which seems to me not only infinitely less interesting than that of spontaneous occurrence, but also—I speak from personal experience—destructive of spontaneity. For over three years I spent a great deal of time and trouble over deliberate experiment. Experiences of real interest to myself were of very rare occurrence during that period, and I am not convinced that, even selfish interest apart, it is not more useful to others that one should become aware of the illness or danger of a friend, and put oneself in touch with the intimate sympathies of those one may be able to help or comfort, than that one should prove the possibility of transferring a name or a number or the shape of a geometrical figure for the benefit of a public which is left but “almost persuaded” in the end.

Of course, there will always remain the instances—very rare, but of supreme importance—in which some message of real interest is experimentally transmitted—such cases as we read of in the “Phantasms of the Living”—in which, for example, some one at the moment of death, or in some crisis, deliberately precipitates a message to a distant friend. It has been my privilege to receive many such, but never by means of any empirical method.

My experience is that a message of real significance is projected with force enough to reach its destination without any intervention of planned automatism. The sensation of shock, which is the condition of the transmission, has, so far as I have observed, a tendency to transmit itself along with, or even prior to, the reception of the message, so that the message brings with it

its own atmosphere of grief, or pleasure, or surprise, as the case may be.

However, granted the recognition of an impending message, I think that some automatic machinery of crystal, or writing mechanism such as planchette or ouija, may be useful, or at least harmless, as a means of externalising something further. For example, a few weeks ago I was walking in the park one Sunday afternoon gaily chatting, when I was suddenly seized with the conviction that a friend, whom I had not seen for some little time, was in anxiety of some kind. The very conditions of my surroundings precluded the possibility of even the most ordinary concentration of attention such as might have made a crystal a useful possession at the moment, and the nature of her trouble remained unknown to me. When at last I was able to make use of a crystal, the moment of intuition was past, and all I could discover about my friend was that she was in her own drawing-room talking with a well-known physician whom I knew to be an occasional visitor to her house.

I discovered, on inquiry, that she had indeed been much disturbed during the afternoon by the accidental loss of a valuable ornament, and that at the time I became conscious of her distress of mind she was relating the circumstances of the loss to a friend; that she had entertained at dinner the physician in question, and that he had occupied in the drawing-room the chair upon which I had seen him.

This, I think, was an experience of a purely spontaneous kind—the fact that I am, to some degree, *en rapport* with her had sufficed to transmit to me the shock of her sudden realisation of the loss, and encourages me to believe that if at any moment of real distress she should spontaneously seek my sympathy, it may be my privilege to be made aware of her need. But, unless in the event of so unlikely a coincidence as

my having a crystal in hand at the right moment, I am inclined to think that such a message would reach my consciousness without any indirect agency; that a crystal would be, in fact, superfluous. There seems little evidence to show that any direct intentional telepathic message is likely to remain latent until the accident of looking into the crystal shall occur to externalise it.

The pictures which are, so to speak, symbolic of the atmosphere or circumstances of their subject are, to my thinking, highly interesting and suggestive. It is not only as crystal visions, but also as betraying the tendencies and habits of working of the mind, that they are instructive. I have always revered Emerson's dictum, "Revere your intuitions," and Tennyson's questioning—

"Is it so true that second thoughts are best,  
Not first, or third, which are a riper first?"—

and though I would claim no higher origin for the instinct than that shared with the dog or the horse, I am sure that those possessed of any degree of psychic sensitiveness ought, as a matter of gratitude and conscience, to respect their first impressions. For myself, I have invariably paid dearly for any disregard, whether the warning has come as a simple antipathy, an unformulated monition, or, as sometimes happens, a symbolic vision—a vision, that is, which reveals the atmosphere, good or bad, of its possessor.

Premising once more that I treat as crystal visions those which seem analogous in their course and nature, I offer the following illustrations of my meaning.

I was visiting for the first time at the house of a friend who had recently married. Her husband I had never met, but all that I had heard led me to expect to find him an agreeable gentleman of good birth, fortune, and position. We were introduced, and I soon

perceived that he had, at least, the wish to please, and to show hospitality to his guests. However, from the first moment that I had opportunity to observe him carefully, I was troubled by a curious and perplexing hallucination. No matter where he happened to be—at the dinner-table, in the conservatory, at the piano—for me the real background disappeared and a visionary scene succeeded. I saw the same man in his boyhood—he was in reality very youthful in appearance—gazing towards me with an expression of abject terror, his head bowed, his shoulders lifted, his hands raised as if to defend himself from expected blows.

I discovered afterwards that this scene was one which had really taken place at a famous public school, when, in consequence of a disgraceful act of fraud, he was ignominiously expelled, and had to “run the gauntlet” of his schoolfellows.

One feels tempted to ask why a man should be haunted in riper years by the reminiscence of a sin of boyhood, and this to such a degree that it should be revealed to an absolute stranger, having no special interest in his personality. My impression, drawn from analogy, is that the picture, though historically true, served in the main as a symbol of the cowardice and treachery still inherent in the man, and which have become, as I now know, more operative than ever in his subsequent most lamentable history.

Happily such revelations are not always of so dismal a character. These symbolic visions often take the form of striking a key-note, bringing with it a half-understood whisper of the harmony to which some life is or has been attuned, the vision of one who is gone, but whose influence in some degree remains, the shadow of a childhood's home, the memory of a young ideal, of days when the possibilities of life set themselves to sweet music full of purpose and endeavour. Full of encouragement and hope is the recognition of such

symbols; saddening is the perception that they may fade away and die, that the inspiring influence may be left behind, and what was a religion become only a memory, and then even its symbolic presentment is no more seen.

Visions of this kind are often usefully pressed into the service of friendship; they give one the key to recesses in the minds of others which the undemonstrative Anglo-Saxon opens but slowly and unwillingly without the help of some outside impetus. Such glimpses are not entirely without drawbacks. One does not consciously *seek* what, however spontaneous, gives one a sensation of having listened at keyholes or peeped into a private diary.

However, such information comes often with the consent, and seldom against the will of the person concerned. As a rule, your friends do you the justice to suppose you not unworthy of their involuntary confidence, and the "sensitive," like the priest or the doctor, should have a special conscience in such matters. Perhaps we may even go so far as to suppose that a blunted conscience might, and very deservedly, involve the blunting of other sensibilities. Certainly the views which obtained for a thousand years or so, as to the high personal standard at which the seer should aim, may be held to have included some such view of his responsibilities. The seer among the Egyptians was always a boy or a young woman "who had not known sin," a practical commentary on "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," which to the student of the occult should be humiliating and suggestive. Not that phenomena so entirely outside of the normal personality, and so entirely beyond its control, can leave any scope for personal vanity, but as every privilege in life brings with it its responsibilities, we cannot better show our appreciation of the one than by our recognition of the other.

## III.—POSSIBLY CLAIRVOYANT

I am anxious to lay stress on the "possibly." I am very unwilling to assign a supernormal cause for anything which may conceivably be accounted for by a normal, or any degree of extension of a normal, cause. Memory is so mysterious in its activities, so wide-spreading in its field of action, that when we have ever known a certain fact, or when it has come within the possible range of our observation, we are at least within a measurable range of the *known*, when we refer to memory, conscious or unconscious, the perplexities of the *unknown*.

But the facts of the immediate present, as of the future, are not referable to memory. And the hypothesis of thought-transference merely complicates the difficulty. Strictly speaking, so long as a matter is known to anybody, even if that anybody is in touch with you or not, you cannot absolutely *prove* that your knowledge of it is not by thought-transference. It is, however, possible occasionally to prove that it is *not* clairvoyance. I remember a curious illustration of this. I was talking with a friend one day, each of us idly handling a crystal the while. We were talking of a house she had never seen, and I was describing the entrance-hall. Presently she said, "Wait, I see it; let *me* go on. Is there a curtained archway opposite the front door? and is there a gong in a recess by the stairs?" This was perfectly correct, and knowing my friend to have a considerable psychic faculty, I wondered how far this might be clairvoyance. On the other hand, so keen is my own power of visualising, that I had all the time a vivid picture of the scene in my own mind. I looked into the crystal and planned my little test. "Go into the dining-room," I said. A correct description followed—a carved-oak mantel-

piece, crimson chairs with high backs, and so on. "The table is laid for lunch," she proceeded, "but why have they lighted the candles in broad daylight?" The fact was that, as soon as I saw that her attention was fixed on the table, I lighted the candles in my crystal picture! Hers followed suit, proving some, at least, of her impressions telepathic.

Sometimes the origin of the thought-transference is difficult to trace. When two people see in the crystal a fact unknown to either of them, are we to suppose that the source is to be found in the knowledge of some third person unknown, or are both clairvoyant, or does one receive the impression by clairvoyance and the other by thought-transference from number one?

For example, after having carefully studied the curious account of his crystal-gazing experiments in the reign of James I. by Dr. Dee, I was much interested to find that the very instrument was to be seen in the Stuart Exhibition. Never had crystal so curious a history, and though there is little doubt that Dr. Dee was a very credulous old person, and his Scryer a scamp, yet his experiments are very interesting nevertheless.

So, with a crystal-gazing friend, I went off to the New Gallery and found the famous Shew-stone in which Kelly, the Scryer, used to see spirits of all qualities, from "Angelical Beings" down to "divels of Hell."

To concentrate your gaze on a crystal locked up in a glass case so that you cannot arrange it in reference to the light is not an easy task, and, moreover, many people were coming and going, so that we could not linger for more than a few minutes. However, we were particularly anxious to achieve a collective vision—that we should both see something at the same time—and this is what happened.

We had at home a certain keyed instrument, called by courtesy "musical," of the type special to blind beggars. In consequence of some earlier investigations into its internal economy it was now voiceless, and was practically utilised as a table to hold books.

In the crystal we both saw the following scene:— C. and H. were joint possessors of the instrument, and we saw them sitting at opposite sides of the fireplace in the room where it was kept, but while I, in my picture, so to speak, faced the right, my friend faced the left. Neither of us knew that H. was in the house, nor likely to be, as he was living some few miles distant from home, nor were we prepared for what followed. Both C. and H. rose and went to the instrument, which was open, and H. sat down and began to play! On our return home we discovered that H. had, in fact, come in, that he had mended the organ, and that he was exhibiting his success to C. by playing upon it at that very hour.

It seems very difficult to make a general rule in such cases. In regard to the friend who shared this experience I am inclined to think that thought-transference may be an active factor. We have shared spontaneous visions of grave consequence to ourselves, and several times, in moments of danger or anxiety, she has been able to communicate with me from long distances. We have, however, had collective crystal visions without coincidence of any kind, when, presumably, the picture seen was merely imaginary. One day, taking up independently of each other a crystal belonging to a friend, we both saw—at about an hour's interval, and without communication—a pith helmet—alike in both pictures to the smallest detail. Now, if our friend could have reported any tropical romance in which pith helmets figured as associated with the history of the crystal, it would have been an interesting case of latent influence, but we knew of no story

whatever which could at all account for such an hallucination. It was therefore, presumably, pure fancy in the one percipient, communicated by telepathy to the other.

It seems unlikely, as I have said, that any clairvoyant impression of real immediate consequence should be conveyed by means of the crystal, because any one able to receive such impression at all would probably do so spontaneously at the moment of its projection, so that the stories which I am able personally to report in such connection are all very trifling in their issues. To the real student, however, the interest of such stories lies, not in their dramatic, but in their psychical suggestiveness, and I will not further apologise for the following.

I was visiting friends in the country, and was about to leave their house on a certain morning. "I wonder what you will do after I'm gone," I was saying.

For answer, one of them pulled towards me a piece of bright mahogany furniture brilliantly polished, and said, "Here is a crystal—look."

"This is the picnic you said you were all going to at Pin Mill, I suppose," I said presently, as a picture appeared. "What and where is Pin Mill? There is no sign of a mill—it is just a grassy bank with some thorn-bushes beyond. Why do you and K. get up and go away? G. and S. stay together and G. looks as if her back hurt her. The nurse is there too, with the boy."

"I don't know in the least what Pin Mill is, but any way, the nurse and child won't be there," said my friend.

A day or two later she wrote: "You were almost right about Pin Mill—there is no mill in sight. We sat on a bank, K. had cramp and I had to take her for a walk, G. and S. were left together. G. had strained her back and was in some pain, and the nurse and

boy were there. There were no thorn-trees, but there were elder and blackberry bushes, grown up high, which at a little distance *looked* like thorns."

Now, these six coincidences are all very trifling, but they were in no degree the result of expectation; they were even, in some degree, contrary to probability, and the very fact of their unimportance adds to the difficulty of explaining them. They were not thought-transference, they were not memories. It is easy to dismiss them as "mere coincidence"—it is quite conceivable that they were nothing more; but the mere-coincidence explanation is one of which we weary when it has to be applied to dozens and scores of cases, and I use no exaggerated phrase in so speaking. What is the source of such pictures? Truly, as yet we cannot tell.

It seems, therefore, that for the present we must admit the existence of a third class of pictures—those which cannot be accounted for by either of the great contributors to the universal picture-gallery of life—our own memories and the memories of others.

#### IV. ANOTHER HYPOTHESIS—SPIRITS?

It will have been observed that I use the term "crystal-gazing," sometimes called mirror-gazing, somewhat loosely; that I attach absolutely no virtue to the crystal itself; that I hold clearly that we shall find nothing in the crystal but what we ourselves put there—voluntarily or involuntarily—of facts consciously or unconsciously known; that I regard it merely as a convenient method of externalising images already *in the mind*, and that, once granted the power of visualisation, the mystery lies in the acquisition of the knowledge, not in the means of its externalisation.

I may be of opinion that I inherit the lines in my hands from my prehensile ancestors, but I willingly admit that I have heard startling truths concerning

past history read by the knowing in an open palm which—who knows?—may be as good a *point de repère* for precipitating telepathic impressions as a pack of cards or the dregs of a tea-cup; and I could tell queer stories about these methods too.

The difference is that, happily for its reputation, no one has yet been found to claim for crystal-gazing, as they have for Palmistry, that it is an exact science, or, indeed, a science at all. I, for one, should only be too glad if any fixed laws could be evolved; but, so far, the art of crystal-gazing seems to be governed by individual idiosyncrasy, to depend upon Oneself, and that is a person upon whom few of us can count with any certainty.

Of course, there have been found in all ages those who explained the whole mystery by the "spirits," just as now any mysterious force is "electricity," or any mechanical toy "worked by a spring."

There are some quaint receipts for contracting for the services of spirits and faeries. Here is one, to be found in the Ashmolean MSS. at Oxford:—

"First get a broad square Crystall [I have never seen a square one!] or Venice Glasse, in length and breadth 3 inches. Then lay that glasse or crystall in the bloud of a white henne 3 Wednesdays or 3 Fridayes. Then take it out and wash it with Holy aq: and fumigate it. Then take 3 Hazle sticks or wands, of an yeare growth, peel them fayre and white; and make them so long as you can write the spiritt's name or fayrie's which you call, 3 times on every stick being made flatt on one side. Then bury them under some Hill whereas ye suppose the fayries haunt, the Wed: before you call her, and the Friday following take them uppe and call her, at 8 or 3 or 10 o'clock, when be good planetts and houres for that time, but when you call, turn thy face towards the East. And when you have her bind her to that Stone or glasse."

This, it is said, is "an excellent way to get a fayrie;" but the writer adds: "For myself I call Margaret Barence, but this will obtaine any one that is not already bound." I wish we knew more about "Margaret Barence"; she sounds more like a "spiritt" than a "fayrie."

There are various methods, but all equally tedious; people had more leisure in those days. Reginald Scot, writing towards the end of the sixteenth century, gives us, like the cookery-books, "another way."

"First thou, in the new of the Moon, being clothed with all new and fresh and clean array and shaven, and that day to fast with bread and water and being clean confessed, say the Seven Psalms for the space of two days with the Prayer following . . .

The prayer is very long and devout. Then the sixth day you must—

"Have in readiness five bright Swords and in some secret place make a circle with one of the said Swords, and then write this name—Sitrael—which done, standing in the Circle thrust the Sword into the name. And write again Malanthon, and thrust in another Sword. And write then Thamaz, with another, and Falaor—and Sitrami and do as ye did with the first. And all this done and kneeling turn to the South and say thus having the Crystal Stone in thine hands." . . .

Then follows an incantation, to be repeated five times, and then comes the real excitement:—

"There shall come out of the North part five Kings with a marvellous company. When they are come to the circle, they will alight from their horses and will kneel down before thee, saying, Master, command what thou wilt, and we will out of hand, be obedient unto thee."

"Out of hand" sounds promising, like the maxim of one's youth, "Do as you're told *the first time.*" Next you utter a long conjuration, and finally—"They will

call a certain Spirit whom they will command to enter into the centre of the circle or round crystal. Then put the crystal between two circles and thou shalt see the crystal made black." This seems a pity, especially if it be a good one. The conclusion is a little gruesome—"And when the spirit is enclosed *if thou fear him* bind him with some bond."

On the whole, we cannot wonder at a pregnant sentence in a story told in Aubrey's "Miscellanies" (that is the book for the student of crystal lore) about Dr. Sherburn, Canon of Hereford, who was asked by a clothier's widow of Rembridge, where he was vicar, to look over her husband's papers. He found a "call" for a crystal which he had procured to discover thieves who had robbed his clothes-racks; and he used to go out about midnight with a boy or little maid to look in the crystal for thieves. "*The doctor did burn the call*" (p. 131, edition of 1671).

We need not further discuss the spirit-hypothesis. If we believe in their assistance in such matters at all, it is, of course, quite as easy to suppose them present in a crystal as in a table. At one period people seem to have been pretty clear that the spirits were there, and bad ones too. The crystal-gazers of the fifth century were called *Specularii*, and the councils of a Synod about 450 A.D., at which S. Patrick was present, show that they were prevalent in Ireland. John of Salisbury has left us a list of proceedings against the *Specularii* used in his time, showing how the pagan customs were adopted by Christians.

S. Thomas Aquinas did not think much of crystal-gazing. He thought it ought not to be attributed to the fact of the innocence of the young seer, but to the work of a demon who produced results, apparently marvellous, by the movement of the humours of the human body, and by its natural sensitive faculties. This sounds like mesmerism and the odic force theory.

In 1398 the Faculty of Theology of Paris formally condemned such practices as idolatry, "but," says Maury, who records the fact in his *La magie et l'astrologie*, "they continued no less to be the custom." In 1609 they went still further, and a Norman sorcerer, Saint Germain, was burnt on the Place de Grève for having made magic mirrors, with the help of a woman and a doctor. What is even more serious is that, so far as I know, the Act of James I. against witchcraft has not yet been repealed, and it is still open to any magistrate to take us up as rogues and vagabonds if we use the crystal for the recovery of lost or stolen property. Probably this is the particular line which has always been taken up by quacks, for I have in my collection stories of this particular practice in all countries for at least a thousand years.

But to return to the question of the crystal itself. The earliest divination, possibly by mirror-gazing, that we know of was that of Joseph in Egypt. He was a seer of visions from childhood, so that we cannot wonder at the development of his powers in the very fatherland of magicians. "The cup out of which my lord drinketh and whereby he divineth" is spoken of as his most cherished possession. S. Augustine, by the way, thinks that crystal-gazing came from Persia, which would link it with the history of astrology. The form of mirror-gazing known to him was *hydromancy*, and he tells us of its practice by Numa Pompilius, who saw demons in clear water.

The Hindus used black lamps; and another process which long survived, and, indeed, still survives in Egypt, was the pouring of a black liquid into the palm of the hand of a child. The magic mirrors of China, so often talked of, were mechanical contrivances, and do not affect our question. In classical times *onychomancy* was much practised—the seeing of pictures in the finger-nail. We also hear from classical historians

of the use of the sword-blade, of a buckle, of a vase of water, of a crystal ring. The sapphire and the beryl were favourite stones for divination. The crystal, however, seems to have held its place in Northern Europe. In W. Morris's enchanting story of "Sigurd the Vol-sung" (Book II.) we read:—

"But the ball that imaged the earth was set in his hand from of old,  
And belike it was to his vision as the wide world ocean rolled."

Like all mystical divinations, crystal-gazing seems to have been religious in origin, and even after it had come to be regarded as magic, it was accompanied by religious ceremonials—the burning of incense, the muttering of prayers, the careful employment for seer of the child "who had not known sin." Even Dr. Dee kept his shew-stone in a chapel, and Mr. Churton Collins tells me that, when a boy, he saw the whole ceremonial performed by a magician upon the walls of Chester, in every detail like that of which we read in the Egyptian travels of Mr. Lane, Lord Prudhoe, Mr. Salt the British Consul, and Lord Lindsay.

Some commentators have thought that the "sons of the prophets" were the seers of the prophets—boys "who had not known sin"; and the Urim and Thummim have been supposed to be connected with some process of divination.

We must not dwell longer on the history of crystal-gazing—a subject practically inexhaustible, so wide a field does it cover both in time and space.

I have made a great number of careful experiments with the view of ascertaining how far the picture in the crystal is really objective—whether it has any existence apart from the mind of the seer.

I would not venture to offer any theory upon the point. It is a question for the learned in psychology,

above all, a question requiring far more evidence than we possess at present, for as yet the subject has never, so far as I know, except in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research," been systematically dealt with. The Baroness von Way has recorded carefully a number of experiments and experiences, but she seems to have been content to assign the action of spirits as the motive cause, and to have sought no other explanation.

But in the present stage of the inquiry, I am personally satisfied that, as I said before, the problem is not how do we externalise our knowledge, but how do we acquire it? not how does it get into the crystal, but how does it get into the mind?

Every crystal-gazer whom I have ever met has been a good visualiser. Mr. Myers quotes a certain Miss A. as an exception, alleging in proof that "she is excessively short-sighted," but I do not see why that need interfere with the clearness of her mental vision, and no careful reader of the evidence offered in support of other experiences which she records, can doubt the activity of her unconscious memory, seeing that so many of the communications which she receives from "spirits" of various kinds have previously existed in books and newspapers.

Setting aside the merely idle pictures which we fancy in the crystal, as we fancy them in the glowing hollows of a coal fire, or the twisted branches of an old tree, a very large proportion of crystal-vision is of psychological rather than psychical interest, and the problems which it presents are those of memory and telepathy.

Mr. Lang in a recent essay speaks of the practice as "perhaps the only 'occult' diversion which may be free from psychological or physical risk, and which it is easy not to mix with superstition; the comparatively few persons who can see pictures in a clear

depth may be as innocently employed while so doing as if they were watching the clouds or the embers."

Are we to explain the paucity of fresh evidence on the subject by the "comparative fewness" of those who are successful—I would myself incline to a more liberal valuation of their number—or are we to conclude that its very freedom from superstitious interest makes crystal-gazing, in the eyes of many, of less interest?

The "comparative fewness" of the successful I am inclined to explain by the "comparative fewness" of those who take any trouble about it.

That crystal-gazing may be practised with success even by those who know nothing about it as "a science," who have no explanation to offer, no pet theories to support, I learnt lately while visiting an agricultural village in the Eastern Counties. I there found a little colony of accomplished crystal-gazers, half-a-dozen or more of simple village folk, men and women, who for years had met together in this cottage or in that, on winter evenings, in a perfectly scientific, yet withal simple and uninstructed attitude, to investigate the phenomena of crystal-gazing. There is nothing remarkable about these people beyond that, so far as I could discover, they are, like the Highland Seers, all possessed in the highest degree of the power of visualisation. Your true visualiser has always something in him of the artist, and this little group contains some individuals of refinement beyond their class.

There are always plenty of persons ready to fire off little pop-guns of explanation, even if they are not more effective than such phrases as "merely astral" or "merely coincident."

The pop-guns of "merely thought-transference" and "merely suggestion" are always with us, and it must be allowed are handy, though their sound is apt to become a trifle monotonous. The present case,

however, cannot be knocked down by any of these, though doubtless some will be found to say "merely hypnotic."

But to my story. The father of the group is a very intelligent market-gardener, a man who has made the most of his limited opportunities, and who—educated, perhaps, by his profession, one which must of necessity encourage observation and experiment—has a very earnest desire to solve the problem of life and fate.

A few years ago he attended some sort of Variety Entertainment in the county town, one feature of which was mesmerism. Interested, but not wholly convinced, he was anxious to experiment for himself, and one market-day he hunted through the "fancy" shops of the neighbourhood for some polished article which should correspond with the metal disc used by the mesmeriser.

The nearest thing he could find was a small opalescent glass ball, of the kind in fashion at one time as a ménuholder. He took it back to his own village, and proceeded to experiment on a younger brother. Placing the child in an easy-chair, with his head thrown back in orthodox fashion, our friend held the ball slightly above and a few inches in front of the child's eyes, and directed him to gaze fixedly into its depths. Presently the boy began to laugh. "You mustn't laugh," said his brother severely. "You must keep quite quiet and steady." But his mirth only increased, and, on receiving further reproof, "How can I help laughing," he said, "when you show me pictures like that?" "Pictures? What do you mean?" "Why? isn't there an old Chinaman grinning and making faces at me?"

Happily my good friend had sufficient versatility to see that he had got hold of a new fact, and from that moment he turned his attention to crystal-gazing. Naturally enough, no record was kept of the experi-

ments, but I have no reason to doubt his account of the results, which were indeed of the greatest interest. They are not, of course, in the nature of things, evidential, but I am glad to know that proper crystals are now in the hands of the group of Seers who assisted his inquiries. These people had no outside knowledge, or encouragement, or help whatever, yet they have developed the art of scrying in all its branches—the externalisation of conscious ideas or images, of revivals of memory, and of information unconsciously acquired by thought-transference, possibly by clairvoyance.

So much for the reward of taking pains.

Here are some exercises in crystal-gazing graduated according to the scale of apparent difficulty, but the question of what kind comes most easily and naturally, will vary with individual tendencies.

(A.) Look carefully at some part of the room in front of you, avoiding anything likely to be reflected in the ball. Shut your eyes and try to visualise it. Then try if you can see it in the crystal. If you have any gift of visualisation at all, this ought to be easily acquired after half-a-dozen experiments.

(B.) First visualise with closed eyes some simple scene you have lately witnessed, and then, as before, try to transfer this to the crystal. This exercise should be practised over and over again, choosing subjects of increasing complexity, beginning, let us say, with a chair or table and ending with the table spread for a dinner-party, and the chairs occupied by the guests.

(C.) Visualise some scene of which you have lately heard or read a description: "The boy stood on the burning deck"—"Under a spreading chestnut-tree, the village smithy stands," or the like, and transfer that to the crystal.

(D.) *Imagine* a scene, paint it with your fancy. Think of it till the details are quite clear, and transfer that to the crystal.

Practise all these again and again, making your pictures more and more detailed and elaborate as you go on.

(E.) Then begin the whole series over again, but looking this time directly to the crystal for your pictures without a separate effort of visualisation in advance.

The people who assume that all crystal-gazing is "psychical," seem to think that the faculty of summoning up a picture is much on a level with that of seeing through a brick wall, knowing of the welfare of distant friends, or reading to-morrow's *Times*, just as they think that because they can write automatically, move Planchette or get a table to tilt, that they are *ipso facto* receiving messages from a better world, and conversing with "the spirits."

This is quite another matter. If you have the power of thought-transference, or clairvoyance, or premonition, or intuition, &c., &c., crystal-gazing is as good a way of externalising it as any other, in some respects perhaps a better and safer way. But you are quite as likely to see nonsense pictures or commonplace pictures in a crystal, as you are to write nonsense or the commonplace with Planchette, and how much that "quite as likely" may mean, is not for the present writer to determine.

Any music-master can teach you to read a sonata and to play it on the piano, but whether you make music out of it, or only a performance, must depend on yourself. Certain powers there are, which are given to one here and another there, ours to educate, but not to create, to use but not to command, to regulate but never completely to control, for which we are responsible, but the occasion of which it is not ours to dictate.

The power of Crystal-gazing may considerably facilitate, though it is by no means necessary to, the

power of what we call clairvoyance. Either may exist without the other, though, speaking from my own experience in investigation of such subjects, I am inclined to think that the Seer is for the most part of the artistic temperament, and therefore probably a visualiser. He is, even when most simple, even when illiterate, a lover of nature and the beautiful. I use the word Seer of course as the possessor of the Seer *temperament*, not merely the recipient of some psychic message on some single or rare occasion of emotion or excitement.

I think that over-attention to criticism and experiment—both undoubtedly of supreme importance—may tend to destroy one's spontaneity—to induce the curse of self-consciousness—absolutely fatal to the seer and destructive of his powers. I think that experiment should be the special province of the automatist whose visions, messages, hallucinations, are of no psychical interest, that is to say, to nine-tenths of those who, judging from results, are subject to visions and the like.

The only caution I would venture to offer is that which the truest science offers to all inquiry.

That which teaches us more of ourselves, more of our powers and possibilities, which makes us increasingly realise the sphere of our unconscious and involuntary influence, the stern witness of memory, the responsibilities of sympathy, is not an amusement for a vacant hour, the mere gratification of an idle curiosity.

## IV

### THE DIVINING ROD, OR THE FACULTY OF DOWSING

1. A Faculty easily tested.—2. Experiences with a Modern Dowser.—3. The rod among the Ancients for divining and for other purposes.—4. The rod in later times, its origin.—5. The rod in Europe, 1413. Dowsing for metals.—6. Dowsing for water, 1630.—7. Dowsing for criminals, 1692. Aymar and Bleton.—8. Chevreul, the classic, on Dowsing. His three periods.—9. Dowsing in our own century.—10. The nature of the power, its independence of the divining rod.

1. THE student of psychic literature cannot have failed to observe that the tendency of most modern treatment of its phenomena is of a kind analogous to that known to the school-boy as "reduction." The supernatural is sub-divided and reduced to terms of the supernormal, the supernormal to terms of the unexplained. The point in rational dispute is not their existence, but their explanation. While in many ways phenomena that are spontaneous are the more satisfactory, on the other hand, those that are induced are more easily observed, and lend themselves with the more readiness to investigation.

The apparition in a haunted house seldom presents itself to the expectant inquirer; the seer fails to produce visions to order; none but the professional charlatan can warrant even a modicum of information to the confiding visitor who pays his fee for a communication from the "spirit-world."

The "dowser," *i.e.*, the person who professes a

facility in discovering underground water or metals, is, however, fortunate in possessing an unassailable position. Whether his methods be normal or super-normal, whether he be possessed of occult art or merely of natural science, whether his gift be the result of intuition or of experience, there need be no explaining away, either of his success or of his failure. His business is to tell you whether, on a certain area of land, there is, or is not, underground water, or it may be, though in our days less common, minerals, with any details as to depth and volume which it may be in his power to add. You dig, or, if you are economically disposed, bore, to the prescribed level, and there you find, or do not find, water, as the case may be. No one is infallible, and it is only reasonable to allow to your dowser, as to your doctor or lawyer, a certain percentage of failure, and to compare his average with that of other men of the same craft. The special advantage of the position of dowsing among occult phenomena, using the word "occult" in its broadest sense as equivalent to *unknown, unexplained*, is that it is susceptible of an immediate test, and admits of no excuses as to "conditions," or lack of sympathy, or disturbing influences.

Certainly, to judge from the extent of the claims of the various professional "dowsers," and, still more important, the testimonials as to their success from well-known landed proprietors who have employed them, we may gather that, whatever be the explanation of the fact, the water-finder has justified his existence.

2. Before discussing the position and history of the art of dowsing, it may be as well to describe the process, as I was privileged to watch it lately, on an estate which happens to be very inconveniently situated in regard to water, having only one or two surface-water ponds, and those neither central nor easily

accessible. I ventured to suggest to the owner the possibility of discovering a spring by some professional "dowser," and proposed that Mr. Leicester Gataker should make the experiment. For anything I know to the contrary, there may be a score of water-finders as efficient as he, but I had seen the originals of his testimonials, some of which happened to be from persons known to me, and, moreover, I knew him to be a man of education. While perfectly willing to admit that treasure is sometimes contained in earthen vessels, and that words of wisdom *may* be spoken with a cockney accent, it is nevertheless an economy of trouble to the investigator, to establish the fact that one's witness is at least so far educated as to make accurate observation and intelligent report, the less improbable; the capacity to observe or to describe not being common in any class.

He arrived one very hot day towards the end of July, and with characteristic energy insisted on getting to work at once. Proceeding to the nearest hedge, he cut a small forked branch, which chanced to be of birch, though hazel-wood is that conventionally assigned to this purpose.

I remarked on the substitution, but he only said, laughingly, that it did not in the least matter, that, in fact, he could do just as well without any at all, and that the use of the twig was a mere dramatic detail of the situation, so far as he personally was concerned. He cut down the fork to a rough V, about a foot and a half long, and holding one extremity in each hand, at once set off in a very rapid walk in a direction opposite to that from which he had approached the farm, and which I have reason to believe he had never been over before, a fact which appears to put the explanation of previous observation of the ground out of court.

Mr. Gataker never slackened pace for a moment,

though very soon the fork began rapidly to turn round and round, as he held the extremities in either hand. The ground was slightly undulating, and near the top of a slight elevation, fifty yards or less from his starting point, he stopped abruptly, saying, "I have been following up a stream—the spring is here—it is about seventy to a hundred feet below the surface, and the water rises at the rate of 120 gallons per hour. Now, let us see where the stream runs on this side." He walked away to the left so rapidly that we were unable to keep up with him, and a man was directed to follow with some wooden pegs, which were driven into the ground at points indicated by the water-finder, as suitable for experimental digging. He selected about five such points, following the track of the alleged watercourse over hedge and ditch, but declaring the first spot to be the most promising. At a distant point of the farm, where water was especially desired, Mr. Gataker said that it would probably be found in tolerable abundance, and at no great depth, but that it would be mere surface water, and not worth the expense of the exploration. His diagnosis proved correct in every particular.

It was interesting to observe, that when the original twig broke off short, apparently worn out by violent exercise, Mr. Gataker entirely dispensed with any assistance of the kind, and trusted solely, he told us, to the sensation experienced in the hand and arm. His hands hung down, extended a little outwards, and on observing closely, we could see, from time to time, a vibration in the middle fingers, which appeared to be drawn downwards, just as in the case of the apex of the twig. His movements throughout were brisk and energetic, and his statements were equally definite and decided. The whole business was over in less than two hours, and having frankly and clearly replied to all our questions, Mr. Gataker took his departure.

So much for the dowser of to-day. Now let us glance backward.

3. Like crystal or mirror-gazing, rod-divining has a very ancient history. If we take as our genus rhabdomancy, and include all forms of divination by rods, we shall get involved in a story which is very long indeed. The rod has been in all ages a symbol of authority; it is the sceptre of kings, the wand of the fairies, the caduceus of Hermes, the badge of office of the Roman lictors, of the magician in all ages, of the lord steward, of the gentleman usher, and of the parish beadle. Janus and Medea are represented with wands, with a rod Circe changed twenty-two companions of Ulysses into a drove of pigs (Ovid, "Metamorphoses XIV.," "Æneid VII."), and with a rod Minerva restored him to youth. According to some commentators there are many references to rhabdomancy in the Old Testament,<sup>1</sup> and we find it a frequent method of divination among many ancient races.

Rhabdomancy, the art of *divining* by rods, seems to belong principally to those nations which dealt in other forms of augury and divination. Herodotus tells us it was practised by the Scythians and by the Brahmans of Persia; Strabo speaks of its use among the Brahmans of India; Cicero, in his *De Divinatione*, mentions it as a familiar form of augury; Arrian and Tully refer to its magic properties; and Tacitus to its use in Central Europe. Herodotus talks of the "fine straight wands" of the Augurs and Theophylact, as quoted by Sir Thos. Browne ("Vulgar Errors,") thus describes the process of augury by rods.

"They set up two staffs, and having whispered

<sup>1</sup> The curious in such matters may consult the following references: Gen. xxx. 37; Exod. iv. 2, iv. 17, vii. 9, viii. 5, xiv. 16, xvii. 5; Num. xvii.; Hos. iv. 12. According to St. Jerome, the word rendered arrows in Ezek. xxi. 21, would be more correctly translated "rods."

some verses and incantations, the staffs fell by the operation of demons. Then they considered which way each of them fell, forward or backward, to the right or left hand, and if agreeable, gave responses, having made use of the fall of their staffs for their signs."

Probably the first water-finder carried his rod in his capacity of magician, and its association with dowsing was a mere accident of the situation. Water-finding is a faculty peculiar to certain persons, and entirely independent of the "divining" rod, which, though possibly as a means of self-suggestion, or to impress beholders, is still used by many dowsers.

Mr. Lang reminds us that *to twig* is used for "to divine," and the term *to douse* is recognised by Dr. Johnson.

But, so far, we hear of rhabdomancy only as a means of looking into the book of fate, a mere *sortes*, and never as applied to so definitely useful a purpose as that of the discovery of water or minerals. Vitruvius Pliny, in his "Natural History," describes various methods of seeking for underground water, but does not seem to have known of the use of rods for such a purpose. Even in the sixth century, when water-finding is spoken of by Cassiodorus as a definite profession, we have no mention of the rod in such connection (Theod., *Epist.* liii. *Variar lib.* III.).

The rod seems, however, to have had early associations other than those of mere divination. With a rod Moses smote the rock, and water gushed out. The rod of Aaron blossomed and indicated that his authority was divinely appointed. The lituus of Romulus had especial powers and was effective in indicating the succession of Numa Pompilius, and, like the rods of Moses and Aaron, was regarded as sacred, and was laid up in the Temple of Mars, as theirs were in the Tabernacle. Mercury, as Hermes, was the god of

boundaries and of thieves, and the Egyptian Hermes taught the people to measure their fields. The rod of Hermes, the golden rod of wealth, was used also to conduct souls to Hades, and so dispensed the awards of fate, here and hereafter. All these things have in their degree their modern analogies; even the changes wrought by the wand of Circe remind us of how witches on broomsticks were metamorphosed into hares, as the companions of Ulysses into pigs. Even after their conversion to Christianity, the Frisian people, when in perplexity as to a criminal in a case of homicide, would lay two rods upon the altar, and ask God for a sign, as did Moses before the budding of the rod of Aaron (*Archæologia*, vol. xliii.).

4. How far the divining rod, as used during the last three or four centuries, is the lineal descendant of rods such as these, is a question not easy to answer. Probably the fact that divining for minerals was early associated with magic, and that the magician carried a rod, not only as a symbol, but for tracing diagrams and abracadabras, may have something to do with its use in connection with the faculty of dowsing.

In the very earliest records of modern dowsing, dating possibly from about 1413 (at that time for minerals only), we have mention of seven different kinds of rods, and when, more than two hundred years later, we begin to hear of water-dowsing by the Baron and Baroness Beau Soleil, it is again associated with metal rods of seven different kinds, the use of which was well-known to the miners of the Tyrol.

As one author remarks in this connection: "We may well believe that in the use of the sympathetic rod and other fantastic instruments, they conformed to the hermeneutic fancies of age, in order to give a supernatural appearance to the results of their natural skill" (Dr. Henry White in *The Student*, February 1870.

As a matter of fact these Beau Soleils did probably turn to account their "natural skill" as geologists. This question of origin possibly accounts for the fact that while Miss Buckley ("Anthropological Studies," p. 141) considers the use of the divining rod distinctly non-Aryan, so accomplished a folk-lorist as Mr. Andrew Lang speaks of it as "a European and civilised superstition which is singular in its comparative lack of copious savage analogies."

Kelly, not him of crystal-balls, but the author of "Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore, 1863," considers that the divining-rod as used in England and France is shorn of much of its glory and power. The mere discovery of mines, buried treasure, and springs of water—dowsing, pure and simple—"is a modern and too limited view of its wondrous efficacy, the boundless range of which is duly signified by the German name *wish-rod*, *wünschelruth*." It is called in the Niebelungen Lied simply "the wish."

"The wish lay thereunder, a rod of gold."

Moreover he finds, in this larger sense, a correspondence between the divining rod, with its stem and fork, and the mandrake; also with the Hindu chark, or fire-generator. The mandrake and the shaped divining rod have a rough likeness to a human figure, and both had the power of bringing luck to their possessor. He refers to a letter from a burgher of Leipsic in 1575 to a brother who had sustained misfortunes in business and domestic affairs, and to whom he sends an earth mannikin or mandrake to revive his good luck.

Moreover, he tells us that "even now the likeness of a puppet or doll is sometimes given to the wish-rod; it is wrapped in swaddling-clothes, a head is stuck upon it, and a baptism is smuggled for it by furtively attaching the puppet to the body of a child that is

about to be christened" (*Prohle-Harz-bilder*, p. 79). In the Ober Pfalz the wish-rod is baptized and named, and three signs of the Cross made over it with the hand.

Kelly traces all—the caduceus, the chark, the forked wish or divining rod, the hazel sacred to Thor, and the thorn, also sacred, from which the rods were cut—all these and many more to association, if not identity with, the embodiment of lightning. "The intimate connection between lightning and human life and happiness may not be very obvious to all minds at the present day, but in primeval times it was a palpable fact, intuitively understood, and out of it grew the conception of the magic rod that fulfilled all wishes. . . . It is clear that the supposed attraction of the divining rod for metals was also a product of the same primitive mode of thought."

5. Be all this as it may, the use of the divining rod as we know it, the rod that "dips" or dowses for minerals—water-dowsing was a later development—was not practised in Europe till early in the fifteenth century even if we accept as genuine the work of Basil Valentin (*Testamentum Novum*, lib. i. cap. 25), a holy monk of Erfurth, who wrote in 1413 from his convent of S. Pierre. Chevreul, perhaps the first authority on the divining rod, quotes him with apparent confidence, from a MS. translation dated November 26, 1695.

He was considerably in advance of many later writers in his absence of superstition as to the cause of the faculty of dowsing. He is tolerant as to its use, but not satisfied with the attitude of the public as to what it involved.

"For man," he says, "by a false opinion, thinks and believes always that his skill hinders or advances this rod, and not the special gifts with which it is endowed by the benediction of God. The greater number of such people do not know by what influence these rods are struck, and constantly these ignorant workmen carry

them in their belts or their hats, and guard them sacredly and religiously."

The worthy monk's opinion as to the merely dramatic use of the rod, was apparently like that of Mr. Gataker. He seems even to realise that the power of water-finding is a faculty and not an acquired art, a fact recognised by others, for Paracelsus, towards the end of the same century, condemns the rod as often deceptive, and Agricola, the German mineralogist, has little more faith. He disparages the use of the rod for finding metals as a mere relic of ancient magical forms, but nevertheless goes into some detail as to its use. Writing from Basel in 1557, he refers to its employment in searching for mineral veins, and tells us that different kinds of rods were used for different metals — hazel being specially reserved for silver lodes. He is somewhat sceptical on the whole subject, and says that the rod was really of no avail except in the hands of a skilled miner, who trusted to natural signs. This, too, is quite a latter-day explanation of the phenomenon. A work published in Orleans in 1569, on the art of water-finding, contains no allusion to the use of the rod.

There is not really very much literature on the subject of dowsing till the Jesuit inquiry began. The Baroness of Beau Soleil published a list of one hundred and fifty mines discovered by herself and her husband, a distinguished engineer, by means of the rod. Her book, published in 1632, was dedicated to Richelieu, who was, nevertheless, so ungrateful a few years later as to put both baron and baroness into prison on the charge of sorcery. It is true that assigning them, the one to the Bastille, the other to Vincennes, may be considered more lenient treatment than burning them to death, as he did in the case of another alleged sorcerer. There they died in 1645, in destitution and misery. They used the same old paraphernalia enumerated by

Valentin, the "jumping" rod and the "falling" rod, and all the rest of them ; but she and her husband were experienced mineralogists, and had explored the principal mines of the New and Old Worlds, and had probably acquired considerable geological knowledge. In using the rod they confirmed to the usages of the age, which required a certain tinge of the romantic and the picturesque, and the assumption of occult knowledge was in the air. The baron held an important position as Controller-General of Mines in various parts of Europe, and ought to have known better ; but there is a lack of simplicity about his methods which savours of charlatanism.

6. However, the really interesting thing is that they were possibly the first to apply their faculty to the finding of *water*. Chevreul, following Lebrun, to whom his work is dedicated, definitely fixes on 1630 as "the most remote date which may be cited for the application of the rod to the discovery of springs, at least in France" (*Les Baguettes Divinatoires*, p. 42).

7. Nevertheless, Ménestrier, writing in 1694, thinks, as does Déchaies, that the practice of water divining was of the highest antiquity. Arguing in favour of further extending the use of the rod to the finding of thieves, as was done by Aymar and others, he writes : "Now, is it credible that in all the centuries in which the rod has been used for finding springs, there has never been any one who could make such discoveries as those of Aymar." This Aymar was a native of Dauphiné, who was credited about 1692 with the power of dowsing not only for water and metals, but for robbers and murderers ; and there is evidence that in two or three cases he was successful in bringing criminals to justice. Vallemont gives us the whole procès verbal, and Mr. Andrew Lang, in his "Custom and Myth," tells the story, with all due authentication, at some length. It was also told years ago in Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature," but with some disingenuousness, as she

describes his successes but not his failures, and it is superfluous to repeat it here. Aymar's fame was so far established, that he was sent for to Paris by the Prince of Condé, son of the great man, to be investigated; but even if he did not cheat there, as was thought, though Vallemont defends him (Vallemont, *Physique Occulte* I., 27-49), he failed so often when put to the test, that after being tremendously "lionised" for a time, he was sent back to Dauphiné discredited—an early example of the usual career of the professional medium; genuine phenomena to start with, a yielding to the temptation to claim too much, perhaps first for fame, and then, still worse, for money; finally, failure and well-merited disgrace.

Of course he had many imitators. There was a certain Barthelemy Bleton who, as far as I know, was the first to describe himself as a "hydroscopist," poor Aymar's disgrace having made a new title desirable. He possessed another distinction, and disclaimed any necessity for the use of the rod except for the information of spectators. He said the rod was "a mere index, expressing physical sensations." When the Society for Psychical Research said this a hundred years later about table-turning and other "automatic" phenomena, it was considered very new and original. He, too, was sent for to Paris and "investigated." The psychical research folks of the period had more experience by this time, and had an explanation ready, or what they conceived to be such. They said he "made the rods move by the imperceptible pressure of his fingers." Very likely he did, but that could not matter, any more than it matters who kicks the table at a séance. The point is, does the table or rod convey (no matter how pushed or kicked) any information not normally acquired? This, Lalande, who reports the case, omits to mention. He tells us that the Parisian physicists had made up their minds that he

was an impostor. It has been reserved, among physicists, to Professor Oliver Lodge, to show his brethren that they may do better with their minds.

"I have written against Parangue (another 'hydroscopist'), and belong to three academies, and you want me to believe such stuff," writes Lalande. A century and more has not produced much change in the fashion of criticism. One could parallel this phrase of Lalande's any day from our own journals. It is not the want of faith one complains of, but the quality of the reasons given for refusing proper investigation.

However, a Dr. Thouvenel, in Lorraine, gave the seer a better chance, and had the patience to make a great number of experiments. He records that Bleton found eight hundred times, and often blindfold. In 1783, when Thouvenel was commissioned by Louis XVI. to make a chemical examination of the minerals and of the medicinal waters of France, he appointed Bleton his assistant, with excellent results. In addition to performing the work required of him, Bleton indicated the position of various coalfields, and this led to his employment by the School of Mines to seek for coal near Paris, so his story ends more cheerfully than that of his predecessor, perhaps because he was less pretentious.

8. The classic on the divining rod is, of course, Chevreul's *Baguettes Divinatoires*, a book which grew out of the fact of his being nominated in 1853 as a distinguished man of science by the French Academy, to report on a *Mémoire sur la Baguette Divinatoire*, by a Monsieur Riondet. He collected a considerable amount of evidence on the matter, from which all subsequent writers have largely borrowed. This work was dedicated to Lebrun, to whom he acknowledges his obligations.

Chevreul gives an interesting summary of the opinions of earlier writers, who are surprisingly nume-

rous. He finds nearly a dozen writers who refer to metal finding before the Beau Soleils added to the utility of the faculty by turning their attention to water finding. He takes as his second period from 1630 to 1689, when the subject began to engage the attention of the Jesuits.<sup>1</sup>

The question, not only of the effectiveness but of the lawfulness of the use of the dowsing rod, seems to have been much debated at this period. The Jesuit Fathers have always, more than any other order, been "all things to all men," and have seen the importance of taking their part in the intellectual and scientific interests of the time to which they belong.

Chevreur enumerates about sixteen writers, of whom some half-dozen are Jesuits, who corresponded with each other, some as to the existence of the faculty, others as to its lawfulness; on the whole, they were of opinion that if it existed at all, it had no business to continue.

"In 1666," says Chevreur, "the illustrious Robert Boyle put the question, as one of its members, to the Royal Society of London, whether the divining rod is really put in motion by the neighbourhood of metals." Chevreur is not only a careful writer, but he was, moreover, a member of the Royal Society of London himself, and till the statement, which has been followed by subsequent writers, is definitely disproved, we may accept it as true, though precise evidence is lacking.

Chevreur, in touching upon the interest in England, does not tell the story of Lilly, who, having studied the *Ars Notoria* of Cornelius Agrippa, was anxious to test the Divining Rod, and persuaded the Dean of Westminster to allow him to experiment in the cloisters of

<sup>1</sup> The forty-six works on dowsing enumerated by Raymond, an American mining engineer, as having been written in the century and a half previous to 1700, probably include, in large proportion, those written by the Jesuits of the seventeenth century.

Westminster Abbey at dead of night, probably with a view to buried treasure. On the western side the rod became violently agitated, and he and his assistants opened the ground at the spot indicated. They found a coffin, which probably did not surprise them, and though history does not relate their intentions, no doubt they would have proceeded to examine its contents. Unfortunately "a storm arose which nearly destroyed the west end of the church, extinguishing all the candles but one, and made the rods immovable." It was not a pleasant position, a desecrated cloister, a possibly violated coffin, probably an angry dean to whom to explain things next morning, a dark night, a solitary candle, and a violent storm. However, it all ended well. Lilly "charmed away the demon, but made no more experiments."

Chevreul takes as his third period that from 1689 to 1702, which he calls the most interesting of the history of the rod, that in which it was largely used for moral purposes, and not only for metals or water, notably in the case of Aymar already referred to. When this use began it is not easy to ascertain. Mr. Baring Gould, in his "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," quotes the *Sieur Roger*, a lawyer of Rouen, as one who in 1674 was convinced as to the use of the rod in water-finding, but not in hunting criminals. This period includes a very interesting correspondence between two ecclesiastics, Lebrun and Malebranche, between the years 1689 and 1694, in which the whole phenomena are again and again described and discussed. They admit the genuineness of the dowsing with regard to water, and perhaps to metals, but not as to the other powers claimed, and on the whole consider that the faculty should not be encouraged. Among some fifteen writers, we find notably two doctors, Chauvin and Garnier, as well as two abbés, Lagarde, who tells the Aymar story, and De Vallemont, who, as

has been said, defends him, who regard the power as a natural gift, contrary to the opinion of others who believe Satan to be responsible for the whole business. Indeed, the *Histoires Critiques* of De Vallemont was put on the *Index Purgatoris* in 1701, in spite of which great numbers of Churchmen made use of "Sourciers," as they were now called.

Certainly some of the effects claimed were a good deal to get out of a hazel stick. Ménéstrier tells of a young woman who repented and confessed as to her performances, and he hints that her story, if true, points to assistance from a region rather further down than even the divining rod is likely to indicate.

The rod was very active in its "moral" capacity. "It answered every sort of question as to the talents or capacities of individuals, their sins, and the number of them. It was infallible with regard to the past and the present, but was nearly always wrong with regard to the future. The rod would tell how an absent person was dressed, the colour, the materials, and the fashion of the garments. It would reveal the journeys a person had made, and the wounds he had received, and on what part of the body."

No wonder that Vallemont's work was forbidden when things had come to such extremes! Lebrun of The Oratory published his book the very next year, but he took care of himself on the title page, and to prevent any mistake, called it "*Histoire critique des pratiques superstitieuses qui ont séduit les peuples et embarrassé les savants.*"

One interesting point in the book (vol. ii., Chap. 7, p. 635) is his description of four old divining rods which he had seen in Paris, inscribed with the names of the wise men from the East, but as such inscriptions were usual among the "properties" of magicians, these may only have been their ordinary rods utilised for divining.

Taking as the final period from 1702 to our own times, it is interesting to observe that like Bleton and Aymar, the most renowned among the "tourneurs" and "sourciers" were natives of Dauphiné. (See Chevreul, *op. cit.* 108.)

During the eighteenth century dowsing was employed in Italy, and a man named Campetti was in 1806 "tested" at Munich. The experts did not deny the phenomena, though they quarrelled over the explanation, a decided advance in the history of criticism. (See Gilbert's *Annalen der Physik*, vol. xvii. 1807, and lx. 1819; also Gehlen's Journal, 1807).

According to Pryce the first exponent of the dowsing rod in Germany was hanged as a cheat and impostor. (*Mineralogia Cornubiensis*, 1778, p. 113.)

A few years later, we hear of a successor to the Baroness Beau Soleil, a woman dowser, Catherine Beutler. (*Archiv der Medizin*, vol. i., p. 56, 1816). She was successful, but it made her ill, though she is described as a robust, healthy woman.

In Alsace there existed a Rhabdomantic Society, who believed so firmly in her powers that they petitioned the King of Wurtemberg to employ her services for the discovery of coal, &c., in his states. It does not appear whether the experiment really came off.

The story of Lady Milbanke's dowsing is well known, and has been lately told for us again by Mrs. de Morgan, herself a careful observer of "occult" phenomena.

"Lady Byron's mother, Lady Milbanke, had the faculty of using the divining rod, and was often asked by her neighbours and tenants in Durham county to exercise it for their benefit when they wanted to sink a well. Lady Byron told us that she had seen her mother's hands held tightly by Dr. Fenwick, a well-known scientific physician in the north, who, going behind Lady Milbanke, pressed the fingers of each hand, holding it so as to make the stick point upward

in the air. Nevertheless, when the lady had walked a few steps, the twig suddenly turned round, and, defying the doctor's hold, pointed to the ground with such violence as to tear the skin from the fingers, and even to draw blood."—"Memories of Threescore and Ten Years," p. 216.

She succeeded in convincing (by demonstration) Dr. Charles Hutton, mathematical professor at Woolwich, who records the circumstances in his "Mathematical Recreations." Water-finding had also been practised in Scotland about 1760 by Jenny Leslie, a Scotch lassie, and De Quincey tells us that "most of the kettles in the Vale of Wrington in Somersetshire were filled by rhabdomancy."

9. Towards the end of the last century there seems to have been a revival of the art of dowsing, though mainly for metals. In Cornwall it was in common use among the miners, who believed that the rod was guided to mineral lodes by pixies, the guardians of the treasures of the earth. Among the Mendip Hills, too, it was frequently practised, and Billingley, in his "Agricultural Survey of Somerset," describes the process. In Hone's delightful "Every Day Book" we find an account of its practice by a gentleman near Bristol. In Tilloch's "Philosophical Magazine" for 1802, vol. xiii. 309, we are told that a man discovered, by the accidental handling of a rod in his own shop, the existence of a mine "now being worked under the town of Redruth." Pryce too, *op. cit.*, gives several instances of the discovery of lodes, but few turned out profitable, as the rod dipped without discrimination of good or bad.

All readers of "The Antiquary" will recall the adventures of Dousterswivel, the derivation of whose name is sufficiently obvious. Kelly in his "Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition," p. 190, remarks, "Had the antiquary been half as well skilled in magic

lore as he was in the art of discovering Roman camps and Latin inscriptions, he might have convicted Dousterswivel on the spot as an impostor, when the fellow pretended to cut a divining rod in the broad glare of day, and with as little ceremony as one might cut a walking-stick. The success of such an operation is dependent upon many special conditions. It must always be performed after sunset and before sunrise, and only on certain nights, among which are specified those of Good Friday, Epiphany, Shrove Tuesday, S. John's Day, the first night of a new moon or that preceding it. In cutting it one must face east, so that the rod shall be one which catches the first rays of the morning sun; or as some say the eastern and western sun must shine through the fork of the rod, otherwise it will be good for nothing."

"Some sorcerers do boast they have rod  
Gathered with vows and sacrifice,  
That borne about will strangely nod  
To hidden treasure where it lies.  
Mankind is sure that rod divine,  
For to the wealthiest ever they incline."  
Sheppard's "Epigrams," 1651.

Naturally enough, about the middle of our own century the power of dowsing for water or minerals was explained with much elaboration of reference to mesmeric force (Mesmer himself used rods) and Od, and Reichenbach, and electro-biology, and magnetism, and the various phrases popular at the period. However, the talk had its uses, as it served to keep the question before the public, and water-finding became not only a reputable profession, but even a popular amusement. A writer of the period (see *Blackwood*, 1847) informs us that about one in forty experiments were successful, referring mainly to those among the Cornish mines. In Pryce's time in Cornwall, "all rods in all hands answer to springs of water." Dowsing for

minerals was less universally successful, he says they answered in the following order: limestone, coals, lead, tin, silver, iron, copper, gold.

The sixteenth century critics had considered the action of the rod due to "sympathy;" in 1679 Saint Romain and others had referred it to the action of corpuscles; others about the same time to electric effluvia; Willenius in 1671 calls it, in advance of his age, "a natal gift;" and Thouvenel, in the case of Bleton, calls it "electricity."

About fifty years ago two men, Adams and Napstone, were conspicuous as dowzers "for water, coal, and minerals in the earth" by means of hazel rods. They were, like most other English dowzers, West of England men, and their achievements were reported at some length by a Mr. Phippen, a surgeon in Somersetshire, in a pamphlet published about 1853.

Adams claimed to have discovered nearly a hundred springs, and one undertaking of his was reported widely in the journals of the period. This was a visit to Leeds by the invitation of Mr. Marshall, a well-known manufacturer, in which his experiment was successful under very carefully arranged conditions.

As we might naturally expect, the rod was used considerably at the time of the "gold craze" in California. A Spaniard largely advertised certain rods "certificated by several men of science." These were of elaborate construction, and their description suggests the quackeries of the seventeenth century, when crystal-gazing was practised by Dr. Dee with an elaborate ritual.

Some rods were tipped with the horn of a young heifer, containing "quick oil of amber and dragon's blood." Others were provided at the tip with a small ball made of the particular metal the rod was intended to discover, suspended by a horsehair and warranted by the certificates of the "several men of science,"

to "deviate from the perpendicular" at the right moment. (See "Letters from an old Rodman," *Democratic Review*, 1850.)

10. That the power is personal and has no connection with the special mechanism employed is beyond question. Some dowzers, as we have seen, employ no mechanism at all, others require rods of wood, whale-bone, or compound substances. Apparently then it is not in the rod. It is curious, too, that while for some the rod turns only for water, for others it is active near metals, or gas, or petroleum. And again, as we have seen in some hands, it becomes excited in the neighbourhood of corpses, murderers, or thieves.

Neither, given the rod, need it always be forked. The lituus of the lictors was merely bent. Bleton used any sort of rod, forked or straight, fresh or dry, so long as it was not cut from the elder tree. The forking of the fingers by folding the second and third over the palm to avert the Evil Eye, and the breaking of the forked merry-thought or "wish bone," may be reminiscent of the divining rod in its older use.

Mr. Baring Gould tells of an Italian, Amoretti, who "had sensations near water, coal, and *salt*."

That some persons do have sensations, however subjective, is undeniable. Bleton, when a child of seven, used to fall into convulsions when he passed over running water, and Catharine Beutler actually became ill under such circumstances. Medical men have testified to increased action of the pulse in the case of modern professional dowzers, but that again may be due to the mere consciousness of being under observation.

Any one interested in dowsing, with or without the rod, can readily experiment for himself. A forked twig is easily found, and it is not much trouble to walk along holding it in your hands a little in advance of your chest. You will soon find out whether the

rod "points" for you, and if so, whether you are really in the neighbourhood of water or not. Of course, the test is very insufficient if you are on ground familiar to you, or even on strange ground where the whereabouts of water is perceptible to eye or ear. The power of dowsing for metals is less common, otherwise experiment in this direction is simple enough, if any obliging friend will hide a few coins for you indoors or out.

To discuss whether the dowser deliberately turns the rod is mere waste of time. It cannot matter if he does. For him the movement of the rod is a mere externalisation of the fact, somehow in his consciousness, that he is near water, or oil, or gold, or whatever it may be.

We go back, in fact, to the old question that we asked in discussing crystal-gazing. The point is not *how does the picture get into the crystal?* which is easily answered. The seer puts it there. It is as his critics say, hoping to be unkind, but succeeding only in being veracious, merely his fancy. The point is *how did it get into his head?*

Similarly it does not matter how the rod is turned. The dowser probably does it himself without knowing it. But how did he subconsciously get the information which led to the turning of the rod? The question is not special to the art of dowsing. It is that to which we are driven whenever we discuss subconscious activity of any kind.

Two hundred years ago Lebrun wrote to Malebranche that the wand only turned "when the operator had *the intention* of discovering," that is to say, when in a state of expectation, conscious or subconscious. The faculty is in this respect, as in others, like that of visualising a picture in a crystal. It is a natural gift, *plus* the concentration and expectation which are encouraged in one case by the rod, in the other by

the ball or mirror, but to which neither rod nor ball is necessary.

A writer in the *American Journal of Science and Arts*, 1826, quotes the statement that—"With the precaution of washing the hands and the soles of the feet in a weak solution of muriatic acid or salt and water, and making the trial barefoot, the experiment will succeed with every one." But this is going a little too far!

The English dowser is as a rule a west countryman, just as those of France come from Dauphiné. The art was kept alive in Cornwall after it had been lost elsewhere in England; its revival was in Somersetshire.

Seven collections of recent records of water finding lie before me at this moment, all by west countrymen. Repetition so frequent seems to be due to more than chance coincidence, and one cannot but ask how far the possession of the faculty is a question of race. Were the dowsers of Cornish origin mainly, one would suppose that, like that of second sight, the gift was to be found largely among the Celts, but the term "west country" is too wide to imply any racial limitations.

Like the poet, the dowser is born, not made. You have the instinct or you have not, and if you have not you must go without. You cannot be made into a dowser any more than you can be made into a seer or a musician, though the gift, like all others, may be developed. One may deny its connection with the occult, call it an instinct, an intuition, or what you will. You may cheat consciously or unconsciously—lower the twig by muscular pressure or anything else you like—the important point is, does water or metal, as the case may be, exist at the spots you indicate? You may "call spirits from the vasty deep, but will they come when you do call?"

Among the varied facts I have collected in all

parts of Scotland as to special faculties and psychic gifts, I have never chanced to hear of any one with the water-divining faculty. Perhaps one reason is, that there is little need to take any special trouble to secure water, as there is more water in Scotland than anything else, except rock, at all events in the Highlands.

The divining for corpses which one hears of in American story-books is not properly rod-divining at all, and yet it comes near enough to the criminal hunting process just described, to come within our notice. Readers of "Tom Sawyer" will remember the search for the supposed corpses by floating a loaf down the stream, with the idea that the loaf would stop when the whereabouts of the bodies was reached. Tom Sawyer was not strictly truthful, and the story may be interesting only as folk-lore. Californian stories are often "folk-lore" too, but the following is at least suggestive.

A train was wrecked on a broken bridge on February 1, 1894, and seven men were drowned. All the bodies were recovered except that of the "station agent," whatever a station agent may be. For fifteen days the body was sought for, but without success. At last an old Spaniard arrived on the scene, unable to speak a word of English, and equipped with only a few tallow candles. He went to the exact spot in the river where the engine had fallen, "lighted one of his candles, fastened it upright to a shingle with a few drops of its hot grease, and set it afloat just where the floor of the cab had spilled its inmates. The shingle was not well ballasted and came to grief almost immediately.

"The old fellow prepared a second float with greater care, and this time made the sign of the cross with the candle before lighting it. Shingle No. 2 was launched just as the first one had been, and went dancing down the ripples without mishap. Led by

the Spaniard the searchers followed along the bank, most of them so impressed by the old man's earnestness as to frown into silence one or two who were inclined to laugh at the strange proceeding.

"Past the famous old Bohemian Club camp-ground, 200 or 300 yards below, the flickering light sailed on its frail raft, avoiding shoals and riffles and snags as though steered by an unseen hand. Half as much more distance down the stream was traversed, and at a bend where the torrent had piled up a long, wide bed of sand and coarse gravel in front of a sunken log or boulder came the *dénouement*. The water over this bar was scarcely half-a-foot in depth, and appeared to possess nearly as much movement as the current in the main channel. But, strange to say, the shingle came to a standstill. It turned around two or three times, lazily, as though in an eddy, and without making any further progress down stream drifted slowly to the pebbly beach and stranded.

"Two shovels were plunged into the gravel without a word of argument, and in a few seconds a hole had been excavated to the depth of eighteen or twenty inches. Water flowed in immediately, so discoloured by the disturbed earth that the eye could not penetrate it, but the shovellers could feel if they could not see, and one of them, with a frightened look on his face, withdrew his blade, exclaiming: 'By ——, boys, he's here!' A dozen willing hands joined in the uncovering, after a hand exploration had resulted in the discovery of clothing at the bottom of the hole. The gravel was so firmly packed that extracting the body was a matter of considerable difficulty, but when it was finally drawn out on the beach there was no difficulty in recognising the well-known features of Sabine."

According to some authorities, the use of the hazel twig for divining has been derived, by some confusion

of thought from the "hazel wands" of Jacob (Gen. xxx. 37) and Aaron's rod that budded; the Hebrew word (*luz*) being the same in both cases, and, it is said, more correctly translated "almond" (*cp.* Hos. iv. 12). It is well known that the witch (or *wych*) hazel flowers out of season, just as the almond tree puts forth flowers before the leaves appear. Early engravings of the pastoral staff are referred to in Brand's "Popular Antiquities," in which it is represented as carved with flowers, and in the Middle Ages there seems to have been a tendency to confuse the rites of religion with the rites of popular magic, and the staff of office may have been common to both.

In his "Popular Names of British Plants," Prior quotes Grimm's suggestion that the verb *halsian*, "to foretell," may be derived from the use of the hazel for purposes of divination (*cp.* C. Keary's "Outlines of Primitive Belief in the Indo-European Races").

The use of hazel-*nuts* for investigation of future events is alluded to by Gay in his poem, "Thursday, or the Spell," and by Burns in "Hallow'e'en," and hazel-nuts are found in pre-historic graves.

In *Disquisitio Magica*, bk. 3, Del Rio recommends the use of the hazel "to hunt thieves."

About the year 1821, Ralph Emmerson, an American, published some letters as to divining rods, in which he mentions a "peach twig" as used for the purpose. He says it was "withed down from an elevation of 45 degrees to a perpendicular over certain spots, and when these had been passed it assumed its former elevation." So it did the business, whether conventionally correct or no.

A modern dowser, Mr. J. Williams, who had been several times employed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, is said to "possess a partiality for hazel or nut-bearing rods of one year's growth." Probably the question is a mere matter of self-suggestion, and the

instrument the operator likes best is likely to be the most effective.

Naturally the main object of accumulating evidence on water-finding, or any other phenomenon, is that we may have data on which to base theory. There is no lack of evidence. Yet the only progress we can show towards understanding it is that we have given up talking nonsense about its explanation. Now we have progressed from the state of knowing nothing to the state of knowing that we know nothing, which is at least halfway to finding out something. Moreover, we can talk a little about it, and call it "an unexplored faculty," which sounds well, and commits us to nothing. There is no doubt that even sensitive people are sensitive in different ways. It is difficult perhaps to convey in words the fact that there seem to be varying degrees of relation between man and nature, or humanity and other forms of matter. Many persons are not conscious of the perfume of water, while to others (the present writer for one) a freshly poured out basin of cold water, is as fragrant as mignonette. It is well known also that there are persons who cannot hear the cry of the bat, and who are deaf to the higher notes of the canary.

The faculty of dowsing is ours to use, not yet ours to explain, though we are better off than when Albinus said in 1700, "I ween that no confoundeder thing is to be found in the world than the divining-rod business, for whatsoever is right and fit according to one, the same is wrong and unfit according to others, until there is no good to be presumed out of so great confusion."

## V

### HOW IT CAME INTO MY HEAD.—THE MACHINERY OF INTUITIONS

THE following pages are the substance of an address given to the Society for Psychical Research, under the title, more congenial to its nomenclature, of "*The possible Sources of Subliminal Messages.*"

The word "message" is used in the sense specialised in psychic vocabulary, as signifying the perception, by one's ordinary consciousness, of some memory, sensation, or deduction, of which one has been previously only sub-consciously aware, and which is externalised as a message from one part to another of one's personality. The former title, not of my own invention, is one which I reject for two reasons. First, the word "subliminal" does not, to my own mind at least, convey the intended image. I can understand a perception being below the *floor* of my consciousness, but the notion of its being below the *threshold*, seems as a symbol, unnecessarily imperfect. The word "message," though otherwise unobjectionable, has been adopted by the spiritualists, and suggests an association with "Mediums," and "Controls," and "Séances," all entirely remote from my present consideration.

I merely wish to discuss certain psychological conditions familiar in a greater or less degree, to a great number of persons; in the less degree especially familiar to women. "Give us your intuitions—but spare us your reasons!" is the masculine attitude towards

a woman's instinct, and, though perhaps for reasons other than those he imagines, the man is probably right. There are many circumstances under which the mind works without our consciousness of its working. One is, for example, at a loss for a name. "Never mind," we say, "it will come presently." The conversation continues, and presently with no conscious effort, the name is recovered. Or we have some mental work to do, say, a lecture to prepare or an article to write. We have no ideas on the subject, all is a blank. A little later we find the whole thing worked out in our minds, reasoned and arranged. There may, of course, be contributory circumstances, a different mood, the intervention of a night's rest, and so on; but there is the fact, to which many will testify, that an elaborate mental process, whether of originating or of reviving, has been gone through, absolutely without consciousness of effort.

"Things come into one's head," one hardly knows whence or how. In the artist, the poet, the musician, the teachers of men, we call the process "inspiration"; in the brute we call it "instinct." Midway we have the persons "of special receptivity," we have "intuition," and "woman's wit," and we distribute names and count them explanations. We talk of the science of psychology—

"By vivisection, at expense  
Of half-an-hour and eighteenpence,  
How brain secretes dog's soul we'll see."

If the old, old story be true, and we are all part-takers of the eternal, we shall not solve the mystery here. The achievements of science are the fixed products of Time; art, the highest utterance of man, is alone eternal. We forget Archimedes and reverence Homer; Shakespeare is eternal, and Cornelius Agrippa an historical curiosity. Thought is personal to the

mind that thinks it, and deduction from collective experience is liable to break down under individual scrutiny. It is only by collation of the workings of individual minds, that we can arrive at material for generalisation, and it is because it is individual, not because it is of special value as compared with other individual experience, that I have considered the following notes worthy of preservation.

The question of corroboration, as to which the standards of the Society for Psychological Research are very strict is here prominent to a degree which, under other circumstances, might appear pedantic. The address was first published anonymously at a time when Professor Sidgwick was President of the Society, and for this reason Mrs. Sidgwick was good enough to permit the following footnote.

NOTE BY MRS. SIDGWICK.

As no names are mentioned in the above paper, I am asked to state that "Miss X." has shown me all the signed documents referred to in it. The proofs of the part of the paper relating to incidents in which he was concerned have been submitted by us to Mr. Holmes, who has approved them. Mrs. Wickstead sent her accounts, as quoted, direct to me, and "D.'s" original account is also in my possession. The ladies spoken of as "D." and "H." have appended their signatures to the cases in which they were concerned, in testimony that the circumstances, so far as they knew of them, were correctly stated.

I may add that the incidents seemed to me to gain in impressiveness when I discussed them with "Miss X.," partly on account of details which could not be published, but which added to the force of the coincidence.

The aim of the following pages is solely that of presenting a familiar subject from a less familiar point of view. Much has already been written on the question of the *Sources of Messages*; many theories propounded which it is not my concern either to establish or confute; many experiences quoted, to which it is

not in my power to add much that is new, or anything that is startling. I simply make an attempt to examine a few simple experiences from the point of view of the subject, rather than from that, more familiar, of the spectator or the experimenter.

My own experiences, from which I propose to draw, have in them nothing of the marvellous; they are all of a most ordinary nature; they claim no merit but that of being carefully observed and recorded. For that very reason—because they present no special difficulties, because they are for the most part, as compared with others which have been described to us, mere commonplace—they are perhaps the better material for elementary inquiry.

I have attempted in several instances, mainly of so trivial a nature as not to absorb one's conscious attention at the moment of their occurrence, to analyse the impression which they created, to observe the nature of the sensations they aroused, and to measure the degree and kind of the emotion or train of thought, if any, by which they were accompanied.

That this analysis is far from satisfactory, I am quite as conscious as the severest critic could wish; this is the case for many reasons, some of them sufficiently obvious. The analysis of sensation is proverbially difficult at all times, and the analysis of sensation in some degree apart from one's ordinary experience, apart largely from that of others, having little analogy with other strata of one's consciousness, little help from antecedent probability and ordinary *a priori* deduction, has in it perhaps some elements of especial perplexity.

I propose to deal with such phenomena as are purely spontaneous, for, directly the question of experiment is introduced, we introduce also the element of that self-consciousness which I venture to think fatally destructive of just those conditions which it is most

useful to observe. And, just because of this, just because the phenomenon is in greater or less degree a shock, it is very obvious that we have, at the outset, that inevitable condition of surprise which, in some sort, disqualifies the subject for exact observation.

We might compare our position with that of an estate holder who, with the help of a competent water finder, has lately discovered a fertile spring upon his property. A few years ago we were prepared to admit the possible existence of water somewhere, deep down, far out of sight, but we were less prepared to admit that there were possibilities of in some degree commanding a supply by empirical methods. A few had brought to us specimens of the precious fluid. Most of us knew people who had some sort of experience for which they could not account, but we dismissed the phenomena as so far removed from ordinary experience as to seem either wholly fortuitous, or mere charlatany. The word "fortuitous" we now modify into "spontaneous," recognising that the phenomena are governed by laws, however little known or understood. In place of professional charlatany we have now the results of organised experiment. We no longer dispute the existence of the phenomena. We even classify the methods of their production under such groupings as "automatism," "telepathy," "hypnotic suggestion," "self-suggestion," and the like. But our classifications sometimes merely *name* while powerless to *explain* the phenomena. We want to go a step further back, to formulate, if possible, some system which shall help us to refer effect to cause. And when we remember that our material, our unit of thought, is not mere inorganic matter or a gas, a group of animals or plants, but a sentient, thinking human being, it seems as if our inquiry should have special advantages and facilities, in that we are not dependent solely on our own observation—that the subject of our research can intelligently

participate in the experiment, can itself observe, analyse, and record.

When considering the various psychological experiments of the kind now so familiar to us, which aim at classifying and explaining the impulses and emotions of the patient, one is sometimes tempted to ask, as in regard to other forms of vivisection, What is the Subject's point of view? This is the standpoint from which I propose to indicate not, as yet a clue to the solution of the problem of the Sources of Subliminal Messages, but, rather, a few of the difficulties which beset us in the attempt.

My friends have often said, "Surely you must have some impression of the nature of the phenomenon while it is passing, whether the message comes from without or from within, how far it is externalised, whether your vision—supposing a vision to be in question—is an externalisation of your own thought or mental perception; whether it is, so to speak, an emanation from some mind still in the flesh, or whether it is some definite message from a discarnate mind?"

Such a question, it might seem, should be, by an intelligent observer, easy of answer.

I confess, however, to feeling great sympathy with those who find it difficult to analyse sensations of this kind—possibly, even, some impatience with those who have a pigeon-hole ready prepared and docketed for the reception of each impression as it arises.

I.—Let me illustrate this point from the very simplest class of messages with which I am personally familiar, those in which a message is received, having no obvious corresponding sense impression.

One morning, 20th July, 1890, I had spent the whole morning, for I was recovering from recent illness, lying on a long chair on the lawn. I could not move without help, and was therefore incapacitated

from going back to the house and forgetting that I had done so, as might otherwise have been the case. About twelve o'clock a friend, casually calling, came through the drawing-room window into the garden to talk to me. When she returned to the house about half-an-hour later, a book which she had left in the hall was not to be found, and after a prolonged hunt in every likely place, she, with another friend, came back to the garden to see whether she could have left it near me. On hearing their story I at once remarked, "The book lies on the blue-room bed." The statement seemed wildly improbable, as the room in question was not in use, and was seldom entered even by the servants. There, nevertheless, on the bed, the book was found. Some workmen had come into the house during the morning, bringing a number of pictures and books belonging to a friend, to be taken care of for a short time, and these, for safety, had been placed in the disused room, the book lying on the hall-table having been accidentally included with the new arrivals.

Now, how is one to explain a circumstance of even this simple kind? One can hardly dismiss it as mere "coincidence," for this is but a specimen of a type of incident which occurs very frequently. It would be somewhat far-fetched to call it "telepathic," as the book was unconsciously removed, and we have no reason to suppose that the workman was aware of having included it among those he was carrying. No one in the house had seen its removal. The impression cannot have been, in any literal sense, clairvoyant, because there was no conscious picture in my mind. I formed no vision—of a kind often seen—of the whereabouts of the volume. I had no reason for the statement. I was not conscious even of forming a *guess*. I can only describe the impulse in some such phrase as "It came into my head to say"—*this*, and

many other things of a like kind, equally true, equally improbable, and equally unexpected.

I would group this with another case with which it has some features in common, though the source of the message is perhaps more apparent. A very intimate friend had died, and we found a sad pleasure in reading and discussing the many notices of his life and work which appeared in newspapers and magazines. One afternoon his sister, a friend, and myself were speculating as to the probable authorship of an article containing details of a kind so intimate that we felt sure the author must be a personal friend. Several names were suggested and dismissed; at last one of my friends remarked: "I seem to have a hazy notion who it ought to be, but I can't get hold of it." At that moment my eye fell upon the paper in question, and across it I read in the handwriting of my deceased friend<sup>1</sup> "Henry Roberts"—a name which, to the best of my belief, I never heard before. "That is the man!" my friend exclaimed—when our companion interrupted, "What Roberts do you mean?" "The Oxford man." "But I don't remember one. Where does he live?" "I don't know. I don't fancy he belongs to any college." At this point—again on the paper before me, and again in the handwriting of my friend—I read "Montagu Street."

It so happens that both of my friends are much more familiar with Oxford than I am, and the street I have called "Montagu" is a very unimportant one.

The friend who had recognised the name of the man was not able to say whether my further statement was correct, but the other lady remarked, "There is a Montagu Street, I know; but the only man I can remember living there is one whose name I forget—a great botanising man." "That is Roberts," said my friend. "He is a botanist, and he and my brother

<sup>1</sup> None of the names used are the real ones.

were great friends, and so the statement is quite likely to be true."

Now the crowning mystery of this story is that it *was not* true, and the article was written by some one quite different; so, had I accepted the communication as coming from my deceased friend (which happily I did *not*) I should have added one more to the multitude of cases one constantly hears of—of lying spirits and false messages—which would have been for me a very new and a very distressing experience indeed.

I find no difficulty in supposing that I received the name, Henry Roberts, from the mind of my friend who was trying to think of it, instances of sub-conscious knowledge coming to the surface in the mind of a second person more readily than in that of the thinker being common enough. The "Montagu Street" question is a little more difficult; but we may perhaps explain it, either as forgotten knowledge on the part of the friend whose sub-consciousness transmitted the name Henry Roberts, or as a forgotten association with the name Henry Roberts on the part of our other friend, who knew the name of the street, and not that of the man.

I had a curious series of impressions of this kind—unexternalised—recently under rather special circumstances.

I had been asked by the owners of a house, reputed to be haunted, to pay them a visit, in the hope of elucidating the mystery of the alleged ghost. I knew the bald facts of the case from a neighbour of theirs, and beyond the invitation had had no correspondence with them, and knew absolutely nothing about them, except that they were young married people with some little children, and were very highly respected. I had already formed the conclusion that the phenomena were mainly subjective, and that it was a case for Bell, Book, and Candle, and knowing

that the alleged ghost had been the occasion of real distress, I felt some responsibility for my visit, which I thought would either remove or emphasise the discomfort of my host and hostess, and of others dependent upon them. I was anxious, as far as possible, to earn their confidence, to secure such help as might be, in the difficult task of uprooting, in the course of a day or two's visit from a total stranger, an idea which had had possession of their minds for over two years. It is almost the only time when I have really longed for the power of controlling phenomena, so as to be able to "show off" at will.

I knew, however, that wishing would not help matters, and that I must await events.

My hostess drove me up from the station and courteously expressed her sense of the trouble I had taken in coming to so uncanny a house and among entire strangers. "We all tried guessing what you would be like," she said, "but it matters much more to you what we are like." There was my chance. "Perhaps I know," I said, "let me describe your husband;" and hardly knowing from one phrase to another what I was going to say, I sketched a personality which I had certainly not consciously conceived, and which had certain marked peculiarities—"very tall, extremely thin, with low forehead and unusually overhanging brows and deep-set eyes, clean shaven." I quote from memoranda made at the time. My hostess listened in silent surprise, and her only comment was, "You *must* have seen him!" Next we discussed the house. "Have you had it ever since you were married?" I asked. "No," she said, "we first lived at another place a few miles off. We came here two years ago." "And in the meanwhile you went to New Zealand?" I was impelled to remark. This too proved correct, though I said it with as little perception of its meaning as if I were pronouncing words in an unknown language.

Later, when I came downstairs, after changing my dress, I was introduced to my host, who had, I found, been suitably impressed by the account of these lucky hits. Something was said of a visitor to lunch the following day. "Is her name Clara Stimpson?" I was again prompted to inquire. This too proved correct.

So far my impulses had been impulse merely, without any sense impressions. The words "rose to my lips," in a very literal sense. But when a gentleman present asked me how "Stimpson," not a common name, was spelt, I had a momentary visualisation. The name is familiar to me only as that of a certain London tradesman, who spells it *Stimson*. One of his carts rose before my mind's eye with the letter p inserted in the name above the s. "With a p," I said confidently, which was correct.

The next day I was returning alone from a walk when I met my host in the carriage drive. "Miss Stimpson is here," he said. "She knows about what you said last night, and we want to see whether you can pick her out from the three ladies, all strangers, on the lawn."

I am too slow-sighted to distinguish easily even those with whose personality I am familiar, and I felt that here again was a case for self-abandonment. I walked up with perfect confidence to one of the three (they were all of about the same age and general appearance) and said, "You are Miss Stimpson," which proved correct. This, however, by itself would not be of any value, as I had only two chances of missing.

After that I was reduced to terror lest it should occur to my friends to ask awkward questions dangerous to my new-found reputation. I was by no means reassured when I learnt that part of the programme arranged for me was that I should "tell them their fortunes!"

This I declined, but offered to "read their char-

acters." The power of character-reading is, of course, simply a result of the habit of observation, and in four of the cases present I knew, before I began, that I should find the task easy enough. But I was not prepared to find myself sketching scenes in their past lives, and I listened with as little expectation and quite as impersonally, as if the voice speaking were that of some one else.

It would not be fair to repeat these statements, but all who were present bear me out in saying that the facts were all perfectly correct, and perfectly definite in kind.

I may add, incidentally, that I succeeded in "laying the ghost" so far that, though the previous manifestations had been very frequent, nothing has been heard of him since the date of my visit (August 29, 1894).

I have long felt that some degree of *exaltation* is conducive to experiences of this kind. This, of course, may be of all degrees and varieties, the only necessary conditions being, I believe, self-abandonment, and self-forgetfulness—whatever the motive. In the present instance my motive was a very strong one, and I never remember having so many impressions of the kind, without a single failure, in the course of so short a time, for all occurred within twenty-four hours of my arrival, after which, as I felt that the necessary preliminaries were achieved, and I had other work to accomplish, nothing more of the kind happened.

I have sent a copy of the passages in my diary referring to the above incidents to my host and hostess, with the following note, which they have signed:—

"The above statements are perfectly true, and, so far as we know, Miss X. could not have obtained the knowledge she displayed of our private concerns by any recognised method."

In my diary I find another recent example of this unformulated impulse to express what has never been consciously a thought.

In this instance I cannot attribute the impulse in any degree to special interest in the subject concerned, for nothing could be more futile, more absolutely without importance, except merely as a psychological curiosity.

On August 15, 1894, I was staying with my friend, Mrs. Wickstead, at a hotel in Scotland. When I wanted to ring for the maid in the morning, I found that my bell-pull was broken, and there was nothing for it but to go to the door of my friend's room, and ask her to ring and give the necessary order.

Knowing that she was in bed, and the door locked, I intended to call out, "Will you ring your bell, please," but the words resolved themselves into, "Who is Frances at Eastbourne?" "I must be going daft," I thought; and when my friend called back, "What? What did you say?" I succeeded, though with an effort, in telling her of my needs. It was not till we were creeping up the Caledonian Canal some few hours later that I had an opportunity of telling her of the ridiculous incident. "I don't know any Frances, do you?" I added. My friend laughed heartily, and answered, "Well, no, I don't, but I had a letter yesterday about a Frances who is going to Eastbourne, in whom I feel some second-hand interest. What sort of a Frances?" To my own surprise I had an answer ready. "A Frances," I said; "an oldish lady in a cap." "Quite true," said my friend, "I have never seen the lady, but she must be quite old enough to wear a cap." Mrs. Wickstead confirms her share of this incident as follows:—

"[On] August 15, as we were going up the Caledonian Canal on the steamer, Miss X. said to me, 'Who is Frances at Eastbourne?' I was very aston-

ished, as I do not know the Frances in question, but one of my correspondents a few days previously had told me of her visit to them at Eastbourne. When I asked Miss X for details, she said, 'I know the Frances is a woman, because of the way the name is spelt, and she is an oldish lady with a cap.'

This sort of thing is almost irritating. It is quite useless, and not even amusing. If there is only a certain allowance of thought-transference or clairvoyance or the like, why cannot it be more usefully expended? In my own case I am not even able to deduce any conclusions. I have expressed all I am conscious of concerning it when I say—"it came into my head." I believe, too, that I am justified in adding—"and such as the information is, I always feel that it is true."

II.—Another group of subliminal messages is that which externalises itself in *visual* form. I find that others, less accustomed than myself to the receipt of messages from the sub-conscious stratum of one's mind, find it somewhat difficult to sympathise in my feeling that this class is less startling, more natural, so to speak, than the group, in some way more simple, with which I have dealt so far. There is always, to me, something weird, something which quickens one's pulses and excites the kind of physical discomfort known as "feeling a cold wind," described by frequenters of séances, in listening to unfamiliar statements proceeding from one's own lips, in not knowing what you may be led, or perhaps driven, to say next.

As I have already had occasion to say in other articles, I habitually think in terms of sight. Though often congratulated on the possession of unusual powers of memory, I am absolutely unable to recall anything which I cannot visualise. Even numbers, when heard only, not seen, I associate with musical sounds, and these, in turn, with combinations of colour. Con-

sequently every idea or recollection, consciously dwelt upon, is visualised, and in many cases, dramatised—that is, my pictures have life and movement. For this reason, a scene conjured up either in the crystal or, as the professional “medium” would say, “in the surroundings” of those about me, has in it none of the disconcerting elements of the less externalised impression. It is more in conformity with my habits—has a greater share in my consciousness; moreover it is, except in the rare cases of “collective hallucination,” my own property, with which I am not obliged to part, except by my own choice.

And here I should like to say, in the interests of those whom such of us as “collect cases” are perpetually badgering for evidence, that I believe the instinct of the subject of such experience is to be silent about it. I was disposed till lately to regard as a personal peculiarity the sort of dumbness which strikes one at the moment of its occurrence. I can go away and write it down—I can talk about it later; I can, even while it is present, make trivial remarks on other topics, and “keep up” a conversation, but it is obviously easier to say to afternoon visitors, “Do you take sugar?” or “Won’t you have some more cake?” than to acknowledge that I am penetrating not only their thoughts, but possibly even their sub-conscious memories, at the moment. My visitors might not like it, for one thing; one has a guilty sensation of listening at key-holes, for another; for myself I have always the physical discomfort of being out of breath (a fact which may suggest more explanations than one), and finally one feels much as the young man does over his first sonnet (school-exercises not being counted), which he locks up in his desk for a length of time proportionate to the depth of the sentiments which gave it birth.

When, during my frequent visits to the Highlands

of Scotland, I am brought in contact with more Seers in a few weeks than in the whole of a lifetime elsewhere, I have the opportunity of noting the same conspiracy of silence, and of seeking to discover its cause. Again and again I come across stories, which, if true, and I have no reason to doubt them, go to show that, over and over again, catastrophes might have been averted, and trouble, greater or less, arrested in its course, if those who saw visions would have spoken out in time. I quote, in illustration, one story which struck us with some indignation, and which we had at first hand from the principal actor and the principal witness, two young men working in a quarry not far from Oban. One of the two, the fifth seer in a direct line in his family, had a brother who was about to row in a regatta on a loch some miles away. It was arranged that the quarrymen were to join him, but when the day came for their projected holiday, the seer declined to go, or to allow his friend to go, but would give no reason. Later, a telegram came to say that the brother was drowned. "I knew it," said the seer; "I knew it was to be so." We asked why he had not warned his brother against his impending fate. He seemed to think the very notion profane—an interference with "the will o' the Lord." We asked why he did not at least tell of his vision, and allow others to draw their own inferences. That, he said—and we heard this and the other excuse dozens of times—would never do; if you did that "ye'd hae nae mair," and indeed we constantly hear of "telling of the first" as a means of curing oneself of being a seer against one's will.

But to return to the question of visualised impressions, or intuitions, or transference of thought.

In October 1893 I happened one day to call on a friend who was engaged, I was told, with a visitor from the north. Though the visitor was unknown to me, I

recognised his name as that of a correspondent of whom I remembered nothing definite except that he had spoken of himself as the pupil of a certain professor whose lectures in philosophy and logic I had myself attended.

By some accident I remained standing for a minute or two before he was introduced to me, and had thus an opportunity of observing him, which I did with some interest. I have already explained more than once, that I am so strong a visualiser that my impressions, when at all vivid, constantly assume an objective form, and I see them before me as a picture, often allegorical. On this occasion I saw, standing near Mr. Holmes, the tall figure of a Hindu whose dress and bearing I observed carefully, and whose appearance I took to be a symbolic presentation of the thought which passed through my mind, "You don't look much like philosophy, not a Kantian or Hegelian anyway, mystic possibly—meditative and receptive—not observant or critical. Perhaps you have played with theosophy."

When I moved across the room for conversation, the figure disappeared, but some time later, when our talk happened to turn on the sources of messages, I mentioned the circumstance, and Mr. Holmes seemed deeply interested.

On November 23 I received a letter from him, reminding me of the incident, and asking me (saying that he would, later, explain his reasons) to answer the following questions:—

1. When and where did you see the vision ?
2. To what nationality did he belong ?
3. How was he dressed, and in what colour ?
4. Did he wear anything on his head ?
5. What colour was his hair ?
6. What sort of features ? Lips thick or thin ?
7. What was his manner towards me ?

I answered these questions to the best of my ability,

and by return of post received a letter from Mr. Holmes relating that a few days before (November 20) he had an interview with a "clairvoyant" footman, who had, quite spontaneously, described the same figure which I had myself seen five weeks earlier. For the sake of comparing details, Mr. Holmes' questions to me were framed upon the description given by the medium. My answers were from memory only, as I had made no note of the incident at the time, and the following, from Mr. Holmes' diary, does not give details. I may, however, observe that he believes that there is no discrepancy between my earlier and later descriptions.

"The note I have of our interview is as follows (entered November 18, 1893): — On October 10 or 11 I [was introduced to Miss X. who told me] that on entering the room where we were, she saw a vision (as it were) of an Indian gentleman, presumably a philosopher, standing behind me and vanishing immediately after I rose to shake hands with her. This vision, she said, she interpreted to mean that I was under an Oriental 'control,' and should therefore presumably be fond of psychology, logic, metaphysics, and speculative thought generally.

"She was careful to explain that she did not regard the vision as proof of the real existence of such a spirit, but merely as a symbolical embodiment or projection from her own mind of a conception which she had formed of my character. She then looked, she told me, at the shape of my thumb, and though not a believer in palmistry, and believing that the lines on the hands are inherited from our prehensile ancestors, she thought that this part being large was indicative of some considerable logical argumentative or reasoning power."

This is probably a correct account of what I said, except that I am hardly likely to have used the term "control."

I considered Mr. Holmes' hand very interesting from the curious resemblance of a somewhat unusually shaped thumb to that of a Parsee acquaintance, a great student of logic and of classical and Oriental mysticism. I have never been convinced of the justice of the pretensions of the alleged "science" of palmistry, but I often glean indications from what one may call the expression of the hand, and have sometimes found that the palm may act as, so to speak, a *point de repère* for thought-transference or intuitional impressions.

I now append Mr. Holmes' report on his comparison of evidence, November 20, 1893:—

*"Miss X."*

On entering the room I saw a vision of a man standing behind you.

He was an Indian; a Hindu, or perhaps a Parsee.

His clothes were white, apparently cotton or thin silk, with a coloured bordering.

He had a white cotton or silk turban on his head, with a red edge.

His hair and his whiskers were very dark.

His lips were rather thin, but not remarkable.

He stared before him with Hindu indifference, but seemed to regard you as his property. He stood quite close to you with his hand on your shoulder. He had a sort of guardian-spirit air; a sort of inspirer of your existence air; a general air of proprietorship and of your belonging to him.

*The Footman.*

There's a man standing by you now.

He is a furrener (foreigner). He isn't white and he isn't black, but he's a kind of dark orange, a sort of Mulatto colour.

He's dressed all in white; he's got a kind of brown holland suit on.

He's got a white turban on his head.

He's got dark hair and dark whiskers; very dark.

His lips are neither thick nor thin, but medium.

He looks at you very lovingly. He knows you very well, and looks as if he could take you up in his arms and hug you. He stands very close to you, so he must be very intimate with you.

Mr. Holmes adds:—

“See if this does not alter your theory of the vision. How could two different persons, one refined, educated, and well-connected like yourself, the other a poor, ignorant working-man, see precisely and absolutely the same subjective vision, if there were no objective reality there? Isn't the ‘simple truth’ hypothesis after all infinitely more simple and scientific and credible than all the fine-spun theories which seek to set aside the theory that the thing which we see first *is* that which it purports to be? I have no intellectual difficulty in taking the vision as a piece of genuine objective perception made by means of a sixth sense or special power (latent perhaps in all), but developed only in a few.”

I should perhaps state by the way that I have sufficient reasons, into which, however, I need not enter at length, for believing that this story of the footman was not, as might appear, a case of that inscrutable omniscience which usually pervades the kitchen. I am as certain as one can be of anything, that by no normal means could this man have heard of the previous incident.

I reminded Mr. Holmes of the probability that as his psychical experiments and experiences had been very few in number, it was likely that his interview with me might, on the occasion of his visit to a medium, be somewhat prominent in his mind, and that thought-transference might account for the second description of the Hindu. I have no means of deciding between the two interpretations.

III.—I find it possible to distinguish between a vision of a living friend and of one who has passed away, by reason of the greater concreteness of the phantasm of the living—a perception, mental, perhaps, rather than sensuous; but on very careful reflection, recollection, and analogy, I can find no certain

difference in kind between the thought image—the visualisation of an idea—and the so-called “spirit”; suggesting that this, too, may be in certain cases the visualisation of an idea—for myself a pregnant fact, infinitely suggestive. My own inclination is invariably to exhaust every possible normal, even every possible *extension* of natural explanation, before appealing to what we call the supernormal, and I ventured to urge this point upon my correspondent. He, however, assured me that he found a “straightforward spirit” a much more thinkable hypothesis than “an externalised visualisation of a symbolical idea subconsciously conceived”; and though I may have my opinion on the case in point, “I have no reason but a woman’s reason”—“I think it so because I think it so.” Such things rest, unfortunately, but too often on impressions too subtle for analysis, almost too subtle for statement.

A curious little incident, not the less suggestive and perplexing for its extreme triviality, occurred, in connection with Mrs. Wickstead, while in Scotland in 1894.

We were breakfasting alone, very early and somewhat hurriedly, on the morning of August 10, having planned to take the coach to Glencoe, when I suddenly perceived a little red man dangling in the air, a foot or two away from my friend, and remarked upon the fact. She looked at the toast-rack and marmalade in front of her, and being used to odd statements on my part, asked “What kind of a red man?” As he continued his dangling I was able to describe him in detail. He was entirely red, and had the sort of outline of the little jointed ivory figures one buys in the Soho Bazaar. His arms were crooked abruptly upwards at the elbow, and he ceased a little above the knees. Mrs. Wickstead could suggest no explanation, and we went our way leaving him, so far as I know, still dangling from an invisible string. We did not

return till late in the afternoon, when Mrs. Wickstead, having entered the house first, met me as I came in at the front door, saying "There's your red man!" and showed me a letter she had just received marked *Immediate—To be forwarded*, and sealed in red wax with the impress of precisely the figure I had described. The letter had arrived by the first post, shortly after our departure, and was of consequence.

We have kept the seal, which, so far as I am aware, I had never before seen, and Mrs. Wickstead has written a separate account, as follows:—

"One morning at breakfast (August 10), during our Scotch tour, Miss X. said to me, 'I have a hallucination this morning of a little red man dancing about on the table; he has no legs, and has one of his arms crooked up in a funny fashion; he has something to do with you, not me, as he keeps dancing about in front of you.' I could not account for the little red man in any way; but in the evening I found among my letters (which had arrived after we had gone out in the morning) one of some consequence, with a red seal, an impression of a man without legs, and holding a flag or sword in one hand."

No cudgelling of my brains or stirring up of my memory avails to contribute anything further. I simply saw the little red man, he suggested no association, and I assigned him to my friend merely because he seemed to belong to her "surroundings."

Once, while we were out, I observed a girl with a heraldic device in her hat, sitting next to the coachman in his red jacket. We speculated as to the possibility of his correspondence with my vision. But I felt at the time he wouldn't do.

I should like, before passing on to another point, to illustrate what I have said as to the sense of abstraction which accompanies the image of one who has passed away.

It has happened to me many times, so vivid are these phenomena, to mistake a phantasm for a living person, *for the moment*, but only for the moment. I believe that this is merely a consequence of my extreme slow-sightedness, as, when the *time* sufficed, the mistake has always been corrected. If the vision has only sufficient duration I become conscious of its independence of my environment. In every case that I am personally able to recall, the living phantasm brings with it some hint of its own surroundings, of the things with which it has some real relation—the *dead* seem to be abstracted from any surroundings whatever.

Now for my illustration. An old family friend, a very accomplished musician, had directed my musical studies from my earliest childhood. He had a very highly strung, artistic temperament, yet, strange to say, was an absolute Materialist. He was so closely associated with my favourite study, and my desire to please him by diligence and perseverance was so intense, that, when thoughts of music occupied my mind, it was not remarkable that I should visualise my old friend at his piano or organ. And it was always definitely at *his* instrument. If I fancied him at mine, a more careful observation would show that the piano before him was his own favourite Broadwood. I would see him, too, among the surroundings of the seaside home to which he had lately removed, which, though I have never seen it, seems quite familiar, and I was glad to find, on seeing a photograph of his studio that I had correctly localised the old familiar furniture.

On the 5th May, 1893, I received a letter from his wife, in which she said that both were getting old and feeble, but nothing of a nature more alarming. On the 9th, one of my frequent pictures of my old friend arose before me. He looked just as usual, with this difference, the image bore no relation to anything else ;

it was, if I may so describe it, a vignette; there was no piano or violin, and the sense of abstraction, before referred to, was very intense. To a friend, who endorses the story, I remarked sadly that I knew my old friend was dead. I also entered the impression in my diary. The next day brought the sad news. I do not think there was any time coincidence. My friend had died at dawn, and my picture was formed about 9:30 A.M., three hours later. I have never classified this as "a phantasm of the dead"; it has rather seemed to me as if some sub-conscious knowledge of the fact, however obtained, served to modify a familiar act of visualisation, or, if we make thought-transference the basis of any theory of explanation, as if the seer were incapable of receiving an impression of the new surroundings, as if the new atmosphere could not communicate itself, as if, let us say, my friend had become abstracted from time and space and had no relation with the things which we call "real."

Strange to say, I have lately had a similar monition of the dangerous illness of my friend's wife. I give the story as noted by an intimate friend at the time.

"On January 29, X. and I were dressing to go out when I suddenly noticed that her eyes were fixed on the window, in a manner I know well and have long learned to associate with something 'uncanny.' I waited till her face regained its normal expression, and then asked what she had seen or what she felt. She turned to the clock, and said in a dreamy, far-away tone, 'A quarter past 11. I think Mrs. Laurence is dead or very ill.' The next morning a letter telling of the dangerous illness of the lady in question reached X., from a very rare correspondent."

[Signed.]

My old friend's illness was very sudden—the result of a stroke of paralysis, but I cannot discover any

time-coincidence, unless it may be that of the writing of the letter, as to which my correspondent can only say, "it was somewhere about the middle of the morning."

And here I would say emphatically that there are two classes of phantasms (I use the word as less committal than "spirits," for I do not feel myself in a position to speak with certainty) two classes of phantasms, of which I am unable to speak from experience, the phantasm that is so concrete as to utilise furniture, remove tables and occupy chairs, and the phantasm that is so abstract as to be independent of space, beyond whose person one may trace the pattern of the wall-paper. One knows both of them in Christmas Annuals and "psychic" novels.

I offer another example of the possible explanation by thought-transference of what at first sight might seem a vision of the departed.

Two years ago I was visiting in a place in which I had spent part of my childhood. The constant companion of those earlier days was my friend M., who since my last visit had married, gone abroad, and had died. So intensely was the thought of M. associated with all my old haunts, and so complete had been, during life, our power of thought-transference, that a vision of my old friend in half a hundred spots would hardly have surprised me. Nothing, however, of the sort occurred, until one day I was walking with a friend past a row of houses built since my last visit, and towards which I felt only the distaste of an old inhabitant for modern improvements. At the last house in the row I had a momentary vision of my friend M. As, of course, the sense of my friend's loss was very prominent in my consciousness, I could not, with any fairness, analyse the impression, for it is obviously a case in which one would have to discount for expectation. It was, perhaps, the very last place

in which such a vision might be looked for, still I never for an instant mistook the figure for any other, brief as was the impression of its presence.

A remark made to me the following day possibly explains the phenomenon. A sister of my deceased friend said to me, "I want to take you to call on the Ts. They live in the end house in that row of new villas," naming the place of my vision, "and would like to know you. They are too old to call upon you, but M. used to be there so much that I think you would like to meet them. They think they saw you pass the house yesterday."

What more likely than that the thought of M., so prominent in several minds, should have thus taken shape, perhaps, in some such fashion as in a crystal picture? But I cannot tell.

I have, so far, tried to express the effect, upon the subject, of three stages of supernormal messages.

(1) The impulse to deliver a statement which seems to owe its genesis to something apart from one's own consciousness, to be independent of reason or memory, perhaps analogous to the messages of clair-audience or automatic writing, but having no corresponding sense impression, an elementary form possibly of the phenomenon known as "trance utterance."

(2) The externalisation of an idea, a symbolic presentation of an impression consciously or sub-consciously made.

(3) A definite sense hallucination, presenting some fact sub-consciously acquired by thought-transference, clairvoyance, or other means.

These have all so much in common that to distinguish between them is not easy, and may be considered merely fanciful. But sometimes, as in the following case, a mind picture seems to contain all three elements at once, and the analysis becomes more complex still.

During the month of August 1893, we chanced to be staying in a seaside village on the north coast of France. The hotel was so full that we had to sleep in a little chalet at a short distance away. My own room was next to that of Mrs. Wickstead, with whom I had then only a slight acquaintance.

On August 11, about 7.20 o'clock, I looked into her room on returning from my afternoon bathe, to ask if she would walk with me up to the hotel for dinner. I found her lying on her bed, with her back to the window, and reading the newspaper. In place of the wall behind her, I seemed to see the view of a seaside watering-place—a view quite different from that really visible through the window. With this for a background, I saw a scene which will be shortly described.

I was naturally somewhat startled, and hardly knew in what words I accounted for my visit; but I left my friend very hastily and returned to my own room. I there wrote the following memorandum in the few moments which I could spare before going up to our meal at the hotel.

(A.) "*Friday, August 11, 1893.*—I entered Mrs. Wickstead's room rather hurriedly this afternoon about 7.20, to tell her that I was going up to the hotel terrace, and found myself momentarily confronted with a startling scene. She was resting on her bed, and the very limited space behind her seemed to have expanded so that I looked straight on to the sea without the intervention of wall or window. It was rather a sea than what lies before us here. Against this background a man was moving so that I saw his profile only. He was above average height—not young—grey, with a moustache—clear-cut face—very upright. As he came near Mrs. Wickstead he turned so as to face me, but my attention was distracted at that point by the intervention of two other figures who seized

him from behind with gestures which somehow conveyed to me annoyance, if not actual malice. These were two girls, perhaps between eighteen and twenty-five, but it is not quite safe to say. I saw only one distinctly; she was well outlined—rather ‘gentlemanly’ in her get up—had a ‘tailor-made’ air—I rather think a shirt, but if so it had a stiff front or a man’s tie, and was not loose and soft. The other girl impressed me as the stronger, but whether mentally or physically I cannot say. The man was well groomed—dressed, I *think*, in grey. I did not see the girls’ faces.”

While at table, I told my friend that a wish she had chanced to express that something of psychical interest would happen during her visit seemed to have been fulfilled, but without describing the circumstances, which we agreed she had better have in writing. We also agreed that in view of the possibility of some further development, it would be better that we should exchange no ideas upon the subject. On our return to the ch<sup>â</sup>let, I presented her with my memorandum. She expressed great interest, but did not tell me to what extent the vision was veridical, beyond the remark that though the description of the gentleman was almost exact, she felt tolerably sure that he had not a suit of the colour I described.

The next morning I was alone in my room, turning over in my mind the details of my vision, when suddenly the whole scene reappeared. For the first moment, I was inclined to feel that this was only a visualised memory, occurring as it might have done in a picture in the crystal. But I soon perceived that it was something more, as the story received new additions, which I at once described in writing, of which the following is a copy:—

(B.) “*Saturday*, 11.40.—Sometimes, if I wait without seeking for information, I get my visions repeated with additions—a recrudescent memory, as I believe,

involving some facts unnoticed at the moment. I have now discovered the name of one of the two girls. As I was noting down yesterday's events in my diary the whole scene was reproduced in a flash with the addition that the man on being held back shouted 'Aimée! Aimée!'" [The real name being one which, as to the peculiarity of its finals, corresponds with this.]

Early next morning I slipped this memorandum under the door of my friend's room, calling her attention to it, with the remark, "I have found out the name of one of those girls." When we next met, my friend expressed increased interest in the story, but again offered me no information. During the day, however, she put into my hands a case containing photographs, calling my attention to the portrait of a friend of whom we had had occasion to speak a few days before. I at once exclaimed, pointing to another portrait near it, "Why, that's the ghost; and a very good likeness, too." She then told me that she had had all along little doubt that this gentleman, her friend, Admiral Z. [whose real name and title I am not permitted to give—a man of distinction in one of the Services] was the original of my picture; that the two girls in question were his daughters, but they were unknown to her, and that she could not at all explain the details in my vision which had seemed to express some enmity towards her on their part.

I now add Mrs. Wickstead's remarks upon the incident.

"Miss X. has asked me to give an account of a curious incident in which I was the agent. I was lying in my room after bathing, reading the *Daily Telegraph*, and my thoughts entirely centred on the article which I was perusing. I heard a knock at my door, and on my saying 'Come in,' Miss X. entered to tell me that she was going up to the terrace of the

hotel, at the same time remarking that I was very flushed, which, I said, I attributed to the bath. During dinner, about half-an-hour afterwards, she said 'I saw something extraordinary in your room just now,' and on my expressing astonishment she told me the following strange story, which I cannot do better than give in her own words as she kindly wrote it out for me that evening. [See A. *ante*.]

"I was much impressed, as all the figures were so distinctly described that I could, without hesitation, recognise every one of them. I purposely gave Miss X. no hint which could in any way guide her to a solution of the meaning of this curious vision.

"The next morning while I was dressing she pushed under the door the following, at the same time saying 'I have discovered the name of one of the girls.' [See B. *ante*.]

"Now this is to me most interesting, as my second name was Aimée, and I have never in my life been called by that name except by the man in the vision; and on my asking Miss X. why she wrote the name with *é* instead of the more usual *y*, she replied, 'because it impressed me as being written thus.' I never sign this second name except to official documents, and she could not possibly have known that it was my name, my first [which is here given as Esther], of course being well known to her." [Mrs. Wickstead does not even use her second initial.]

The next chapter in the story was as follows:—

On Monday, the 14th of August, we were at a hotel in Rouen, and at table d'hôte I was seated next to my English friend, Mrs. Wickstead; and in conversation, she referred, but without naming him, to the admiral, and without touching upon the incident which had introduced him to me. As she spoke, I happened to be twisting round with my fingers a tall goblet of Chablis, into which I was idly gazing. As I looked, there

formed upon the surface of the glass the following words, in long, narrow letters,—

“Aimée is Esther ; the one who speaks is Kate.”

I read the message aloud to my friend, who at once exclaimed,—

“Now you know. It is quite true that I, Esther, am Aimée. The name properly belongs to me, but it is one which I never use, and never employ in my signature, and never hear except from the lips of this one particular friend, the admiral. It is also true that one of the girls is called Kate.”

We both agreed that this message was of a particularly perplexing kind, as I had all along supposed that the cry, “Aimée, Aimée,” referred not to my friend, Esther, but to the admiral’s daughter.

On the suggestion that I might perhaps see something more, I again gazed into my goblet, when at once a picture appeared as if in a crystal.

[I quote the account written the same evening and which has been preserved (with A and B) by Mrs. Wickstead.]

“*Monday Evening, August 14.*”

“There succeeded a picture not so clear as before, and which I cannot recall except as a memory—that is, I can revive the impression, but not visualise the scene—A long row of houses of the seaside lodging-house type—in front a road—beyond, a long low building—an esplanade, and below the sea—at the door of the building stands the same man as before—the right hand in his pocket, looking straight out before him—*perhaps* it is not a door—I saw the upright lines behind him—it may be a window—it faces the sea.”

My friend was quite unable to say whether this vision were or were not likely to be true, as the place at which the admiral was staying was one she had never seen ; but she took an early opportunity of send-

ing him a description of the incident, and two or three days after, she read me his reply.

I add some further notes of Mrs. Wickstead's on the story.

"I must here state that my conversation at that moment was with reference to the man in the vision, although unknown to Miss X., and my thoughts apparently called up these names in the glass as if to tell her to whom I was alluding.

"On writing to tell my friend of this vision, in reply he says, 'the description Miss X. gives of the house does not correspond with the house I am living in, but does to a great extent with the club from which I always write—it is on the sea-front with a road in front—then the esplanade and sea—and I often stand at the door or bay window and look out across the sea.'

"One or two points are interesting as regards the first vision. I said to Miss X., 'you are wrong about the colour of the clothes the man was wearing, as he only has a brown suit with him.' In reply to my query to him on the subject, he writes, 'I had worn a grey suit that morning, and a brown one in the afternoon, but at 7.15 o'clock I must have been dressed for dinner—the girls had on serge dresses with silk fronts, not shirts (as they were going out for a sail after dinner); they often wear in the day-time stiff shirts with ties.'"

It seems to me that this story contains, as to the source of the messages, varied and conflicting elements. The figure of the admiral might perhaps be traced to thought-transference from my companion; but as the figures of the girls—unknown to her—may be regarded as "part of his surroundings," whatever that phrase may mean, it would seem more simple to consider both elements in my vision as purely clairvoyant. In either case, the picture may be regarded as belong-

ing to Class III. But supposing it to be clairvoyant—that I really did see the man and his daughters—how shall we account for the irruption of that part of it which was not *literally* true, though to me quite as real and vivid as any other—the action of the girls in withdrawing their father from my friend's influence?

This can only be taken as symbolic, as belonging to Class II., the visualisation of an idea. How far the idea was of my own conception it would be difficult to say.

Then the explanatory message seen in the glass of Chablis—whose mind gave birth to this? Is not this, although more externalised, of the same class as the impulse to say things which our minds have not consciously conceived?

The vision of the admiral standing at his club window—which was literally coincident—one would explain without hesitation as thought-transference, except for the fact that if we admit clairvoyance in the former case, one does not see why it should be excluded in the other, just because another and simpler hypothesis would fit the circumstances equally well.

On the theory that one's intuitions and premonitions and the like are messages from one's sub-conscious self to the self of one's ordinary consciousness, it is instructive to note that one's sub-consciousness occasionally appears to regard things from a somewhat different standpoint from that of the ordinary consciousness, to present important facts in an aspect which makes them seem to us unimportant, to externalise only some trifling accessory in an interesting picture, and to misrepresent, and often exaggerate, one's emotions. Why, for example, should it not be as easy to see the contents of an important letter as to see the (equally unknown) device upon its seal? Why, again, should we be subjected to what I may describe as fictitious emotion, as in the following example?

On Tuesday, January 22, 1894, I was reading, as is my custom, before rising. I had been reading for perhaps an hour and was vaguely conscious that there were movements about the house. I was reading "Love's Labour Lost," and had paused to visualise the second scene between Moth and Armado in the full absurdity of its detail. Suddenly, just as one scene succeeds another in the crystal, the picture I had conjured up disappeared, and gave place to that of the village street of my northern home. But, as often in dreams, the scene was historically inaccurate, for not only were there the rough stone cottages thatched with ling, of my childhood's days, with one of which (in my picture, especially visible), the abode of an old servant, I was very familiar, but also part of the block of handsome stone buildings by which they have been lately displaced, and in which an old friend W. chances to have his offices.

Together with the picture, there flashed upon me a sense of loss and distress, which, as I gazed, took possession of my whole being. Tears sprang to my eyes, and I felt that I knew that something sorrowful had occurred, though of what nature I could not recall. The impression was as if left by forgotten knowledge, not a forecast of the future, the sort of distress with which one awakes from a forgotten dream. A moment later, hearing the steps of the maid, and the clink of the tea-cup outside, I extinguished the lamp to give me time to recover from my too obvious distress. She re-lighted the lamp and handed me, with my tea, a letter which I at once perceived was from a sister of my friend W. I opened it with increasing apprehension, for, as I had heard from her but a few days before, I felt sure she must have some special reason for writing. The letter was to tell me that our dear old servant, who formerly lived in the cottage of my vision, and whom I had known all my life, had died suddenly

and that my friends had just returned from the funeral service.

It is an ungracious task to measure one's regrets and affections, but, as so often happens in the case of being "prepared" for a shock, the previous emotion was in excess of that which the news itself would have occasioned.

Certainly, whatever the source of such messages, there is about them a distinct lack of the sense of proportion in time, space, and degree. In the case just quoted, the superfluous emotion did not certainly come from the friend who communicated the news, for her interest in the old servant was much more recent than my own. So far as I can tell in looking back, I went through none of the natural consecutive processes of reasoning which might lead from a vague sense of something wrong in a certain village to association of the fear with those dearest to me in the neighbourhood, dread as to what that might include, and terror of the worst. I am perfectly clear that I saw both dwellings at once, the sites of the two being not fifty yards apart.

There are many cases of this kind which do not admit of being recorded before the coincidence is known, and which must therefore rest on my personal veracity and be judged accordingly. This may be said also of the following incident, in itself trifling, but which I quote as a further illustration of the queer way in which one seizes upon an accessory, rather than the more important item in an incident. I was driving home in the afternoon of January 14. My cab was checked at a street corner, and I noticed that we were passing an oyster shop. Suddenly I knew that my friend E. was sending some oysters to an old gentleman we know who is ill. I looked at the time—4.20—and though I had not the smallest reason to suppose E. had ever thought of doing such a thing I felt no doubt as to the fact. I fully intended to note it down on my

return, but unluckily forgot all about it till next day, when I heard my invalid friend's daughter sending a message of thanks for some oysters sent by another friend, *not* E. E., however, was present and I turned to her and said, "You ought to have sent those oysters, I saw you doing it yesterday afternoon at 4.20."

"That was the very time they were being sent off," she answered, "and though they were Mr. Jones' present, I ordered and sent them at his request."

Presumably the motive force in any act is the initiation of that act. Mr. Jones had never sent my friend a present before in his life, and, indeed, knew him very slightly; such impetus as the act might receive from its novelty and his initiation ought, one would naturally suppose, to have been accompanied by the idea of Mr. Jones, and yet such idea failed to reach me, while the more familiar and commonplace one of E. did its work.

In receiving messages of this kind, I always feel that a main point is to preserve them from admixture with the ordinary stratum of consciousness; otherwise they become, in point of psychological interest, as dreams at the moment of waking, to deep-sleep dreams. As soon as I begin to reason about an impression, I begin to distrust it. Constantly, in trying to receive trace impressions of the kind known by the absurd name of "psychometric," I find that having dismissed my first impulse as too improbable I am reduced to mere guessing, and all interest is lost. So I think it a good rule to say whatever comes into my head on such occasions. For instance, D. has noted down the following: "December 24, I showed [X.] Aunt E.'s little box to-day, and said, 'You may have the contents of this if you can see them through the lid.' She answered, 'Then I certainly shan't get them, for what I see is not likely to be in a box of that sort' [a cardboard two-inch cube, coloured to look like oak]. 'What do you see?'

'Wedding cake.' In point of fact, the box contained a miniature plum-pudding in a toy basin." I am perfectly aware that whereas my first (and approximately correct) impression seemed to my reasoning faculties absurd, the second article I visualised—a memory of recent shopping, an inkstand shaped like a cricket ball—was far more wide of the mark.

I do not apologise for the triviality of the experiences quoted. Were they of a more startling character they would lend themselves less easily to comment, either now or at the time of their occurrence. What I feel to be, from the critical standpoint, far more important, is their numerical frequency, and the relation of success to failure.

For about five years I have tried to keep a diary of such things. I have aimed at writing down premonitions before their coincidence was known—noting cases of thought-transference, retro-cognition, trace, intuition of all kinds. I am conscious, as most people are who attempt to keep diaries, of unlimited omissions; but so far as the entries go, I think they have been kept with exactness, and I may point out that, as I have exercised no selection as to entries, as I have omitted cases because I forgot them, or because the book was not at hand, or the occasion not convenient for writing, not because they were not good, such omissions tell against me, and not in my favour.

I am certainly within the mark in saying that I have noted less than one-third of the total of experiences of this kind. I ought to say, too, that I never note pictures which spring from fancy and recrudescent memory which I recognise as such at the time, nor pictures which I *put in* the crystal or deliberately conjure up, unless they develop in some unexpected direction. Such things are obviously not worth recording, as any one capable of visualisation can create them indefinitely at will. They are like half the

novels one reads, amusing for the moment, occasionally suggestive, but mere pastime and not worth remembering.

I have omitted, too, certain cases which, for various reasons, have found record elsewhere—as for instance, when any friend concerned in the experience has asked for a written account of it and it has not seemed to me worth while to repeat the memorandum. Further, I ought to explain that an entry may include half a dozen pictures or impressions, provided they relate to the same subject and occur on the same or a not distant occasion. For example, the whole story of Mrs. Wickstead and the admiral is recorded under one heading, and comes in first as “Number 31” and then as “31, continued, see above.”

Perhaps one year's records may be taken as typical; 1894 gave, as far as I can judge, a good average; better, I think, than 1893; not so good as the two previous.

All the above details being allowed for, I classify my record for 1894 as follows:—

- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) 19 cases good.  | (d) 7 cases unexplained. |
| (b) 5 „ bad.        | (e) 5 „ incomplete.      |
| (c) 27 „ imperfect. |                          |

(a) The classification “good” does not refer to the quality of the message, but only to its accuracy. The “little red man,” for example, is very trivial, but as far as it goes it is correct; this, and “Clara Stimpson,” and “Frances at Eastbourne,” and “The admiral” series, though differing in quality, I should classify alike as “good,” because they contain no element of doubt.

(b) I classify as *bad* such impressions as seem to have no foundation in fact, as for instance, when I picture a friend as in trouble, who, in point of fact, is in average spirits, and the like. I am inclined to believe

that nearly all such cases are due to the irruption into an imperfect, or imperfectly understood, experience of the ordinary consciousness. Of course in certain cases there is another obvious explanation, that a friend may have transmitted the impression of a passing mood or sensation, keen enough for the moment, but forgotten in looking back, when questioned on the day's general complexion. Two cases originally classified as *bad*, I have since changed to "imperfect." One of these is, I believe, where the evidence complete, really a *good* case, but I leave it, at present, as *imperfect*.

(c) I classify as *imperfect* all such cases as are only partly good—like the "plum-pudding" story. It occasionally happens that a case at first *imperfect* becomes *good* in process of time.

(d) The class *unexplained* includes such stories as the Hindu and Mr. H., which is neither right nor wrong but, as far as we know, meaningless. I was at first disposed to classify these as *subjective*, but I am inclined now to think that inadequate, perhaps unfair.

(e) The cases classified as *incomplete* are those as to which the evidence is too imperfect to admit of any conclusion being drawn; which it would be unjust to regulate to the *bad*, but which, for lack of precise information, I am unable to classify more precisely.

I will not further multiply examples which are the more tedious because their principal point lies in the minuteness of their differences. I have perhaps made it apparent how difficult it may be for even the recipient of supernormal messages to speak with any certainty as to their source. I should like to sum up, as possibly suggestive of comparison to others of wider and more startling experience than my own, the very few conclusions which I have been able to deduce from my own observation of apparently supernormal messages, which, I may remark, have been tolerably

frequent during my whole life, and which I have now observed very carefully for about ten years.

(1) I find it quite impossible to mistake the intention of any figure which has ever appeared to me at the moment of death, although these figures have, I think, in all cases, presented their usual appearance.

(2) I think also that, when the glimpse has been more than momentary (and again I would emphasise the fact of my slow-sightedness), I have never, even in the case of strangers, mistaken a vision of a deceased person for that of one still living.

In both cases I am speaking of the kind of vision which we call clairvoyant—which it is difficult to trace to the mind of any one living, or to any memory or observation of my own. In both there is a strong sense-impression of abstractedness to which I have before referred; in the former case this, naturally, is further accentuated by the emotion or shock which accompanies it.

(3) But things become more complex when this sense of abstractedness is carried—as in the case of the Hindu—into pictures of the kind which seem to me to be externalisations of an idea. If the idea, whether born in my own mind or communicated from that of another, does not include any surrounding circumstance, the figure will be “a vignette,” having no relation to things about it, standing or walking possibly in the air, owning none of the usual conditions of time and space.

(4) But if, on the other hand, the mind in which the picture originates further conceives *the surroundings*, these too will be presented. Then the vision will fall under one of two groups:—

(a) The picture may be thought of as in definite, distant surroundings, so that the seer, while walking in a London street, may see a friend seated at a dinner-table at ten o'clock in the morning. A vision of this

sort is difficult to distinguish from "clairvoyance," and it is constantly so miscalled, just as any subjective hearing of voices is miscalled "clairaudience." I admit the frequent difficulty of distinction. Happily, we have usually the obvious ground of coincidence, the comparison of time, place, and content of message.

(b) The figure may be thought of as having relation to my surroundings, so that I may see a friend, who has pictured himself as calling on me, in the act of lifting the latch of my garden gate. This is an instance when a hallucinatory figure may be excusably mistaken—as frequently happens—for a real one.

In all subjective analysis and observation of this kind, there are two constantly recurring difficulties, both of which have to be reckoned with—the element of surprise and the element of expectation. Each is in its way a serious interruption—the shock which partially unnerves, the antecedent knowledge or apprehension which over-stimulates the activities, so that discrimination between what we *see* and what we *think* we see, adds another feature to the problem of exact observation.

It must be a very hardened observer indeed who does not feel some degree of emotion, whatever its kind, however familiar its occurrence, at the sudden extension of one's purview; and it is, in many cases, only afterwards that one analyses the brief impression.

This, inevitable as it is, emphasises the importance of deducing no rule from a single, or even from a few examples. It is so easy, and yet so fatal, to read back the proof of any theory one is anxious to establish.

On the other hand, expectation too is a serious pitfall, far more serious, I believe, than we are ready to realise. The question is not one upon which time will permit me to enlarge; but I believe that the extreme difficulty which has beset all my mechanical experiments in crystal-gazing is to be found equally, though

less obviously, in every analysis of sense-impression. There is the difficulty of *sense*, of, so to speak, *physical* expectation, and the difficulty of *mental* expectation, this last being both conscious and sub-conscious.

In the above illustrations I have tried to select some which seemed free from special complications, the importance of which I think will be readily conceded.

There is one danger of which I say nothing, because, in truth, I know nothing of it—the alleged danger to health of mind or body. For myself, I am perfectly healthy; accustomed to an active life spent, in great part, in the country; riding, walking, or gardening; a lover of animals, flowers, and country pleasures. My health, like that of most, has suffered interruptions, but I can emphatically say that my psychical experiences are clear and abundant in proportion to the perfection of my physical health—that weariness or exhaustion, which might render them dangerous, makes them, as a rule, impossible.

## VI

### HYPNOTISM

1. The History of Hypnotism and its association with Psychical Research.—2. What Hypnotism is.—3. The value of Suggestion.—4. In the Consulting-Room.—5. The Dangers of Hypnotism.

“Is there any need to appeal to the miraculous for an explanation of facts of this character? Must we invoke the supernatural? . . . No, these phenomena contain nothing supernatural. This view I shall never be weary of proclaiming. Hypnotism is directly amenable to our means of investigation, and must needs be an integral part of the known domain of science.”—CHARCOT.

1. IT was, perhaps, not, on the whole, a happy thing for hypnotism that, in shaking off the quackeries and the superstitions of its infancy, it nevertheless retained some flavour of the occult. There is no inherent reason why the discovery of the use of hypnotic suggestion should be associated with psychic inquiry any more than the discovery of the use of chloroform or of antipyrin. But the association has always existed, though there are signs increasingly obvious to the student that, with the wider recognition of its uses, the independent position of hypnotism is daily more completely acknowledged.

There is an old saying, “Always win fools first”; and this seems to have been the policy of the earliest exponents of what was then called animal magnetism. It seems inconceivable that intelligent and educated persons should not have seen through the theatrical *mise en scène* of the processes of Mesmer and his disciples, but the novelty of the ideas involved was so

perplexing, that quacks and charlatans seized the opportunity and turned it unscrupulously to their own account, and so, from the first, the subject was veiled in a degree of mystery which, to say the least, was highly unscientific.

By a curious coincidence the last quarter of a century which has recognised the study of the occult as reputable, has also recognised the use of hypnotism as scientific, and, once more, not at the hands of sensation-loving "professors," but under the direction of men of science and of literature, the two subjects have come to the front together.

In 1866 Liébeault published his first work upon hypnotism; in 1867 the Dialectical Society began to collect evidence as to the reality of spirit phenomena; in 1879 Charcot began his famous work at the Salpêtrière; little more than two years later the work of the Society for Psychical Research was projected.

It is, to say the least, suggestive that three of the doctors best known as making use of hypnotism as a means of cure in their ordinary practice should be all members of the Society for Psychical Research, two of them holding office in the society, and all contributors to its literature. The reason is sufficiently obvious. The hypnotic condition is one which gives special facility for the investigation of certain phenomena of mind and states of consciousness, and psychical observations, in turn, are useful to the philosophy and diagnosis of the physician.

There are many whose first objection to the practice of hypnotism is that it contains nothing new, it is nothing but the old teaching of Mesmer and Elliotson, which we knew all about long ago.

This objection, as a matter of fact, *understates* the case. The only new element in the problem, that of the value of suggestion, was known, if not to Mesmer, at least to his early followers—Faria used to induce

the sleep by verbal command only, without passes—and the sole novelty lies, not in the fact, but in our appreciation of it. For the rest, we have subtracted from, rather than added to, the early discoveries. We have given up the “odid force” and the “electrobiology,” which served to explain the phenomena to earlier writers. The old books contain pictures showing streams of light issuing from the person of the operator, and directed with healing force towards the person of the sufferer. Now the operator has lost his importance—he sends out no streams, and has no special gifts—he is little more than a machine; and, indeed, machines have been invented which, in many cases, do his work perfectly well. And then, too, we have given up all the mystery which surrounded the performances of Mesmer, all the supernaturalism which Elliotson employed. Spiritualism has no more connection with hypnotism than it has with vaccination.

A brief glance at the history of hypnotism will help to make these points clearer.

The history of modern hypnotism divides itself naturally into three chapters.

(1) As practised by Mesmer under the name of animal magnetism. From 1775.

(2) As practised by Dr. Braid of Manchester. His treatment was known as Braidism, or hypnotism, to effect a distinction from the magnetic fluid theory. From 1843.

(3) As practised by Liébeault of Nancy, and distinguished from all previous theories by the discovery of the value of suggestion. From 1860 to our own day.

To point out a few landmarks on the way from Mesmer to Liébeault will facilitate the consideration of modern discovery.

While studying for his medical degree in Vienna, Friedrich Mesmer's attention was drawn to some remarkable cures effected by a Jesuit priest, Father Hehl.

These cures were said to be due to the application of a fluid or magnetic influence, emanating from steel magnets, which were applied to the persons of the patients. Mesmer discovered that he was able to produce the same results by merely passing his hand over the parts affected, and he deduced the theory that animals, as well as metals, possessed this power, and drew the attention of various learned academies to a force which he called "animal magnetism," and which was long believed to be the power at work in the hundreds and thousands of cures which were ascribed to him, and to others under the name of *mesmerism*.

That much quackery was practised, much superstition fostered, is beyond doubt, but we may do well to follow the charity of Dr. Moll, who writes:—

"I do not wish to join the contemptible group of Mesmer's professional slanderers. He is dead and can no longer defend himself from those who disparage him without taking into consideration the circumstances or the time in which he lived. That those who defame Mesmer know least about his teaching, and have the least acquaintance with his works, is very clearly shown by a whole series of books about modern hypnotism."

Among the successors of Mesmer we should specially mention De Puységur, who was, perhaps, the first to observe the somnambule or deepest stage of hypnosis, of which we shall speak hereafter; and the Abbé Faria, who, in 1813, forestalled the later discovery that the sleep was due to a brain-condition of the subject, not to any influence from the operator.

The year 1843 saw the beginning of the modern science of hypnosis. A little volume was published by James Braid, a young Manchester surgeon, under the title of "Neurypnology," followed three years later by a second, "The Power of the Mind over the Body." He was the first to induce hypnosis by fatigue of the

eye, aided by verbal suggestion; and he was the inventor of the term *hypnotism* (*i.e.*, the state of sleep), as distinguishing his own practice from that of the earlier magnetisers. He also was the first to discover the value of hypnotism as an anæsthetic.<sup>1</sup>

This was a tremendous advance, but his discoveries attracted less notice than they deserved, perhaps because medical attention was, just about the same time, absorbed with the new discovery of chloroform. Nevertheless he may be regarded as having had a direct influence on the modern practice of hypnotism, since it was the study of Braid's book which led Dr. Liébeault to open a small dispensary for the treatment of the poor at Nancy, in 1860. This brings us to the latest chapter in modern hypnotism. In 1866 Liébeault published his first work on the subject. In 1875 an important article on "Induced Somnambulism" was published in Paris, by Charles Richet; in 1878 Charcot began his famous work at the Salpêtrière; in 1886 Bernheim, whose distinguished name secured attention for his subject, published his famous work on "Suggestion and its Application to Therapeutics"; and in 1889 Dr. Lloyd Tuckey published, in London, his "Psycho-Therapeutics" advocating the Nancy treatment, a book which, now in its third edition, remains a standard work upon the subject; and in the same year Dr. Voisin, of the Paris Salpêtrière, read a paper before the British Medical Association at Leeds.

It is interesting as exhibiting the growing interest in curative hypnotism that all the twenty-seven books referred to by Dr. Bramwell in the course of a recent pamphlet, have been published since 1888, and all but four between 1890 and 1894 (inclusive).

The subject has long been, and to some extent is

<sup>1</sup> The only complete study of the history and works of Braid has been given us by Dr. Milne Bramwell.

still, shrouded in mystery, and quacks and charlatans of every variety have made their profit out of it. Much, in spite of recent research and inquiry, remains unknown; the unknown is taken for the sublime; from the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step. Those most interested in hypnotism cannot but acknowledge that many, interested only in themselves, have done their utmost to bring the whole subject into contempt. It has been treated as a mere entertainment; it has been surrounded with quackery and superstition; it has fallen into the hands of those whose little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing.

Hypnotism, however regarded—therapeutically, psychologically, morally—needs to be rescued, not from its opponents, but from its friends. The fact that many members of the British Medical Association of 1889 seemed to be about as well informed upon the subject as the French Royal Society of Medicine of 1784, drawing conclusions, one cannot but suspect in both cases, not from what mesmerism or hypnotism had done, but what it was reported capable of doing, is due to the zeal of those who have combined to place hypnotism on such a footing that its investigation is by some considered as much beneath the dignity of a learned body now, as it was a century ago.

This state of things will not be mended as long as it is possible for the showman to make hypnotism into an entertainment, or the quack to use it as an excuse for trifling with disease. It is very easy to exaggerate its danger—a point on which we shall have more to say presently—but it has its dangers as have all agencies of the kind, and is not to be employed indiscriminately, any more than chloroform, nitrous oxide gas, or Somebody's Soothing Syrup.

2. Probably no serious student would venture upon any accurate definition of hypnotism—we do not as yet know enough to say what it is, but only what it

is like. It is—with limitations—very like sleep, as its name implies, and the hypnotic intelligence is very like the dream intelligence. In both, it seems evident that something has been subtracted from the ordinary consciousness.

In our dreams we commit, without hesitation, various acts which in our waking state would be condemned by reason and judgment. We converse with people we don't know, we walk about in insufficient costume, we pass, without surprise, from one scene or group of persons to others wholly unconnected with them. We are not quite "all there." So in the hypnotic state. We are literally not "all there," and the different degrees of hypnosis depend upon how much is "there," and of what kind. In sleep, when we are "not there" at all—that is when we are in deep sleep—we have no remembered consciousness whatever, but in the hypnotic state we are able to arrive, not at mere unconsciousness, but at a different consciousness, a consciousness having at times its own special memory and its own distinctive powers, and those, occasionally, of a very superior kind. Hence the great interest and importance of the hypnotic condition as distinct from that at which we arrive in mere ordinary sleep.

It is characteristic of the hypnotic sleep that the subject accepts, without inquiry, the suggestions made to him. There are stories innumerable of the effect of suggestion upon the somnambulist in ordinary sleep. One recorded by Abercrombie, and very often quoted by later writers, is a good case in point.

An officer, serving in the expedition to Louisburg in 1758, was the constant butt of his associates, who had discovered that his dreams could be influenced by whispering in his ear during sleep. They would make him believe that he had fallen overboard, that a shark was pursuing him, that he was engaged in

a quarrel, and so on, in each case arousing him to suitable action—the attitudes of swimming, diving, firing a pistol, and the like. He would awake with a sense of exhaustion, but with no recollection of his dream.

In the hypnotic state exactly the same kind of thing may be very easily produced, and at first sight the analogy of the two conditions, of sleep and hypnotism, seems very exact, and Liébeault, Bernheim, and other writers of great experience, maintain their close relationship. Dr. Lloyd Tuckey of London, and Dr. Moll of Berlin, think that the analogy has been somewhat overpressed, and, indeed, the differences seem fairly obvious. The hypnotised person seems to be capable of far greater powers and activities than, except in the very rarest instances, are recorded of the ordinary somnambulist. Moreover, the hypnotised person is in relation with his hypnotiser, with whom he talks and who influences his ideas and conduct, whereas the sleeping person, except in such rare instances as that of the somnambulist quoted, has relations only with himself.

However, for our present purpose it may suffice to answer the question, "What is Hypnotism?" in some such terms as the following:—

Hypnotism is a condition, artificially induced, in which the mind is prepared to a degree unusual in the waking state, to receive and to carry out the suggestions of others.

It will be observed that we say *unusual*, not *unknown*, in the waking state, or whence would come many of the "cures" performed at the shrines of saints, by faith-healers, vendors of quack medicines, by charms, anointing with oil, and other similar agencies?

Whether the condition is due mainly to the withdrawal of certain powers or to the stimulating

of others, to the sleep of the conscious self or the awaking of the sub-conscious self, is a problem still in the balance.

3. Considering the very small importance which most of us attach to other people's suggestions, it seems as if a condition which enables us to assimilate them more easily might be hardly worth the pains bestowed upon it!

The suggestion and influence of others have, however, greater weight with most of us than we are readily inclined to admit. However great may be our independence or self-sufficiency, we are unconsciously impressed and worked upon by those about us, to a degree of which few are aware. It is a mere commonplace to say that the power to avail himself of this fact constitutes the real skill of the leader of men, from the orator or preacher down to the "managing woman" and the persuasive tradesman. By the process of absorbing the interest and sympathy of the audience, the attention is turned in one special direction, is virtually subtracted, as in sleep or hypnosis, from all the interests of the normal state, so that, for the moment, we "forget ourselves" and are unconscious of the lapse of time. Into the blank thus created the orator is at liberty to introduce such ideas as he is desirous of impressing upon us, and in the mind so prepared they assume an undue value and prominence, and we are persuaded if not convinced.

The mother who picks up the crying child and "kisses better" the wounded knee, the physician who assures his patient of recovery in other scenes, the quack who administers his electro-magnet and his bread-pill, the teacher who encourages to renewed efforts of memory or understanding with "You can if you try"—all are constantly illustrating the value of suggestion. We all know the effect of suggestion

upon a crowd as expressed in the saying, "One fool makes many." It lies at the root of much religious emotion of the Revivalist kind, as all readers of the history of field-preaching, of Irvingism, and Shakerism, and many other "isms" must allow.

It is a recognised force, valuable or mischievous as it may be used, and upon this force, according to the latest and best supported theories, the whole importance of hypnotism depends. Some minds are much more open to suggestion than others. We all know the story of the man who wagered a large sum that he would persuade a crowd of persons that the lion on the top of Northumberland House wagged his tail. The passers-by did not all accept his suggestion that "It moves, it certainly moves." A large proportion went on their way convinced that he was one of those fools who make many. In short, they were not suggestible.

It is obvious that there are certain occasions when the suggestions of others might be of infinite value to us—occasions when the ideas have become so set in a certain direction that our own will-force is not sufficient for their readjustment. Who does not remember the discomfort of the mood which in childhood followed upon being naughty? We wanted to start afresh and did not feel cross or disobedient any longer, but there was a horrible embarrassment in changing the current of thought and action, except in the presence of the one or two who had the tact to divert our attention in a new direction, to "suggest" some idea strong enough to wipe out those with which the weary little mind was already occupied.

How does hypnotism subserve this purpose? We have already seen that the hypnotic state is, in varying degrees, a state in which the normal powers are lulled or dulled as if in sleep, when observation, the logical faculty, the power of judging assertions and balancing

cause and result, are, for the time, in abeyance, and the mind grasps, without inquiry, any statement or command authoritatively thrust upon it. Dr. Lloyd Tuckey, following Tarchanoff, illustrates this condition by the following analogy: The addition of one more ray of light into a room already fully illuminated, commands no attention, while the same ray introduced into a perfectly dark room assumes undue importance and becomes of wholly disproportionate consequence. So with a single assertion or command. We tell a man in the waking state that his coat is on fire. He refers the matter to his reasoning faculties which, as there is no fire in the room at the time, dismiss the statement with instant contempt. Make the same assertion to one whose mind is an absolute blank. It stands alone in the void, the logical faculties are absent, the statement is received and acted upon. The man tears off his coat and stamps upon the imaginary flames.

The mind, empty for the moment of its usual contents, seizes and acts upon the first authoritative statement supplied from without.

This state, however, would last as long only as the hypnotic state. The idea conveyed would, of course, pass away with the condition which made its reception possible. The woman who has nursed a sofa cushion, at the command of the hypnotist, under the impression that it was a baby, will, on awaking from her trance, restore it to its place, and wonder how she came to find it on her knee.

Under these conditions but little could be accomplished. It might be suggested to the drunkard that brandy was a nauseous beverage, and while actually hypnotised he might refuse the proffered glass, but he would probably be all the more ready for refreshment when the trance was over.

The real value of hypnotism as a curative agency

lies in the possibility of suggesting to the subject ideas and commands which he will carry out in the waking state. To the child, that he will give up biting his nails; to the hysterical girl, that she will have no more fainting fits; to the kleptomaniac, that he will have no further longing after his neighbour's goods. The single ray of light introduced into the darkened room is of greater relative power than any other in all the flood of light which occupies it before and after.

We have thus seen that (*a*) hypnotism is the science which deals with the state of hypnosis; (*b*) that hypnosis is a state characterised by increase of power to receive suggestion; and that (*c*) obedience to this suggestion may be deferred, and may be executed in the waking state after an interval longer or shorter as the hypnotiser may suggest.

4. Let us, by way of illustration, imagine ourselves in the consulting-room of one of the many doctors who now make use of hypnotism in their ordinary practice. This scene shall be to the best of my ability a composite photograph, representing not one scene, but many.

There are present the doctor, his assistant, and ourselves. The first patient is a young lady accompanied by her mother. The doctor has been treating her for some time, and has learned the symptoms of her malady. She has been overworked at college, has become anæmic, nervous, and sleepless. She has been treated in the usual manner; tonics, gentle exercise, fresh air, mental rest, have been prescribed. The last has proved unattainable. The mind refuses to rest, it preys upon itself, disturbed nights and weary days destroy all hope of profit from the remainder of the treatment. Hypnotism, all ordinary methods failing, is to be tried for the first time.

She is placed in a comfortable chair so that her head is supported. Her hat is removed and her

mother is invited to take a seat beside her. The girl is nervous. "It is of no use," she says. "You will never succeed."

"Why not?" suggests the doctor gently. "You are a student; you know what it is to abstract your thoughts, to become oblivious of your surroundings?"

"Certainly," she agrees.

"Well, now," he continues, "instead of abandoning your mind to quadratic equations, just resign it to the contemplation of these," and he holds up two fingers about six inches from her eyes and a little above them.

"But that will make me squint?" she says.

"Never mind; when you're tired of squinting, shut your eyes."

There is about two minutes' silence, then she begins again. "I think, doctor, I should be able to abstract my mind better, if you would explain to me why I need squint. I am sure you must have a good reason for asking me to do anything so disagreeable."

"By all means. Our experience is that the state at which we want to arrive is most easily produced by fatigue of a nerve centre. Sometimes we ask our patients to watch movement—the motion of the hand up and down before the eyes. Sometimes we employ a sudden flash of dazzling light. Some use a loud noise, the beating of a gong for instance, to tire the hearing."

"You won't do that, will you?" she asks quickly. "It might lead to murder. I would always risk hanging to stop a noise."

"No, I don't propose to try it in your case. But I should like you to persevere for a few minutes in fixing your gaze upwards. Have you never noticed the sort of stupefaction that follows from a fixed gaze?"

"Oh yes; on Sundays I've stared at my Prayer

Book in a long kneel, till I had hardly sense left to get up again."

And the silence is renewed. Presently I see a look of blankness steal over the expressive face, the eyelids droop. The doctor relaxes the rigidity of his fingers, and draws them slowly downwards before her face. The eyes open again, and the air of alertness and intelligence returns for a moment.

"Hush," says he, "don't speak, you're asleep—you're asleep," and he continues his stroking motion a few inches in front of her face. His voice is low and gentle—"you're asleep," he continues monotonously—"asleep. You're asleep, asleep. You're sleeping."

The eyes re-open, and the girl seems thoroughly alert.

"What *did* you do that for?" she asks, "I was just beginning to feel sleepy and comfortable, if only you hadn't changed the tense. That just aroused my attention."

"I am so sorry! I'll remember that another time. Now, I don't want to weary you, and we'll stop for to-day. We have made a good beginning and I'll ask you to come again in two days. Remember all we said about diet and fresh air;" he adds to the mother; "this is going to succeed if we persevere, I think."

"Do you really think so?" I ask, as the door closes.

"Oh yes, undoubtedly; but it will take time. She is too much interested in the phenomena. That is the drawback in the case of a very active mind."

"Do you mean that her will-power is too strong?"

"Not a bit of it. The impossible cases are those of weak will-power or of uncontrolled and restless wills. No, her powers are all in her favour. The greater the will-power, supposing that the patient is willing to exercise it in our favour, the better for our purpose. She can *will* to keep wandering thoughts out of her

mind; *will* to devote her attention as I shall prescribe; *will* to obey whatever I may suggest to her. But at present the idea is new. She has an active, inquiring brain, and till she has explored her sensations, and comprehended my methods, we shall do nothing."

"Don't you grudge the expenditure of time?"

"Not in the least. The case is promising—she showed decided tendency to the sleep, at the first visit, and I *have* had cases in which absolutely nothing has been done during the first twenty, or even more. Now this"—as a card is handed to him, "does make demands on one's patience!"

The new arrival is a lady whom I at once recognise as a fashionable beauty, whose portrait is a familiar object in shop-windows. She has, it appears, been here often before, and she is good enough to explain to me her reasons.

"I'm trying to get hypnotised so that I may get not to worry. I'm always worrying, and it is ruination to one's looks. They say there's nothing like hypnotism for worry, and there's so much to worry about. We're trying to let our Scotch property you know, and then I want to give up our South Kensington house and live in Grosvenor Square, and there's no house that suits us in Grosvenor Square; and then there's my maid threatening to get married, so selfish, you know, and all the time I worry, and I'm getting to look positively hideous."

By this time she has taken her place in the chair; she is quite familiar with the method of procedure, and lies back with eyes half closed.

"This good kind doctor is so persevering," she continues to me. "I am such a tiresome patient, I know. He is always telling me to go to bed early and take a walk every day, but I can't do that in town and so I'm trying hypnotism. My sister takes chloral, but

they say hypnotism can't hurt you in any way, and chloral makes your eyes look muddy."

No one answers her. The doctor is making passes up and down in front of her eyes. We are quite silent for five minutes.

"I am beginning to feel so nice and creepy," she observes. The doctor is still silent and continues stroking the air. "I know I'm really very tiresome," she says presently, "but I'm so afraid of forgetting if I don't say it now. I want you to be very, very kind. Not to me—to the Society for Imbecile Women—so sad, you know! I'm going to have a little bazaar in the park, and it would be so nice if you'd come to do some of your delightful amusing experiments in a tent on the lawn."

The doctor is apparently deaf; the passes continue.

"Now I believe you're vexed," she continues. "I know I promised last time I wouldn't talk. You'll think about the bazaar, won't you? And now I'll try again."

In five minutes the clock strikes. She is on her feet in a moment.

"Now I must *fly*," she says. "Thank you *so* much. You can't think how rested I feel. It is the most delightful sensation."

It takes her several minutes more to get out of the room.

"Is there any use in that?" I ask.

"Yes, a little, possibly; as much as in a bread-pill, or any other agent she happened to fancy. One must take what comes. Doctors can't choose their patients, and I live in hope of getting her really asleep one day. After that things would probably be easy. She is only too suggestible if one can but get her into the right condition to start with. Perhaps *that* may interest you."

The letter he hands to me is from a famous dentist,

asking for the doctor's help on behalf of an invalid patient, for whom a painful dental operation is necessary, but whose health will not allow of the administration of anæsthetics.

"Do you often use hypnotic suggestion for this kind of thing?" I inquire.

"Not often, unless the patient has previously proved to be a good subject. A man expecting a painful operation, and ill into the bargain, is not in condition to fix his mind on the process of hypnotism. In this case, however, we shall probably succeed. He was under my care some months ago for acute neuralgia, and I succeeded in relieving the symptoms for the time, but the poor fellow is in advanced consumption, and there's not much we can do for him."

"No; I suppose you don't profess to hypnotise bacilli out of existence?"

"No, we don't; but all the same, we can do a good deal for even tubercular consumption. We can suggest sleep, and repose, and freedom from pain, and so give the system an opportunity of resting and gathering strength to resist the attacks. We have even succeeded in reducing the temperature in fevers, but naturally that sort of thing is not achieved the first time, and can only be attempted in the case of those who are subjects already. There will be another patient here directly who will interest you, I think. He has been for years a dipsomaniac, and comes of a family of drunkards. He is perfectly alive to the horror of his position, and has taken infinite pains to cure himself, but hitherto has invariably relapsed. His physique, his mind even, are thoroughly deteriorated, what the French call *dégénérés*, and the case is a painful one. He is a man of means and position, and before he came to me had been more or less benefited by various 'cures,' but nothing had been permanent. Still, believing as I do, that the efficacy of these so-called cures depends

greatly on suggestion, aided by favourable surroundings, good example, absence of temptation, and the like, it seemed to me that if suggestion could succeed, even partially, under ordinary circumstances, it ought to be all the more useful under hypnotism."

"Was he difficult to hypnotise?"

"Not at all. Few drunkards are. The very readiness with which they yield to suggestion to drink, denotes the possibility of success in suggesting absence from drink. The fact is, their minds are not vigorous enough to initiate an alternative course in either case. Our hope lies in making the superior alternative habitual. No; the trouble is that the poor wretch has no help in himself, no backbone. When the effect of my suggestion wears off, he has to come to me for another; indeed, I find it best to make him report himself at stated intervals. Of course, in a general way, we expect that by the time a suggestion—properly received—has worked itself out, the new habit will be formed, and this, aided by self-restraint, and the exercise of the will-power, is generally sufficient. He wishes to reform, and comes here quite of his own free will. Indeed, he came once when he was decidedly under the influence of drink, but I have made him see that that is absolutely useless. Hypnotism depends on a certain condition of the brain cells, and the brain must be in a fairly normal state in order to make that condition possible. A drunken man, a man in the crisis of epilepsy, an idiot, are hopeless as patients—a madman almost so; and it is only the healthy brain that can make full use of the help of suggestion, for, to be permanent, it must be supplemented by the patient himself."

At this point the expected visitor, a gentleman of middle age, enters the room, and the doctor talks to him for a few moments in an undertone. Presently he takes his place in the chair, and after a very few passes

is apparently asleep. At the sound of the doctor's voice he shows signs of consciousness, but without opening his eyes. "Can you hear me?" asks the doctor. "Yes." "Well, now, listen to me. Your brother is coming to stay with you. He can drink a great deal more than you can, without injury, and you will often have to be with him and see him drinking. Now, remember, if you taste drink while he is with you it will make you sick. You cannot even take the glass of sherry at lunch you have had lately. You can take *nothing*. Do you understand?" "Yes, I understand," and he repeats the doctor's statement. "Now, wake," and the doctor blows lightly on his forehead.

In an instant he is erect and quite himself again. "Do you feel all right?" asks the doctor; "head clear, wide awake?" "Oh, yes; perfectly, thanks." Then, seeing my look of interest, he explains what the doctor had delicately left to my imagination. "I have been under a course of hypnotism for an unhappy habit of mine, which has not now recurred for five months; but knowing I was about to be exposed to exceptional temptation, I came here for a little extra help. By the way, doctor, the boy is going on capitally, and his school-report, both for work and conduct, is excellent. As you suggested, I am promoting his cricket as far as I can."

When he has gone the doctor explains further. "That boy is one of our triumphs. Like so many of the children of drunkards and of the vicious, the child inherited miserable weakness of various kinds. His habits were bad, he was morose and unsociable. He hated study, and wouldn't work. He seemed absolutely without conscience or principle, stole, lied, and was a coward. In despair his mother sent him to me. He behaved abominably when brought here, but at last was induced to submit to treatment, on my holding out the hope of cure for a terrible stammer from which

he suffered. This cure was the first thing accomplished, and naturally enough his moroseness soon in great part disappeared, he became more anxious for companionship. Finding that he was disliked by boys better brought up than himself, he became anxious to cure his faults, and by degrees, and after many relapses, he acquired habits of honesty. By this time he had less excuse for lying, and association with others stimulated his courage. Under repeated suggestion, his memory and power of application improved, he formed the *habit* of better conduct, and though far from being a saint, being in fact quite normally naughty, he is one of our most encouraging cases. I have not seen him for six months, and was truly glad to hear so favourable an account."

While we are speaking, the man-servant announces another patient. There is a pause, and then a young lady with bandaged eyes walks slowly into the room. The spectacle is a sad one, she is so pretty and looks so dejected that it is difficult not to feel deeply sorry for her evident suffering.

"I am sorry to see that your eyes are troubling you again," the doctor says.

"Oh, it's not so much my eyes, though I can't see anything, not even the people about me, as my back. It aches so frightfully, and I am getting wretchedly low for want of appetite. The very sight of food upsets me, and, of course, if you can't eat, you can't sleep, and that gives me the most fearful headaches. I want you to cure my headaches, doctor."

It is a dismal catalogue of ills, and I feel that the usually kind doctor might have looked more sympathetic.

"But where is your mother?" he says. "You know the rule. It is of no use to come to me without either your mother or sister. I never hypnotise without the patient's friends."

"What, not with three people in the room?" she asks.

I wonder how in her blind condition she knows who is present. The doctor is relentless.

"This is all I can do for you," he says; and, taking up a card, he writes in distinct capitals on the back, *You will sleep sound from ten till seven.* "Now go to bed at half-past nine, and gaze fixedly at that the last thing before you put out your light. Then try to fancy you see it before you in the darkness, and you will fall asleep before the clock has finished striking."

She leaves the room with a more cheerful air than she had first presented.

"Poor girl," I say sadly. "What can be the cause of so much suffering? What is her complaint?"

"Nothing at all," he answers. "The hardest of all to cure—a misery to the patient and to her friends."

"You mean to say that her disease is all imagination?"

"It is a disease of the imagination," he answers, "and in its way quite as serious as the diseases she supposes herself to be suffering from. Perhaps there is no malady for which hypnotism has done more than for this. That poor girl has been a useless member of society for years. She has cost her parents untold anxiety, not to say expense. When she first came to me she couldn't walk, and was paralysed down one side. Now, except at intervals, when she is as you have seen her to-day, she is perfectly well. Probably she has had some nervous upset, and this is the form it takes."

"Why would you not hypnotise her?"

"I always exact the presence of a friend of the patient's, particularly in a case like hers, when the imagination is diseased, and one never knows what form her fancies may take next. And she has got the suggestion, which is all that is necessary."

"The card, you mean?"

“ Well, no, the verbal suggestion to sleep is already impressed upon her. That card is simply a stimulus to revive the impression. The fixed gaze is the counterpart of the passes I should make if she were here—and, for the matter of that, is no more than the old dodges of watching the smoke come out of a chimney, or the sheep coming through a gap, or anything else that tires the attention. That is all that is required.”

“ Then you don't count yourself an important factor? You are not a believer in your own magnetic power, in the hold you have over your subjects?”

“ I have no hold over my subjects but what they choose to allow. I can do nothing but with their consent, I may even say with their assistance. There is absolutely nothing occult in our relations. However, if, as in the last case, a patient is very suggestible, I always protect her with the suggestion that no one can hypnotise her without her own consent in writing. For the time being I alone am in possession of this, and she has it in her power to withdraw it at will.”

“ So that the position of things in Lytton's 'Strange Story,' and all the stories and plays which imitate it, is thus rendered impossible?”

“ Absolutely. I shall be able directly to show you proof. A lady is coming—a very old patient, very grateful for the help she has received in overcoming some troublesome nervous affections, and with whom I can experiment for your information, as of course I should not do with patients who are under treatment. She is coming on purpose, and knows that I am going to illustrate some little points which may interest you. The last time she was here, by way of experiment, I suggested to her that I could not hypnotise her any more, as I have been doing at intervals for years, without her written consent. We shall see whether it has any effect. There is another little matter which you

may like to observe. She is not well off, poor lady, and when here the other day asked me to suggest to her in the trance that she should ignore various little domestic worries which I knew were on her mind. This she agreed to do, and when I asked if these were all, she confided to me that she was anxious about her boots, which were not strong enough for the present weather, but that she could not afford to buy more. I discussed the question with her, ascertained what kind she wished for, and afterwards sent them to her anonymously. Of course, in her waking state she has no recollection of the conversation, and it will be interesting to see how she interprets the circumstance. When she is hypnotised she is quite likely to recur to it, and to arrive at a correct explanation, because, of course, the hypnotic memories are continuous, just as the waking memories are, only that the hypnotic memory is the better of the two, as it nearly always includes both."

The lady arrives, and has some private conversation with the doctor, part of which, as it concerns the question which we have been discussing, he is good enough to repeat to me when the opportunity occurs. The patient, who is a sufficiently intelligent but simple-minded woman approaching middle age, first interpreted her welcome present as due to the offices of her guardian angel, so utterly unexpected and mysterious did it seem. She is, however, an "automatic writer," and her writing explained the mysterious gift as due to the kindness of her good doctor. This fact is of the deepest interest and suggestiveness, as showing the relation of the automatic self with the hypnotic self, the same facts being in the consciousness of both.

She is placed, as usual, in the easy chair. She has been hypnotised so often that the state is usually induced in a few seconds. She enjoys the process, and

is gratified to learn that we take a deep interest in the results, and that we look to her to illustrate some points which we have not yet seen, as the doctor is very particular never to make use of his patients for mere experiment, and to confine his suggestions to those of therapeutic value only. She is quite prepared to be of service, and awaits the passes with expectant attention.

The usual process begins, she settles herself comfortably. The passes are made, she watches for a moment, and then closes her eyes. In a minute or two they re-open.

"What can be the matter, doctor?" she says. "I'm not going off." "Oh yes, it's all right; try again." Two or three minutes pass. "It's no good," she says, "I get wider awake every minute." "Shall I leave the room?" I suggest. "I don't think that will make any difference," says the doctor, "she is quite used to spectators, but you can try."

I pass into the adjoining room. In five minutes the doctor's voice recalls me. "It's no use," he says. "We have been at it for as many minutes as we usually spend seconds."

"What do you think about it?" I ask of the patient.

"I can't tell. Something in me resists. I don't even feel restful. But I can't imagine why."

"Well now, I'll tell you why," says the doctor, laughing. "The last time you were hypnotised, I suggested to you that it was never to occur again without a renewal of the written consent you gave me two years ago. But I've got the paper all ready, and you have only to sign it. So you see you are still master of the situation."

The paper, a form of consent to be hypnotised, by Dr. — only, and by no one else, always in the presence of a witness or witnesses, bears to-day's date,

and is immediately signed. In about a minute the patient is in a light sleep, the eyes still open. "Speak to her," the doctor suggests. I ask her if she is comfortable, who I am, how many people there are in the room, to all of which she returns intelligent answers. "Now," says the doctor, "I want you to go into a deeper sleep," and he makes a few more passes.

She is now in relation with himself only. I speak to her, she does not hear; I touch her, she is not aware of it; I put smelling salts under her nostrils, she takes no notice; I pinch her, she does not feel. The doctor, from the other side of the room, whispers her name, she responds instantly.

While I have been trying these little experiments, he has been looking for something in the day's paper. He now advances, and placing himself beside her, remarks that, "there is a billiard-match on at St. James's Hall." She seems but moderately interested, and he resumes, "Who do you think will win, Peall or Mitchell?"

"How should I know? What have I to do with billiard-matches?"

"Well, I think it will be Peall. I suppose you have no views about the Manchester Cup? I think La Flèche will win that."

She assents, but shows no interest in the question. After a few minutes' interval she passes once more into the lighter phase, her eyes being open.

"How many people are there here?" he inquires, she mentions herself, the doctor, and my friend. "The lady who was here has gone," observes the doctor. "She was sitting on the sofa over there," pointing to the place I still occupy, "but she has had to leave us." She stares at me and agrees. "Won't you take her place?" he suggests. She crosses the room, and I am obliged to remove myself hastily as she drops into my seat. I pull the cushion up

behind her, and she looks round at it suspiciously. She is holding a small parcel, and the doctor signs to me to take it from her. I remove it gently, and she watches it disappear with a puzzled expression. Again he signs, and I replace it on her knee. "She can't make it out," he says to me. "Who are you talking to?" she asks. "I was thinking that lady was here." "Well, she isn't, so there's no sense in talking to her."

"She'll be back soon," he observes, "she will have on a different hat, a green one, just the colour you dislike; by the way, would you like those flowers?" and he points to some roses in a vase. I take them up and carry them to her, holding them firmly in my fingers. She is perplexed when they resist her attempted grasp, and says, "I think they're very queer flowers, coming through the air like that." I put her mantle, which she had laid aside, round my own shoulders, and walk up to her. She tries to take it, but does not seem to realise that it is on any one and must be unwrapped. I speak to her, and she asks where the voice comes from. This the doctor explains is a "negative hallucination," the suggestion that something there, is *not* there. He suggests a positive hallucination, that something *not* there, is there. "Look," he says, "at that caterpillar on the carpet. It must have come out of the flowers."

She is a kindly woman and stoops to pick it up. "Throw it into the fire," he orders. "No, indeed," she protests; "I can't do that, it's cruel." "But you must do as I tell you." "I shan't do that," and she gently places the supposed worm on a fern in the window. "Throw this into the fire," he says, offering her a dainty silk "chair-back." She takes it from him and throws it into the grate, where, as it happens, no fire is burning. Apparently it has

to be a strong emotion or principle which she can oppose to his orders.

"Would you like to see a post-hypnotic suggestion?" he asks, turning to me. "What can we ask her to do?" We plan the little detail, and he turns to her again.

"You will now count twenty," he says, "and at eleven you will wake up. When the clock strikes four you will light the right hand candle of the three on the piano, and till I have coughed three times you will not be able to say the word 'yes.' Do you understand?" She repeats his instructions and then begins to count.

At the word "eleven" her aspect changes. The air of consciousness and interest returns, but she finishes counting up to twenty.

"What are you counting?" I asked. "I forget; what was it?" "Have you finished now?" "I've finished," and she looks at me curiously. "You see I've come back," I observe. "You've come back," she repeats, still staring. "What is it you are looking at?"

"Well, it was very stupid of me, but I thought you were wearing a black hat. It seems so funny I shouldn't have noticed green." "You don't like green?" "Oh, it is very fashionable, I am sure," she says politely. "But you like black better?" "I like black better." The doctor coughs, rather loudly, and she glances towards him. "Did you walk here this afternoon?" I ask. "I walked here." "Yes?" "I walked here." I felt rather as if I were playing "Old Soldier"—the game in which one may not say Yes or No. I couldn't think how to make her say "yes." "You speak French; can you tell me what *oui* stands for?" "The affirmative, I believe." "For Yes?" "For the affirmative." The doctor coughs again, very gently. The clock strikes four. She goes up to the mantel-piece and picks up a silver match-box.

"What are you going to do?" the doctor asks. "Well, I was going to light one of those candles on the piano; should you mind?"

"Pray do if you like, but why?" "It came into my head to do it; I think because the right hand one would look better shorter; you will excuse me?"

"By all means; but if we are to have only one light, would it not look better to light the middle one?" and the doctor coughed.

"Yes," she returned promptly, but lighted that to the right all the same, and then exchanged it with that which had been in the middle.

"By the way," said the doctor presently, "I wish you would get some information for me. I am so much interested in the result of a billiard-match, that is announced in to-day's paper. You can get such interesting answers by your writing. Here is a paper and pencil. Now, do ask. Who will win the billiard match? I suppose you don't know?"

"Not I," she returned, laughing, "I didn't know there was a match; but I'll see what I can do."

She took the pencil, and after a few meaningless scribbles, her hand wrote "Peall."

"That is excellent news," said the doctor. "Now I wonder if you can tell us who will win the Manchester Cup?"

And she promptly wrote "La Flèche."

"I have every reason to believe your information is really trustworthy," says the doctor. "You are sure you have neither read about this, nor heard it talked of?"

"I never even heard the names myself," she answers, "but I know where the information came from. It was my brother who wrote. When he was on earth he always took an interest in races and such-like things, and never made a mistake."

"I hope you like my hat better now?" I ask, as I rise to take leave.

"That black one? Yes, it is very nice. It was the green I did not like, though that of course is only a matter of taste."

Truly here is a wide field for thought. A revelation of our knowledge and our ignorance, of our power and our weakness, a vast field for usefulness, an immense possibility of danger, another corner lifted of the veil that enshrouds man, "the glory and the scandal of the universe."

The greater number of those of well-balanced mind and body are susceptible, if they choose, of hypnotic influence; those who are hysterical, neurotic, or morbid present special difficulties. The dull, stupid, and weak-willed are more intractable still; idiots are impossible. About 10 per cent. of insane cases were hypnotised by Voisin, but this only after immense perseverance.

One nationality is practically as easily hypnotised as another, and men are quite as susceptible as women.

In all cases the consent of the subject is necessary.

Dr. Liébeault failed in 27 cases only out of 1012. Dr. Van Eeden's experience is much the same. Dr. Bernheim and Dr. Lloyd Tuckey put the average at about 90 per cent. Of course, many cases yield after several attempts only, and this leads one to suppose that many of the cases dismissed as unhypnotisable might be conquered by still further efforts. Something depends on the hypnotiser as well as on the patient, and some writers have recorded that their failures diminished as their experience increased. Dr. Forel, of Zurich, for instance, records 11 failures in 41 cases in his first report, 11 in 58 in his second, and 3 in 29 in his third.

A Mr. Harry Vincent, when an undergraduate of Oxford, recorded some interesting experiences among his fellow-students, among whom he succeeded in hypnotising 96 per cent., a fairly convincing answer to

those who hold the hypothesis that hypnosis is itself a disease to be induced only in the morbid, the hysterical, and the ignorant.

His suggestions were, of course, psychological rather than therapeutic, and were directed in several cases to the improvement of the memory. We fancy Mr. Harry Vincent must have been a popular person about the time of the University examinations! He tells of—

“One young fellow, *æt.* twenty, who complained of the extreme difficulty which he found in remembering dates and the comparative position of localities. In less than a week he was able to remember a whole page of dates after two or three readings, and this increase of faculty was permanent.”

Mr. Vincent continues:—

“It may be said that such increase of faculty must have a prejudicial effect on the general health of the individual, much in the same way as the use of stimulants will for a time increase, but finally lower, the mental and physical powers. Such is, however, not the case if the operation be at all properly performed. The dangers of a nervous lassitude, and innumerable other dangers, are all existent in the use of hypnosis by the unscrupulous or the unskilful. Properly handled there is no method more entirely devoid of danger than hypnosis.”

Mr. Vincent's experiments were *en amateur*, but here is the opinion of Dr. Bramwell, supported by that of seven of the first hypnotic doctors in Europe:—

“Personally, I have never seen the slightest untoward symptom result from the skilled use of hypnosis, nor any evidence that its dangers, under these circumstances, have any existence save in the brain of the novelist. Forel says: ‘Liébeault, Bernheim, Wetterstrand, Van Eeden, De Jong, I myself, and the other followers of the Nancy school, declare categorically that we, supported by the material of many

thousands of hypnotised persons, have never observed a single case of mental or bodily harm caused by hypnosis, but, on the contrary, have seen many cases of illness relieved or cured by it.”

To hypnotise a patient in order to produce results otherwise attainable, is like stitching up a wound instead of allowing it to heal with the first intention. Dame Nature knows her own business, and we gain nothing by *unnecessary* interference. In cases, however, of *perverted habit*, mental or physical, hypnotism is often of unspeakable value. The cases are innumerable of carefully recorded cures of dyspepsia, chronic alcoholism, extreme anæmia, dipsomania, chronic diarrhœa, chronic constipation, spinal irritation, functional heart trouble, chronic rheumatism, tobacco habit, stammering, insomnia, asthma, and moral perversion in children.

It would be well if in all cases a subject, submitting himself to hypnotism for any purpose, would protect himself and test the *bona fides* of the operator by demanding the suggestion of the three conditions which Dr. Milne Bramwell and others always insist on enforcing (see *British Medical Journal*, April 5, 1890: paper by Dr. Milne Bramwell). (1) That no one else should be able to hypnotise the patient without the combined assent of patient and operator; (2) that hypnosis cannot be re-induced without the consent of the patient; and (3) that when in the hypnotic state the patient shall have complete power to reject suggestions at will, and that none will be effective save those previously agreed to in the normal condition.

5. But in spite of these limitations of the hypnotist, in spite of the relative importance of the efforts of the subject, hypnotism remains a sufficiently powerful agent to be a dangerous tool in the hands of the unscrupulous or of the incompetent amateur. The natural generalisation of the careful reader is that so powerful a therapeutic agency should never be used except for purposes

of healing, and only by the duly-qualified medical man. But this would exclude the possibility of such experiments as those recorded by Mr. Gurney and Mrs. Sidgwick, in which, with the assistance of Mr. G. A. Smith, some very valuable psychical and psychological studies were made at Brighton. Such studies, like other forms of vivisection, need not be repeated for mere purposes of demonstration, and need be of very rare occurrence. Certainly something should be done not only to protect the public against charlatans, but to put a stop to the offering on all occasions by all sorts of criminals of the plea of "hypnotic suggestion." The question has been discussed by Dr. Liégeois,<sup>1</sup> by Mr. Taylor Innes,<sup>2</sup> by Mr. Brodie Innes,<sup>3</sup> by Dr. Kingsbury,<sup>4</sup> and others, and more than six years ago Belgium set the example of state-regulation upon the subject, making it punishable by fine and imprisonment (1) to make public show of any hypnotised person; (2) for any unlicensed person to hypnotise a subject under eighteen years of age or of unsound mind; and (3) to cause any hypnotised subject to sign any document professing to have any legal value, such as an agreement, a discharge, &c. These conditions seem reasonable and moderate enough, and might even be made more stringent with advantage.

All readers of trustworthy works upon the subject<sup>5</sup> are familiar with the trite statement that the business of hypnotism is to strengthen will-power, but that it cannot create it, that it may give a push in the direction of evil or of good, but cannot set the feet in any

<sup>1</sup> "De la Suggestion et du Somnambulisme dans leurs rapports avec la Jurisprudence et la Médecine Légale," Paris, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> *Contemporary Review*, October 1890.

<sup>3</sup> *Juridical Review*, January 1891.

<sup>4</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, January 1891.

<sup>5</sup> Such, for example, as those of Drs. Milne Bramwell, Woods, Lloyd Tuckey, Hack Tuke, and Kingsbury, in England; and on the Continent those of Liébeault, Bernheim, Delboeuf, Kraft Ebing, Von Schrenk-Notzing, Forel, Preyer, Wetterstrand, Bérillon, Binet, and Féré, &c.

unwilling path ; that it may enable the patient to carry out potentialities, but cannot bestow new temperament or incite to actions contrary to the nature and disposition of the subject. "Hypnotic suggestion does not enable us to create force, but only to transform it, nor to create characteristics, but merely to modify them. I cannot think that hypnotism would make a naturally morose man permanently amiable, or a violent-tempered man quiet and gentle" (Lloyd Tuckey, "Psycho Therapeutics," 80). "Hypnotism does not induce a new condition, nor work on perfectly novel lines to the extent which is often supposed—it acts by intensifying and utilising mental states which are abnormal in degree, but not unnatural in kind" (*op. cit.* 68).

"It would be vain to make criminal suggestions to the disciplined and moral man, for he would either wake up at once or would ignore them ; but it would be an easy task to corrupt the naturally weak and ill-disposed. If one told a sincere teetotaler that on waking he was to drink a glass of brandy, it is certain that the suggestion would fail, no matter what was the degree of sleep induced ; but the half-hearted abstainer might, perhaps, succumb, just as he would yield to the pertinacious solicitation of his ordinary companions, because the wish to abstain was not strongly grounded, or an essential part of his individuality" (*op. cit.* 310).

This is strong language, but Dr. Tuckey does not theorise merely. The question has been made a matter of experiment in some of the first consulting-rooms in Europe ; by Professor Lombroso, in Turin ; by Dr. Kingsbury, before the British Medical Association in 1890 ; by Drs. Bramwell, Bernheim, Liébeault, Charcot, and others. Even Charcot, who recognised the operation of hypnotism in morbid cases only, emphatically denied that the hypnotiser could make the subject do wrong, or force him to violate his habits and tendencies.

Dr. Liébeault practised hypnotism for thirty years with no bad results; but then Dr. Liébeault knew his business—whom to hypnotise and when. Bernheim, Moll, Forel, Van Eeden, Bramwell, Lloyd Tuckey, and others also testify to the absence of any but good or negative results.

Dangers undoubtedly exist, and the main source of risk is thus summed up by Binet and Féré:—

“The performance of experiments in public should be condemned, just as we condemn public dissection of the dead body, and vivisection in public. It is certain that there are still graver objections to hypnotic exhibitions, since they are liable to produce nervous affections even in those who do not propose to be the subjects of experiment,” and Dr. Tuckey, in quoting this, adds:—

“Such experiments, I maintain, are always useless and often cruel, besides being an offence against the dignity of humanity. The contortions and exclamations of a patient under chloroform are often interesting, and might, by some persons, be thought amusing, but we should hardly choose to excite them for the gratification of idle curiosity or the entertainment of the multitude.”

The question of public exhibitions is a moral as well as a scientific question. If hypnotism has any dangers at all, even if it is dangerous to a few of specially nervous temperament, surely it is not for practice in a mixed multitude. We do not make an entertainment of the administration of chloroform, of nitrous oxide gas, or of the victims of opium. If hypnotism is to be regarded as a healing agency it should be treated with respect as such; if it is a psychical agency, and of value as revealing the depths of our inner consciousness, then surely it is not to be regarded as a mere amusement.

## VII

### OBSESSION : OR THE IMPERATIVE IDEA

(Suggested by the Reading of Dr. Milne Bramwell's Essay on  
*Imperative Ideas in "Brain,"* 1895)

1.—The Fad a Disease.—2. Symptoms of Disease.—3. Its various  
Forms.—4. The Psychic Fad.—5. A Recorded Means of Cure.

1. THERE are times when it happens to all of us to feel like the man who learnt with surprise that he had all his life been talking that hitherto unknown, unstudied language, Prose. Now and then some quite familiar idea is clothed for us in a new garment, and at once assumes an importance never accorded to it before. Some of our wise men, in the world of science, have lately been debating about a serious but unconsidered danger in our midst—not a new microbe, not an extra daring adulteration, not the last thing in influenza, but the danger of *fads*. That fads are tiresome, and time-wasting, and exhausting to the patience of others, is a fact often present to our consciousness, but that the faddist is himself in real danger, demanding all our help and sympathy, is an idea with which few of us have seriously dealt. We have pitied his housemates and those, of necessity, his companions; we have good-naturedly allowed ourselves to be victimised, to give them a temporary relief, but till our neurologists took to calling the fad "an imperative idea," we did not realise that it was a disease like eczema or asthma.

One must differentiate as carefully between a fad and a hobby, as one would between sentiment and senti-

mentality, or emotion and emotionalism. A fad is the diseased condition of those energies which might be wholesomely expended in hobby-riding. My hobby may be cycling, or crystal-gazing, or collecting engravings, or Jacobitism, or cats, and any one of them may be degraded into a fad as soon as I allow myself to bore other people by my enthusiasm. It is part of the grand law of compensation that if I don't do unto others as I would they should do unto me, in the long run I get the worst of it. When we cease to have control of the hobby it becomes a fad, and the fad becomes an imperative idea, and (so we are told by neurologists) that way madness lies!

There is perhaps no kind of fad more self-injurious, more disagreeable to other people, more unfair to the subject under consideration than that which often takes possession of the inquirer into the "Occult." Nevertheless, after ten years of systematic study of matters, which, for want of a better name, we call psychic, and a lifetime of experimental familiarity with the phenomena concerned, I can definitely assert that I have never seen any clean-minded rational person the worse for such interests—very much the contrary. On the other hand, I know of no subject, unless it be that of religion, so much degraded by association with persons of ill-regulated mind and unbalanced judgment, in short, with "cranks." But such people would have been "cranks" under any circumstances, and it is a mere accident that they are crazy about Spiritualism instead of the Bacon-Shakespeare problem, or the New Woman, or any other public nuisance.

To all such, only one form of advice is, to my thinking, possible. If you believe yourself "obsessed," if Planchette swears, and your table-raps give lying messages, and you fall into trances at unreasonable moments, *drop the subject*. Get a bicycle, or learn Hebrew, or go a walking tour, or weed the garden. If

you are sane you can do as you like with your own mind, if you can *not*, consult the staff of Colney Hatch! Want of self-restraint is either sin or disease.

One constantly hears of persons who would "like to experiment" in psychic matters, but it always makes them feel queer about the arms or the legs, or they are pursued by voices, or haunted by spirits, and they think experiments and séances are not good for them. What are they to do?

With every wish to be polite and sympathetic, one has on most occasions a desire to quote the old story of Dr. Abernethy, when a lady came in great distress, because she always felt a pain if she raised her left arm; to whom the great surgeon replied, "Then, why the blank, madam, do you raise your left arm?"

In most cases the pain is only "a fixed idea," and we could probably raise our left arms as well as other people if we could only get rid of the idea. But, any way, as they say in America, the world will get along, and so shall we, without such gymnastics.

Obsession by a fixed idea is not, after all, a very uncommon phenomenon, the difference between a fad and a mania is only one of degree. The rational investigator can distinguish between self-suggestion and objective phenomena, between the morbid effects of fatigued attention, and, apart even from the important question of evidence, the genuine sensation of having received a sub-conscious impression, whatever its origin. Those who cannot, are not fit, even if useful, for investigation. So long as the patient is conscious of his disease, and perpetually at war with the imperative idea, so long is he sane.

2. The question has been recognised by doctors, we are told, since the beginning of this century, and in 1853 Brierre de Boismont wrote:—

"There is a distinction to make, namely, that ideas

may make one ill when they dominate the mind, but one is not really mad except when the will has become powerless to control the impulsions."

Again, Marcé, in 1862, clearly described the origin of imperative ideas—"In a predisposed person," he says, "feeble of character, endowed with keen sensibility, a word, an emotion, a fear, a desire, leaves one day a profound impression. The thought, born in this manner, presents itself to the mind in an importunate way, takes possession of it, does not leave it, dominates all its conceptions; during this time the individual may have consciousness of all the absurdity, unreasonableness, or criminality of this idea; the acts themselves soon conform to these unhealthy preoccupations, and become absurd and extravagant." A clear distinction between these diseases and recognised forms of insanity was made for the first time in 1886 by Morel, and he stated that patients suffering from imperative ideas did not interpret their obsessions after the manner of the insane; that they neither experienced hallucinations nor illusions, nor underwent those transformations which change the personality of the insane and make them radically different from what they were before.

In 1877, Westphal published an important contribution to this subject. According to him, the obsession never becomes a true *idée fixe délirante*, but always remains a stranger to the patient's *ego*, while the insane conform logically to the deductions of their fixed ideas.

Thus, for example, a person obsessed by an idea might believe that people in the street mistook him for the Great Mogul, whereas the insane, "conforming logically" to the deductions of his ideas, would say, "I *am* the Great Mogul. Kiss my toe."

The Roman Church, more familiar with, and therefore more logical on, the subject of supernormal phenomena than the Anglican, has always expressed

herself clearly on this point, and has distinguished between the subjective phenomenon of obsession, and the alleged objective fact of devil-possession.

3. Sometimes obsession takes the form of diseased mental activity, often expressing itself in perpetual questioning, a common form in particular of religious craze. Dr. Bramwell quotes the case of a young woman who worried herself about the Creation. Did everything make itself? Has God created all things? Is there a God? How can one divide objects into infinitely little parts when each part can still be divided? How is it that an object infinitely divided can still be divided, notwithstanding that one cannot divide it any more? and so on. There is no "honest doubt" in this. If she arrived at any answer, it would do no one any good. It is mere mental restlessness, well called by the French *folie du doute*, and a recognised form of obsession.

Perhaps, in the case of those who are "obsessed" with ideas relating to the occult, a morbid desire for revelations from the Unseen may be taken as the equivalent of this phase. The subject with which the diseased mind concerns itself, is not necessarily the occasion of the disease.

Then, again, there is the obsessing idea which reveals itself in certain actions, called by the French, in consequence of one particular form of its manifestation, *le délire du toucher*.

This is a common enough sort of "fad." We all know the tiresome woman, who is always setting things straight, the man who begins a letter over again, if it be necessary to cross out a word; who is always picking up invisible crumbs from the floor, or fuming unduly about ventilation. A step further, a little lack of self-restraint, and the attitude of mind becomes a disease. Dr. Bramwell quotes one patient, whose life was a burden to him from fear of contamination, and

who washed his hands from morning till night, and another who lived in terror of soiling her food, and also washed her hands persistently, like a second Lady Macbeth.

A third kind might be taken to include both the others, that of obsessing ideas.

“The patient is not able to escape from the obsession to think constantly about a certain subject or question. Here it is neither a question of a perception or emotion, nor of an impulse to commit an act; there is only one isolated idea—a word, a phrase, incessantly pursues the patient and continually occupies his thoughts.”

Most of us know, in some degree, the effect of this sort of obsession. When we are tired we are worried or haunted by some particular tune, or perhaps phrase, but, happily, most of us are able, with an effort, to banish it, however insistent.

I know a woman, of considerable strength of intellect, who, nevertheless, has a tendency, when overdone, to count. The action is so automatic that she has often reached three figures before being aware of what she is doing, but the moment she finds herself enumerating the articles she handles, or the steps she is ascending, she accepts the warning and seeks rest in idleness, or in change of occupation. It is the yielding to the impulse, the becoming its slave instead of its master, wherein lies the danger.

People who live much alone, or who limit themselves to a very small range of ideas, or who lose sight of the relative value of the circumstances of life, have a tendency to obsession of this kind, and make life thereby disagreeable to those about them. I know a man, of university education and brought up in delightful and elevating surroundings, who has become a terror to his friends and a bore to all he meets. His wife declares that his period of decadence began with

the purchase of some new dining-room fire-irons, which he proceeded to take under his protection. He lived mainly to enforce the use of a curate-poker, and his mind having sunk to the level of such interests, is unable to recover its former platform.

We all know invalids who will spend a morning considering whether they shall lunch on sago or tapioca, women who make an afternoon hideous by wondering—aloud—whether some one (who didn't listen) thought something they said this morning "queer," men who pursue reluctant acquaintances with considerations of Bradshaw, and whether the 2.45 or the 3.10 train will best serve a purpose which might be safely relegated to the week after next.

One person is a slave to a digestion which needs nothing but a little wholesome neglect; another is "nervous" and non-gregarious in consequence; another yields to imaginary terrors and can't drive in a hansom, or sit in a gallery, or cross a bridge, and the lives of all are crippled and dwarfed in consequence. Children in their early teens are specially subject to "fads" of various sorts, and we all know the graceless tricks, mental and physical, of school-room life.

These are all inconvenient and disagreeable enough. But worse possibilities await those who allow themselves to be enslaved.

According to Dr. Gélinau, a crowd of sentiments of repugnance, &c., which the laity group as aversions, closely resemble the conditions we are discussing. Henry III., for example, who showed his bravery at the siege of La Rochelle and elsewhere, could not bear the sight of a cat. The Duke of Epernon fainted at the sight of a young donkey. Ladislas, King of Poland, got frightened, and ran away when he saw apples, and Favoriti, a modern Italian poet, could not bear the smell of a rose. Dr. Pierre d'Apono was so frightened at the sight of milk and cheese that he fainted. Mon-

taigne says: "I have seen more people driven to flight by the smell of apples than by arquebuses, others frightened at a mouse, made sick by the sight of cream, or by seeing a feather bed shaken." It is alleged that Lord Roberts cannot endure the presence of a cat.

Ribot applies the term "fixed ideas" to states such as these, and regards them as "chronic hypertrophy of the attention"; the fixed ideas being the *absolute*, attention the *temporary*, predominance of an intellectual state or group of states. The fixed idea is attention in its highest degree, and marks the extreme limit of its power of inhibition. There exists, he says, both in normal attention and in fixed ideas, predominance and intensity of a state of consciousness. This is more marked, however, in the fixed idea, which is permanent, and disposes of the important psychical factor—time. "In attention this exceptional state does not last long; consciousness reverts spontaneously to its normal condition, which is a struggle for existence between heterogeneous states. The fixed idea prevents all diffusion. There is no antagonistic state that is able to overthrow it. Effort is impossible or vain. Hence the agony of the patient who is conscious of his own impotency."

4. Once let ourselves get obsessed by any one idea, to the exclusion of all else, and we become its slave. There are certain ideas more likely to absorb the human mind than others. Eternal salvation and all that may advance or hinder the life of the soul, for example, is an idea of immense importance to all who believe in its possibilities, and one, moreover, which presents a wide field for wonder and speculation, for fear, uncertainty, and self-consciousness, all those emotions in fact which most tend to the overthrow of the judgment. Religious mania, in varying degrees, is perhaps the most common form of insanity (apart from

that caused by physical ills, such as intemperance, heredity, and vice). The problems of spiritualism, again, in certain aspects, have particular attractions for the egoist and the person of ill-balanced judgment. All can pose as seers and as prophets, and even the absence of evidence will not *prove* that they are only yielding to the pleasure of talking about themselves and trying to be interesting. Hence, unfortunately, the spiritualistic bore and the spiritualistic maniac are alike specimens, only too common, of the working of that most dangerous of all obsessing ideas—the idea of self.

The induction of so-called psychic phenomena demands a degree of expectant attention, which, to a certain class of minds, possibly a very large class, is a really dangerous physical effort. There are many for whom it is conceivably a serious danger to attend dark séances, “sit for raps,” attempt automatic writing, crystal-gazing, or other induced phenomena, just as it would be really dangerous for them (if it were possible, which it probably is not) to study quadratic equations, or the laws of acoustics, or in fact anything which demanded sustained attention. Five minutes’ talk with an adept in mathematics would suffice to prove their physical incompetence for such studies! but nothing will convince them, that when at the end of a séance they are half sick with fright, exhausted with the strain on their attention, giddy with gratified vanity at a self-suggested “message,” that all these are not part of the phenomena, but only physical sensations demanding attention of the same kind and on the same level with damp feet, or a back that aches from overwalking.

That they have got nothing in spite of their labour is a fact not likely to occur to them, nor that such experiments, besides being unwholesome, are useless, nor that the seer has “to live the life,” not merely an idle afternoon, nor that phenomena are not to be had

for the asking, nor that such are mainly spontaneous in their manifestation, nor that, in short, if they had mown the lawn, or taken a good walk, or studied the cookery book, they would probably have been better employed. As long ago as 1876, an American doctor published an essay on "Spiritualism and Insanity," to be found in a little volume called "Psychic Facts," containing other contributions of interest by Sir Wm. Crookes, Sergeant Cox, Sir Richard Burton, Lord Lyndsay, and others. Dr. Forbes Winslow, in London, and Dr. Talmage, in New York, had alleged that there was considerable connection between the two. In his reply, Dr. Crowell reported upon special inquiries which he had recently made as to the inmates of asylums in the States at a time when spiritualism had a very strong hold upon the people. He quotes figures from fifty-eight official reports, showing that out of 23,328 insane persons, 412 were suffering from religious mania, and 59 only from spiritualistic excitement.

To quote Dr. Bramwell again: "The following is Ribot's conception of the probable physiological condition associated with fixed ideas: 'In its normal state the entire brain works; diffused activity is the rule. Discharges take place from one group of cells into another, which is the objective equivalent of the perpetual alterations of consciousness. In the morbid state only a few nervous elements are active, or, at least, their state of tension is not transmitted to other groups. Whatever may be their position in the cerebral organ, they are, as a matter of fact, isolated; all disposable energy has been accumulated in them, and they do not communicate it to other groups; whence their supreme dominance and exaggerated activity. There is a lack of physiological equilibrium, due probably to the state of nutrition in the cerebral centres.'"

Obviously, therefore, exciting psychic experiments and occult studies demanding strained attention are

precisely what should be avoided by those with any tendency to lack of physiological equilibrium, just as a man with a weak heart should avoid playing football, not because football is unwholesome, but because he is unhealthy.

Obviously, too, such as they are, these experiments and studies have a special attraction for the morbid, and the self-conscious, and the ill-balanced, and "where the bee sucks honey the spider sucks poison." The studies are not to blame.

5. Where, however, obsession has really become disease, the patient, no longer able to help himself, has every claim upon our sympathy and protection. There are also, no doubt, certain cases in which, from special causes, a struggle has been made in vain, or made too late. The patient may be suffering for the sin, or idleness, or lack of restraint of a parent, or his mind or body, diseased from other causes, may be physically incapable of the effort of resistance.

Perhaps no triumph of our own day is more encouraging to the true philanthropist, the real lover of his kind, than that of the discovery that suggestion, if necessary, hypnotic suggestion, is a means of cure for the diseased will. For, after all, the strengthening of the weak will, the giving of an impetus to that unable of itself to make a fresh start, is the real value of hypnotic suggestion, whether applied to body or to mind.

Yet here too the outlook is clouded, and even talking of the possibilities of cure, we receive fresh warning as to the danger of a lack of self-restraint.<sup>1</sup> After reporting in detail eighteen cures of severe cases of diseased will and imagination exhibited in imperative ideas, Dr Bramwell writes:—

"My chief difficulty in such cases has been the

<sup>1</sup> Cases are on record in the medical journals of cures by Dr. Bramwell, Dr. Tuckey, and other English doctors, of dipsomania, kleptomania, morbid fear, shyness, stammering, religious mania, suicidal mania, and other morbid conditions induced by the imperative idea.

induction of the primary hypnosis. Various continental statistics apparently show that the majority of mankind can be hypnotised. Schrenck-Notzing's 'First International Statistics of Hypnotic Susceptibility,' published in 1893, gives 8705 cases by 15 observers in different countries, with 6 per cent. of failures. Wetterstrand reports 105 uninfluenced out of 6500 cases, and I formerly found patients drawn from my own practice equally susceptible.

"For the induction of hypnosis the patient's attention is necessary, and in cases of imperative ideas, this is usually otherwise occupied as the result of the nature of the mental affection. Many also belong to the class the most difficult to influence, *i.e.*, the nervous and emotional. That such patients are the easiest to hypnotise is the conviction of all those who have no practical acquaintance with the subject, but this opinion, unfortunately, has no foundation in fact. Moll says: 'The mentally unsound, particularly idiots, are much more difficult to hypnotise than the healthy. Intelligent people, and those with strong wills, are more easily hypnotisable than the stupid or weak-willed. Sex has no particular influence.' According to Forel, 'every mentally healthy man is naturally hypnotisable.' Mr. Wingfield hypnotised 152 Cambridge undergraduates at the first attempt, while Esdaile found no difficulty in inducing hypnotic anæsthesia among the coolies and felons of Bengal, and these, as he justly remarked, were by no means nervous persons. The fact that many of my patients had read sensational newspaper and magazine articles on the subject did not render my task easier."

The disease, it appears, is very insidious, and we may any of us become suddenly conscious that we are on the verge of succumbing. So long as we are aware of our danger, we have not yet succumbed. The repetition of an insignificant saying is, according to Ribot,

"the slightest form, and pre-occupation, such as anxiety about an examination, a degree higher. Most children, too, have suffered at one time or another from imperative ideas."

Poor children how they suffer! How we have all suffered in our experience, our reserve, our want of that sense of proportion which time alone can bring. I well remember the agony of terror which beset my childhood for long long weeks after finding myself in a field—it was our own field, as I now know—in which there was the usual notice about "trespassers will be prosecuted." I fled for my life, and reached home in safety, but that word "prosecuted" held unknown horrors to a mind already weakened by much reading of Croly's "Salathiel," found in an attic, where it served to prop open a skylight. There were two volumes, and one sufficed for the skylight, and when sent up to lonely play I could always abstract one for self-torment, taking care to jump about now and then to preserve the fiction that I was playing. As the days went by my apprehensions suggested forms of prosecution more and more subtle. A bow in a green baize bag introduced into the house became a spear, a small white packet on the hall table suggested poison, a guitar case was the coffin awaiting me. Oh the hideous responsibility of those to whom are due the silent suffering of childhood! The little soul is so sensitive, it has so little to help it to cast out the imperative idea, its power of association is so strong that the disease may take root and spread, and leave permanent effects which we do not recognise till long afterwards. The cure in childhood is happily easy. The idea is easily fixed, but the attention is as easily diverted, and the loving mother, or even the intelligent nurse, knows the value of "suggestion" to teach or heal.

Van Eeden regards what he calls "manias of superstition" as an interesting variety of obsessions. One of

his patients, a man aged forty, of healthy constitution, has since childhood attached prophetic signification to puerile facts and events. To wear a certain necktie promises him happiness or unhappiness. If he does not touch a certain boundary he thinks evil will happen to him. If he does not re-read a certain line or make a certain letter thicker when writing, something horrible will befall him. At first his strange ideas were insignificant, or he was able to resist them, but, as he grew older, they filled his life and rendered it intolerable. For twenty years he made a pilgrimage every Sunday to the railway station in order to kick a certain post three times with each foot. If he did not do this his father would die. In order to rid himself of these obsessions he makes vows and associates threats with them. He says, for example: "If I yield to one of my caprices in the course of an hour I shall have apoplexy before twenty-four hours have passed." At first this succeeded, but soon the effect of the vows diminished, and he was compelled to make them stronger. The unhappy man now stands sometimes for a quarter of an hour muttering the most fearful imprecations in order to get the strength to go an errand. If he omits them he is forced to obey the most absurd impulses. He must stop before a certain house, retrace his steps, touch boundaries, stop passers-by or touch their clothes; in a word, he is obliged to act like a maniac.

This, of course, is an extreme, though not unhappily an uncommon case. "The whirligig of time brings its revenges" is only another form of the old familiar, often despised, saying, that "virtue is its own reward." A little self-restraint in youth would have averted the terrible tragedy of age. One sentence might be inscribed over many a prison cell, many a miserable home, many a neglected grave: "at first . . . he was able to resist them, but, as he grew older, they filled his life and rendered it intolerable."

Dr. Johnson is so unique and interesting a personality to us who only read of his eccentricities that we are glad he was no different, but he might have been spared the terrible mental suffering of which we read, the melancholy retrospects, the loneliness of soul, had he not come under the tyranny of the imperative idea. There was more than the *délire du toucher* in "his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange peel . . . his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings . . . his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage," of which Macaulay reminds us.

It is interesting and encouraging for many to note that the capacity for cherishing a fixed idea, when under proper control, is in itself desirable.

"Every one cannot have fixed ideas, as for example, idiots, who possess little spontaneous and no voluntary attention, while, as Ribot says, 'In every sound human being there is always a dominant idea which regulates his conduct, such as pleasure, money, ambition, or the soul's salvation.' Some of my patients were physically far above the average, and many of them possessed mental endowments of high quality, and their morbid ideas did not prevent them doing valuable work. Most of them, it is true, were of an emotional, nervous type, but is the sensitive, mobile brain necessarily degenerate? May not the accidents to which it is liable be the result of its higher and more complex developments? The thoroughbred is more emotional and nervous than the cart horse" (Dr. Milne Bramwell).

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of the tyranny of the dominant idea is to be found in the history of Darwin. Only a man of strong mind could have devoted himself unintermittently to one subject as did he. But he paid the penalty. As is well known music and pictures lost their charm. In youth a lover

of Milton and Wordsworth and Shelley, he wrote in later years, "I cannot endure to read a line of poetry. I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. . . . My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend I cannot conceive." Some of us would rather keep our love for Wordsworth and Shelley than even be a Darwin, not that we are likely to have the opportunity of choice!

## VIII

### HOLYWELL—PSYCHIC HEALING : THE WELSH LOURDES

1. The Cause of the Cures.—2. The History of S. Winifride.—3. The Scene of the Cures.—4. The Pilgrims.—5. The Procession.—6. Sunday at Holywell.

1. My interest in the reported cures at Holywell, when I first heard of them, can only be described as moderate. The discussion of faith-healing in all its varieties, whether we study it in relation to Christian science or to the Lourdes miracles, to Sequah, to Mattei medicines, to psychic healing, or to any other of the many varieties of which we are constantly hearing, has in it, or appears to have in it, certain extraneous elements, useful probably as means of differentiation among the representatives of the various views, but which the average outsider is compelled to discard before arriving at the gist of the subject. One is ultimately compelled to accept the view, as in the case of hypnotism, that the cure is not one of activity, but of receptivity, that it is dependent less upon the agent than upon the object, that the holy water, or the divine teaching, or the psychic lesson, as the case may be, is dependent less upon the channel by which it is conveyed than upon the mental attitude of the recipient. For this reason, speaking for myself, the study of the cure, as such, had in it little of novelty or interest. From this standpoint the possible sources of interest are reduced to two—the first, human ; the second, psychological. It is to say, one rejoices in the relief of suffering h

and one analyses with interest the state of mind that makes such relief possible. The nature of the relief itself is not in most cases of great importance *per se*.

But when I came to study the miracles of Holywell I began to feel that they had in them other interests—literary, antiquarian, artistic, perhaps one might almost say anthropological. The scene of them, a miniature Henry VII.'s chapel hidden away in a beautiful valley of North Wales, has in it suggestions not to be found in an Islington Bethesda; their history, dating from the early British saint, and preserving its vitality through ages of heresy and unfaith, has in it a freshness not to be found in an American discovery of yesterday; their surroundings of ritual and litany and pilgrimage offer to one a stimulus not to be found in the indefiniteness of "Christian Science."

And yet, underneath all this, there remains the one factor constant under all forms of treatment, the factor of human pain and suffering in need of healing, and longing to be healed; placing itself under one stimulus or another, in that attitude in which, if ever, healing is possible, that attitude in which the excess of mental energy is capable, if ever, of dominating physical weakness, when mental wealth may endow the physical lack, when, in short, to place the whole situation under the dry light of scientific discovery, "suggestion" becomes possible.

All students of hypnotic suggestion are well aware of the immense value of suggestion in childhood at the hand of the mother or the nurse, of the fact that the mere assertion, "Mother will kiss it better," or "Baby is not cross now," will effect a miracle of healing of body or of mind.

Meditating over the story of cures, as described frequently during the past two or three years, cures not only of women and children, but of the Welsh navvy or the Northumbrian pitman, one could not but

feel that there is in the Holywell cures a special element of simplicity and childlikeness, which suggests the survival of a youthful vitality of a kind one rejoices to know still exists, despite the *fin de siècle* Dead March to which our lives have been attuned. So, at the request of many interested in the subject, I was only too glad to arrange a little party of investigation, and to find myself, with three friends, at Holywell on the eve of S. Winifride's festival of the 22nd of June.

It may, perhaps, be as well to anticipate here the question with which one is inevitably met on the occasion of return from such an expedition as this. "Did you see any cures, and do you believe in Holywell?" I saw many partial cures and one that was very striking, and I most emphatically believe in Holywell, in the sense that I would cordially advise any one to whom the following account may suggest a faith in this cure, to present himself or herself as soon as possible at S. Winifride's Well. As to my explanation of the cures, I have already said that I believe the cause to be in this, as in most similar cases, directly or indirectly, that of Suggestion.

I suppose that even many doctors would allow that, except in the case of a surgical operation, about three-fourths of the cures they are able to effect are, in a greater or less degree, due to the same cause. In so saying I would not for one moment disparage the religious aspect of the treatment. I believe a religious cure to be quite as effective as a scientific cure, and to have probably many inherent advantages lacking in that of science.

In calling such cures "suggestion," one does not necessarily deny the possibility of miracle, though, on the other hand, judging from the analogy of the cures by hypnotic suggestion so forcibly brought to our notice by the science of our own day, the hypothesis of miracle is not necessary. "I touch, but God healeth,"

the formula used by our own kings, from Edward the Confessor down to the accession of the House of Hanover, when the sovereign gift of healing ceased, and the Church Office for the King's Touch was banished from our Prayer Book, is suggestive on this point. The employment of a material agency, the recognition of a physical method, leaves us, nevertheless, free to believe in a cause which is spiritual, in the appeal, whatever the method of suggestion, to the Divine which is within.

The passion of aspiration, in itself the badge of our imperfection, is nevertheless the highest of human emotions ; and it is an encouraging and interesting fact that, even in relation to the phenomenon of physical healing, it is stimulated by charity on the part of the healer, by faith and hope on the part of the healed. Your healer is no mere quack doctor, he is an enthusiast—a fanatic, if you will. The laying on of hands is much the same in its form to-day as it was two thousand years ago—faith removed mountains then, as now. The hypnotist requires the concurrence of your will ; that is, of faith in the phenomenon, or he is powerless ; and, to speak it reverently, our Lord Himself demanded a like attitude. "As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee," was the formula then, as now.

2. Before giving an account of S. Winifride's Well as we found it on June 22, 1895, it would be perhaps advisable to turn back to the seventh century, the days of S. Winifride herself. One word should, perhaps, first be said as to the sources of such history as we possess. These are mainly two, both dating from the twelfth century. One, preserved in the British Museum, by the monk of Basingwerk Abbey, is said by some to have been the work of S. Elerius, who, towards the close of S. Winifride's life, became her director, and the other by the Abbot of Shrewsbury,

written in the reign of King Stephen, the manuscript of which is preserved in the Bodleian Library. A third history of S. Winifride, for the most part an abbreviation of Robert of Shrewsbury, is published in Capgrave's *Nova Legenda Anglice*, and all three have been collated and translated by Father de Smedt, S.J., and form a portion of the *Acta Sanctorum* for November 3, the later festival of S. Winifride. In 1635 a certain Jesuit Father published what purported to be a translation of "Robert of Shrewsbury," part of which appears to have been afterwards included in a volume printed in 1663, by Father Alford, of the order of S. Benedict. This Father Alford appears to have some glimmering of desire for scientific investigation, for he asks very practically why there is no mention of S. Winifride by the Venerable Bede, or other ancient author dealing with early saints. The answer he suggests is that Bede designed only to write the history of his own nation and ignored not only S. Winifride, but S. Patrick, S. Ursula, S. David, and other lights of the British Church. Probably in our own day, when the difficulty of going to Wales is limited solely by the trouble of changing at Crewe, we find it somewhat difficult to realise the state of things when the principality was a foreign kingdom, having its own language and its own government.

In the *Guardian* for June 26, 1713, is the following passage: "Last year a Papist published the life of S. Winifride for the use of those devoted pilgrims who go in great numbers to offer up their prayers to her at the well. This gave occasion to that worthy prelate in whose diocese that well is, to make some observations upon it, in order to undeceive so many poor deluded people, to show how little reason, how small authority there is, not only to believe in the miracles attributed to S. Winifride, but even to believe that there ever was such a person in the world."

The worthy prelate, by whom the "Papist" was thus snubbed (but apparently without any great effect), was a certain Dr. William Fleetwood, Bishop of St. Asaph, and the book, published in 1712, was "The Life and Miracles of S. Winifride," to be had, together with her litany, for the sum of eighteenpence.

I am indebted to the kindness of a gentleman at Holywell for being allowed to see an extremely curious, and, so far as I could discover, a very rare copy of a book published in 1742, "at Mr. Gent's Printing House in York," entitled "The Holy Life and Death of S. Winifride and Other Religious Persons, in five parts, dedicated to a divine of the Established Church, written by Thomas Gent." I have subtracted about twenty lines of small print from the title, which is somewhat detailed.

A story of an attempt to suppress the use of the well by the chief justice of Chester in 1637, is related in a curious document in the Royal Library at Brussels, as I learn from a life of S. Winifride, edited by the Rev. Thomas Swift, S.J. A certain Father Leigh, who resided at Holywell till his death in 1716, has left us a published account of all the miracles which came within his own knowledge, and of which he had "documentary proof upon which he could rely," which documentary evidence is still preserved among the archives of Stonyhurst College. The cure of a certain Winifride White, published in 1805, attracted considerable attention, and was the subject of a quaint tract by the Rev. Peter Roberts, vicar of Madeley (a place one associates more pleasantly with the great Fletcher), under the title of "Animadversions on the pamphlet entitled 'Authentic Documents, &c.'" Accounts of S. Winifride are also found in Rees' "Cambro-British Saints," and, of course, in "Nelson's Fasts and Festivals."

The well seems to have early become famous for

its cures, having at the end of the century previous been bought for, or by some means made over to, the abbey of Chester by the Countess of Chester and her son, who made a pilgrimage to the spot (then known as Halliwell) in 1115; but it was not long before the well again changed hands, and was given by Henry III. to the monks of Basingwerk. During the three following centuries we hear of it from time to time, and in the fourteenth century we find that Pope Martin V. granted special indulgences to pilgrims. At the end of the fifteenth century the importance of the site, and of the cures performed, received recognition by the erection of the very beautiful chapel which now stands above it, the crypt of which contains the well itself. The chapel and crypt alike are of remarkable beauty, in spite of some injury which they received at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, and of their disgraceful neglect in our own day at the hands of Protestant Holywell. In 1629 a large band of pilgrims celebrated the June festival. The list of them, by an unknown writer, includes the names of Lord William Howard, Lord Shrewsbury, Lady Falkland, and many other representatives of Roman Catholic families, besides about fifteen hundred pilgrims.

The story of the pilgrimage of King James II., on behalf of Mary of Modena in 1688, will be remembered by all readers of history.

The litany of S. Winifride, said to be of considerable antiquity, contains the phrase, "S. Winifride, most admirable virgin, even in this unbelieving generation, still pray for England." One wonders whether this were a reference to the despoiling of the shrine at the time of that "reformation" which the artist and the antiquary can never cease to regret, or to an episode in the year 1637, when the chairman of the assizes of the county of Flint, who seems to have been even more ignorant than the average provincial magistrate

issued an order to the churchwardens of the parish, "To take away the iron posts around the fountain, and disfigure the image of the saint, to close all the hospitals except two, and to report all the names of the pilgrims to the next assize." One hears with a certain sense of poetic justice that the judge died in the following January of a loathsome disease. History does not say what became of the pilgrims, but it is to be hoped that they had the satisfaction of hearing of the fact. It is recorded that the statue was white-washed, which we may gather, from the present condition of the chapel, is the Protestant way of expressing contempt for the artistic products of "Papists," but we can learn nothing of its subsequent history. It has now entirely disappeared, and, until 1886, the richly-carved canopy and niche stood empty. The present statue is of marble, but somewhat unfinished in appearance.

The history of the well is fairly continuous down to our own time. Judging from the inscriptions to be found on the walls, pilgrimages seem to have been frequent at the close of the eighteenth century, and to have continued with varying frequency to our own date. The recent revival in Holywell cures is, I have reason to believe, due to the personal energy and interesting individuality of Father Beauclerk, to whose courtesy, self-sacrifice, and devotion to the cause every visitor to Holywell cannot fail to testify.

2. With the exception of one detail—the statement that, towards the end of her life, S. Winifride went to Rome, which appears to be disputed by later authorities—the account given by the twelfth-century writer is on the whole that which seems best to fit in with local tradition and local colour. As Basingwerk Priory, built in the twelfth century, is but two miles from the well of S. Winifride, this is very easily accounted for.

Breui, whose name was later altered into Winifride, was the only daughter and heiress of a famous chief, a possessor of three manors in Flintshire. Early in her girlhood she came under the influence of a certain priest named Beuno (pronounced Bi-no), to whom she was largely indebted for her education. The chief, anxious to propitiate the prelate, whose presence among them seemed to be in every way advantageous, obtained permission from the king to dedicate to the service of God one of his three manors. It is interesting, however, to note that, even so early in history as the days of good King Arthur or thereabouts, socialism and altruism had already strong root in the British mind. For when the king was asked for leave to dedicate the manor in question, he replied, in words worthy of a hero of Trafalgar Square, "Reverend man, it stands neither in my right nor yours to alienate your patrimony from the public services of the state and of the community. But I give you permission to dedicate any one you like of these three manors to the service of God, providing you will leave to me the other two." Whether it was already the custom in those days for unclaimed property to revert to the crown I cannot say, but the king's reply certainly showed prevision of the events which followed. Thus it came to pass that the small manor of Sechnant, that is to say the "dry valley," was dedicated to the service of God under S. Beuno, as being that nearest to the home of Breui's parents.

On a certain Sunday, when her parents had gone to the chapel, which S. Beuno ultimately built at the bottom of the valley by the side of his cell, Breui remained behind to collect the fire, water, and salt required for the Mass with which the service was to conclude.

Left thus alone she was sitting by the fire, possibly cherishing the embers for the purpose she had in view,

when the door opened and there entered a certain Caradoc, a prince of royal blood, who had spent the Sunday morning hunting wild beasts, and being very thirsty, presented himself at the house of the chief, asking, in the good old fairy-tale style, for a drink of water. To his surprise he found in the house no mere simple serving-maid, but a beautiful princess with rosy cheeks and golden hair, and "his heart began to burn with desire, and leading her into the house, where they were alone, he forgot his thirst in the vehemence of his love." As she had already determined, unknown to her parents, but with the sanction of her teacher, Beuno, to become the bride of Christ, she repulsed him, saying, "I am betrothed to another whom I am about to wed." Caradoc was not to be so repulsed, and, finding that he persisted in his suit, she attempted to escape him by strategy. She asked his permission to pass into the adjoining room in order to attire herself more suitably for his companionship. Having escaped from his view she left the house by another door, in the hope of gaining the protection of her parents and of the congregation in the church.

Caradoc in his impatience shortly followed her, and, finding that she had deceived him, in his fury mounted once more upon his horse, and overtook her just as she reached the door of the monastery. The story is thus told in the pilgrimage hymn, which is sung, with some effect, to the tune of "The March of the Men of Harlech."

"Then the tyrant prince pursuing,  
Swore his sword should work her ruin,  
Ah, that stroke was his undoing,  
Winifride of Wales.

For the chasm yawning,  
Swallows without warning  
Him whose sacrilegious hands

The bride of Christ assails,  
 While the holy head descending,  
 To the vale its progress wending,  
 Causes blessings never-ending  
 Winifride of Wales."

The fact of the head "descending to the vale" is, by the way, a variant; for the monk of Basingwerk, whose version we are now following, places the murder at the monastery door. We took the trouble to mount the extremely precipitous cliff which bounds that side of the valley, where it is said the scene took place between Caradoc and Breui, and we came to the conclusion that had her head been cut off, as Robert of Shrewsbury tells us, on that spot, and had thence bounded to the present site of the well, the fact of its arriving there at all would be by no means the least of the miracles associated with it. Be that as it may, the head rolled into the church, to the consternation and alarm of the assembled congregation. Even the officiating priest, Beuno, left the altar and came to see who had done this murderous deed. "Raising his eyes, he saw Caradoc standing with his bloody sword in his hands, and, perceiving him to be the murderer, he cursed him as he stood. The miserable man melted away before their eyes as wax before the fire. Beuno went to the corpse of the dead girl, carrying her head, which had rolled inside the door, and, earnestly beseeching God to restore her to life lest his enemy should triumph over him, he fitted the head to the body. His prayer was heard. The body returned at once to life and animation, scarcely showing a slender scar running all around the neck, and on the spot where her blood had flowed there was an earthquake with a loud noise, and a great stream of water burst forth, and has continued to flow from that day to this. The stones in that stream have been ever since, and are still, the colour of blood. The moss has

the scent of incense, and is a remedy for various diseases."

From the point of view of comparative folk-lore it may, perhaps, be interesting to know that cases of the resurrection of women who have been beheaded occur twelve times in the lives of Cambro's "British Saints"; that the history of the liquifaction of the body, as in the case of Caradoc, occurs in the lives of S. Cadoc, S. Iltutus, S. Paternus, S. Lasrian, and S. Colman of Dromore. The flow of fresh springs of water on the site of a tragedy or of a martyrdom is a legend very common in mediæval history, and occurs in Welsh story on at least two other occasions.

So begins the romance of the story of S. Winifride. The second and third volumes are easily anticipated. Of course, she became the abbess of a convent, erected upon the site of the hermitage of S. Beuno, and, of course, the well very early became famous as the scene of cures and of miracles of all kinds.

The name of Breui received the prefix of *gwen* or *wen*, which signifies white, the "B" being changed into "f" for euphony, she was commonly known as *Gwenfreui*, later anglicised for convenience into the English form of *Winifride*, variously spelt *Winefride*, *Winifred*, and *Winefrede*. One story tells us that the syllable "wen," or white, was an allusion to a white mark around her neck which ever after testified to the miracle of her cure. The earlier biographer, however, gives, as in other cases, the more poetical rendering. She was quite "white" we are told, "because she spoke with the whiteness of purity, and lived in faithful and constant observance of her vows."

When S. Beuno left her, his mission to the vale of Sechnant being finished, he led her to the fountain, and, placing her upon a stone at the water's edge, which is still preserved, and is known as S. Beuno's stone, thus addressed her: "My child, the Lord intends

this place for thee. I must now depart. He provided another home for me. To thee three gifts are given which will hand down thy memory to the devotion of posterity."

Firstly, the stones which were stained with her blood should never lose their crimson colour, but should thus for ever commemorate her martyrdom. This prophecy, as all visitors to the well can testify, has been very literally fulfilled, though botanists attribute the colour of the stones not to miracle, but to the growth upon them of a minute red fungus.

Secondly, whoever should three times implore her help in sickness or misfortune should at the third time obtain his request, unless opposed to the Divine will. Should the third petition be in vain the petitioner might set his house in order and prepare for death. Instances in which, as predicted, at the third time the prayer has been granted are considerable in number, and many of them well attested. The proportion of failures is, of course, very much larger than the proportion of successes, and I have no doubt a great majority have gone away disappointed. At the same time it should be borne in mind that there is no *time* element named in the prophecy, and the saint's dictum, "Then let him invoke thy assistance to prepare for death," may simply signify that the patient has nothing else in particular to look forward to.

Thirdly, S. Beuno informed her that on leaving Sechnant he intended to dwell on the sea-shore at some place which he did not name, and which we now know to have been on the coast of Carnarvonshire, where he founded a monastery in 616. He was anxious, however, to obtain occasional tidings of her, and desired that she should every year, with her maidens, weave for him a cloak, and should place it on the stone upon which she was then sitting, and which now lies, and perhaps has long lain, at the bottom of the water.

The stream would carry the cloak to the river, and the river to the sea, and the sea would wash it to the future home of S. Beuno, a little creek about eight miles from Carnarvon, called from this tradition Porth-a-Casseg, the port of the vestment. The prediction of this miracle was, we are told, fulfilled, and every year S. Beuno received his cloak, which, in spite of the conditions of its journey, was never wet, neither by the sea which brought it to him, nor by the rain which fell when he was wearing it, so that he was for ever after known as S. Beuno of the Dry Cloak.

3. The little town of Holywell lies a few miles west of Chester, on the southern side of the estuary of the Dee. The population is estimated at about three thousand, but there are signs of rapid decay in the extreme poverty of the houses, in ruined factories, closed copper works, silent paper mills. At Holywell, unlike most places, devotion seems to be the only prosperous element. The ever-growing hospice, the handsome Roman Catholic church, with its stately marble statue of S. Winifride, the convent, the school, the lecture-hall, these testify "to the glory of God and of S. Winifride," and prosper in spite of many obstacles.

On arriving, we naturally began by visiting the well itself, and in a few minutes we began to feel that we were already absorbing something of the local colour. The spring is situated symmetrically in the middle of the beautiful crypt which we owe to Margaret, Countess of Richmond, and mother of Henry VII., and to Catherine of Aragon. The spring rises to the surface with great force, and immediately forms a pool, part of which, lying outside of the arches supporting the dome-shaped roof, is enclosed by a stone piscina, and then, passing underground, flows outside of the crypt into a rectangular basin, known as the

bathing-place and which is surrounded by dressing boxes.

Little groups of people were drinking water from the cups which hang from the surrounding pillars, and filling cans and bottles with the holy water for the use of others unable to leave home, or too feeble to come to the well itself.

Beyond the piscina is a shrine, lavishly adorned with flowers and candles, and we noticed one poor girl, who had been bathing her crippled limbs in the piscina, still kneeling barefoot before the enthroned image.

The arches supporting the crypt have been filled in recently, probably in the interests of privacy. Those between it and the bath were, at the moment, closed up by rough wooden doors, as the men were bathing there.

There was something strange in the whole atmosphere of the scene; something which made us feel that our distance from accustomed sights was not to be measured by the six hours of our journey from London; something so stirring and suggestive, that one felt it to be hardly possible to place one's self in the proper condition of æsthetic receptivity during the little stir and bustle of the talking groups, and we devoted ourselves at once to the human element in the scene, preferring to postpone the reception of impressions which were merely æsthetic.

The women were busily discussing the case of a remarkable cure which had been performed the day before, upon a certain Katie Long, of whose name we at once made a memorandum, in the hope of finding her later on. The interest for us in their talk lay, not only in the degree of sympathy with which they viewed the case itself, but in the perception of the encouragement and hope with which it inspired them in regard to the persons on whose behalf they were present.

They seemed to take a personal pride in doing the honours of a place, to which, so far as we could discover, they had themselves been strangers but a few days before. They showed us a group of crutches in one corner and eagerly counted their number, forty-five; they showed us the little twisted boots, left behind, it is alleged, by the mothers of children cured of their deformities, and various surgical instruments, full of horrible suggestions, which hung grotesquely from the elaborate Gothic vaulting which supports the centre of the roof, as well as endless inscriptions carved upon the rough stone walls.

Some of these we deciphered with some pains. In one place the date of 1595 was clearly visible, though the initials which had formerly surrounded it were indecipherable. "B. M., 1604," we read in another place. The reading of "Nicholas Pennant, 1609," gave us some little trouble. "F. P. (or F.), 1629," appeared below it. A somewhat elaborately carved "A. W., 1610," was easily traced. "D. A.," surmounted by an ornate "I.H.S.," was without date, but appeared to be of some antiquity. "W. M., 1621," "Crugan, 1795," "J. D. Ruthin, 1754," "J. Camden, 1794," the letters "G. E.," separated by a cross over some heraldic device, probably a lion rampant—all these we made out with little difficulty. "J. M. Carew, Esq., Meath, W., Cured here Oct. 30, 1831," was an inscription still quite fresh. The name of Pennant we found more than once. "T. Smith, Manchester, 1808," carved with care and detail, was pathetic in its very contrast to the dignity of its surroundings. Above these hung in gay colouring of red and blue and gold the inscription, perhaps from some points of view as grotesque, from others infinitely suggestive, "S. Winifride, Admirable Virgin, even in this unbelieving age, still pray for us."

Returning to the outside we found the detail of

the stone carving as exquisite in finish, and perhaps more perfect in preservation than within. The frequent recurrence of the rose and portcullis recall associations of Westminster Abbey and King's College, Cambridge, and carvings of cows, dragons, and fabulous monsters remind one of the much earlier decoration of Glastonbury Abbey.

In the afternoon we visited the hospice, a large airy building, absolutely destitute of any ornament, except a profusion of flowers and a great many cheap but well-chosen prints upon the wall.

We were very courteously received by the kind Sisters, in spite of the fact that they were obviously worn-out with the sudden demands upon their hospitality. Down-stairs, tables and benches were arranged even in the passages and outside in the court-yard, so as to make all possible accommodation; and overhead, beds were placed wherever beds would go. In one of the women's dormitories a huge pile of mattresses and blankets, ready to arrange in extra corners, testified to the capacity of the Sisters for meeting emergencies. "We used to keep a little room on the second floor to rest ourselves and be quiet in," one of them told us, "but we can't spare either time or space now! We say our Office in here;" and she opened the door of a tiny room at the head of the stairs, which, as she added, was within call for every one.

4. The show-visitor was, of course, Katie Long, the little deaf and dumb girl, cured the day before, and we were very glad to talk with her. She seemed unusually bright and intelligent—by no means the typical "hysterical" patient—and was radiant over her recovery. "We must take your portrait," we said to her, "and we shall give one to the Sisters here, for you have no crutch or bandage to leave to S. Winifride."

"I'm going to leave my ear-rings, please, Sister,"

she said simply, turning from us to the Sister in charge, and fingering the little gold rings in her ears, probably her only possession of any value.

We asked for her history. Her father was a "knocker-up" in Wigan, and she had a sister who had brought her to Holywell. She was fourteen, and in service at Wigan. Her master had a dairy. Yes, it had been very awkward being dumb in service, especially with children to mind. She had had to write down everything. We ascertained that she could write and spell very well, and wondered how she had been taught, as she had been "years" in service.

She was in service when she became dumb, three years ago. She had been sent upstairs in the dark, and she "saw something," and had never spoken since. I longed for details, but having all the circumstances in mind, I did not press my inquiries. The doctor had said "it had come with a fright, and might go with a fright."

No, she had not been really frightened at the water. It was the second time of bathing when she "felt queer," and the *globus hystericus* (she called it a "loomp o' soom'at") seemed to rise in her throat, and she went to her sister and said, "I'm all right now."

Of course one knows that such a case is one of mere hysteria, but it is none the less an occasion for rejoicing and sympathy. Here is no idle fine lady, invalidated by vanity and self-consciousness, but a poor little child, incapacitated at eleven years old, handicapped in that weary struggle for life into which she had already plunged; and when we have called the whole affair "mere self-suggestion," though we may have explained the process, we have, happily, not explained it away.

Others we saw. A blind man from Cumberland, brought all the way by a little grand-daughter—a

fairy-like, dainty little creature—both grotesquely excited over the fact that he had been included in a photograph taken by one of the gentlemen of our party. He was supremely anxious to possess himself of a copy, though what satisfaction a blind man expected to derive from such a possession we failed to discover. However, we took his address, and he has his wish by now.

We noticed that several came from Bolton, the result, we were told, of a cure earlier in the season, of a woman from that town, who had been paralysed from injury in a railway accident at Christmas. She had been carried down helpless to the well, and had walked back! We talked with several who had come crippled with rheumatism and paralysis; and, as we looked at their bent figures and distorted limbs, we realised that it needed a strong faith to take an open-air bath in deep cold water, for those unable to swim or take subsequent exercise; but they all said, hopefully, others had been cured, and why not they?

One fragile, anæmic girl, weakened by long nursing of a crippled mother, now dead, seemed full of hope. She bathed twice a day, and felt better already. I blamed myself for being unable to repress a sympathetic shiver as I looked at her bloodless face and touched her ice-cold hand. I begged her to keep out of doors in the sunshine, but we saw her later continually standing about the chilly crypt, inch-deep in the water that is constantly splashed upon the floor. The well seemed to fascinate her.

One poor woman, unable, when we saw her, to raise herself in bed, had come all the way from Edinburgh, and had been carried down to the bath the day before. Her faith seemed so pathetically strong that we rendered her such service as we could by added suggestions, and assured her very emphatically of amelioration. She

injured herself by over-fatigue three years before, and had been gradually losing power in her limbs ever since.

We considered it a serious duty to emphasise suggestion in any direction that seemed likely to influence the sufferers. A group of mothers discussed the condition of the poor, wasted, distorted little children on their knees. S. Winifride was always good to children, they said; had we not seen the little twisted boots, so many of them, that hung as trophies of cure at the well? Many of the children were already ever so much better. We heartily echoed the S. Winifride theory, and passed on to a group of men who had possessed themselves of an analysis of the water. Most of the ingredients were outside of their experience, but iron, they ascertained, was present, and that was a capital thing. I did not remind them that the total proportion of metallic matter (alumina, silver, and iron) was 0.875 grains in an imperial gallon, but cordially agreed in the importance of the presence of iron.

They belonged to some depressing dissenting community, and had no opinion of S. Winifride and papists in general, though I noticed they were glad enough to accept the "papist" hospitality.

A great many were occupied in writing letters to their friends, and some, blind perhaps, or crippled in their hands, were dictating to others. Everywhere we heard the same tune, that of hope achieved, or of hope waiting and expectant.

A veritable giant sat silent in a corner nursing a tiny kitten. We had passed him once before, and had noticed him as irresponsive to friendly greeting. For the first time I observed now that his fine eyes were sightless. I stroked the kitten, and deplored her puny condition. "T'kit ought to go to t' well," he said, in welcome West Riding accents. "She's main good is Winifride."

"I hope she's been good to you?" I asked in some doubt.

"Main good," he answered brightly, "I've been i' watter, an' I've prayed, an' happen I'm a bit more peart like, but it doan't mak' no differ to the eyes, and so now I knaw the wull o' the Lord." And he gently stroked the little kitten with great powerful hands, surely meant for work in the world. I could not but think of the words of S. Beuno when in his parting charge to the saint, he said, "Brute animals will not lose their share of these benefits, for God's clemency will so rest upon this place that great miracles will be wrought here for the honour of your name."

The very existence of the horses that toil up and down the hills of Holywell is a daily miracle I ached at witnessing.

5. In the evening, we learnt there was to be a procession round the well, preceded by a service and followed by adoration of the relic.

This, by the way, is a very small fraction of the person of the saint herself. After her final demise in 660 she was buried close by the Convent of Gwytherin in the next county, over which she had long ruled, but was translated to Shrewsbury about 1136 under romantic circumstances, related at some length by the Chronicler Robert.

That very destructive period, from habit called "The Reformation," scattered her remains, with the exception of one finger, which was long preserved in the Powys family, but presented at the beginning of the last century to the Pope.

In 1852 half of this was returned to England (one speculates as to what proportion of three unequal joints is considered half!), and was divided between Shrewsbury and Holywell.

The ceremony began by a short, earnest, practical address from Father Beauclerk, the priest in charge of

the mission. It was one from which Christians of any denomination might receive practical profit, and was wholly free from excitement or any undue stimulus of the emotions of the people. Very little was said of miracle, much of prayer and personal effort, and the very lesson which the blind man in the hospice had received was suggested—that spiritual cures were to be looked for rather than bodily. The pilgrims were reminded of the traditions as to the special sanctity of certain spots, especially S. Beuno's Stone (which was at all events hallowed as the scene of many prayers), and of what is known as S. Winifride's Stone. This last, we were reminded, being part of the building erected eight centuries after her death, could not really be associated with the saint any more than could the red stones said to be sprinkled with her blood. But they had their value as reminders of the sacred example of her life. S. Beuno's Stone had probably been coeval with the original building.

Then all not intending to join in the procession were required to stand back. The path round the pool was very narrow, and we thought ourselves fortunate in gaining a little recess by the side of the bathing cabins. The stones beneath our feet were inch deep in water, there was not room to pay any attention to the state of our dresses or of our shoes. All the crowd carried candles, and I knew that one was singeing my hair, and another dripping down my companion's back. Very little movement in our rear would precipitate us into the pool.

An image of the saint was carried in front, then followed priests and acolytes—bright little boys in scarlet, whose enthusiasm pleased us. Next the Sisters, with gentle faces and downcast eyes, after them some schoolgirls from the convent; next, the choir, mostly amateur, untrained but zealous. Then came the pilgrims, and all thought of small annoyances and

discomforts was swept away by the great wave of human sympathy that surged over us. There, in presence of the infinite pathos of human suffering and poverty, one must needs be reverent and mute. One after another, as the sufferers passed by, there arose before us visions of the sad drama of their lives, of their patience, and that other virtue, scarcely less, the patience for and with them of their friends; of the little domestic tragedies, of sacrifice to make their journey possible, of months of toil silently added to the weight of some already over-burdened life; visions of humble homes the lonelier for the absence of the pilgrims—homes in which all else was forgotten in overwhelming anxiety for the issue of this, "the last chance"; of homes desolated by that saddest of all human spectacles, the helplessness of the strong—the bread-winner incapacitated, the active housewife crippled—bright eyes and eager hands become blind or feeble; the awful burden of the weak flesh upon the willing spirit.

Each pilgrim had been supplied with a lighted candle, but in many cases we observed that some attendant friend was carrying it as well as his own. Some of the cripples were too much occupied with their crutches to spare a hand for the tapers, some of the blind and maimed were unable to hold them, here and there was the sad spectacle of a sufferer so helpless as to occupy the entire attention of a friend; in such cases, so far as we observed, both candles were carried by proxy.

One little picture we can never forget—a weary pale-faced mother carrying a child, an infant in proportions, a sage in dignity of demeanour. In the tiny face of a baby of a few months there shone a pair of starlike lustrous eyes, out of which, as it seemed, there gazed a soul imprisoned in torture. He sat erect, his tiny hand holding a lighted candle, which he carried with perfect steadiness and apparent comprehension.

We came to know him later, he was one of twins, and three years old. The pair (the other was a fine healthy little fellow) were called S. Aloysius and S. Ignatius. "If ever there was a saint on earth it's Aloysius," his mother told us. "He's got the ways and the looks of the saint himself. The Sisters say so. There never was such a child! Five and sixpence a week he's cost me ever since he began teething, and I ain't tired of him yet." That child fascinated us. He would sit serene and dignified in unspeakable melancholy on a seat devised for him among the votive crutches. Now and then the tiny face would pucker in pain or weariness, but no cry ever escaped him. S. Winifride had been good, we were told, to Aloysius, he had a fine mouthful of teeth! We asked ourselves, how was it, unless in sympathy with the wondrous mother love, that imprisoned soul was not released?

Now and then some poor cripple would stumble, or a blind pilgrim go too near the edge of the water, or a candle would be extinguished in the draught. Then willing hands would be outstretched to help, even the most suffering seemed always ready to help each other; not a sign of distress was to be observed, the very children never uttered a cry.

Thrice the procession passed through an archway of the crypt and around the pool beyond, returning through the further archway, and then through the crypt round the well, and out again as at first.

Then all who could pass in returned to the crypt, the space about the well and the steps and portico being all crowded by those unable to gain access. Beside the arch used for the exit of the procession is a small shrine profusely decorated with flowers and lights. In front, at a simple *prie-Dieu*, knelt Father Beauclerk. The service began by the recitation of the Litany of S. Winifride. At first the responses were made chiefly by the choir. Others, perhaps,

as well as ourselves, unfamiliar with the petitions, may have been startled at the mediæval quaintness of their language.

When the priest chanted—

*“O bright example of Chastity—O radiant star—O fairest flower of the British nation;”* it was the little acolytes whose voices most audibly responded at each pause, *“Pray for us.”*

But at—

*“O hope and relief of distressed pilgrims,”* many voices took up the response, and few were silent at—

*“That we may be delivered from sickness, accident, and sudden death,”* or at—

*“That God of His abundant mercy may vouchsafe to bless this our pilgrimage.”*

Then, accompanied the whole time by the singing of hymns, the veneration of the relic began. The hymns were well chosen, being for the most part familiar to Romanists and Anglicans alike. There were, however, two special “Hymns of Winifride” that were new to us.

The arrangements were excellent; it was difficult to understand how, without the smallest show of officialism, such perfect order was kept under the conditions of extreme crowding.

There was not the smallest sign of excitement, though one felt in every sense the living pulsation of sympathy and feeling. Slowly, one by one, the pilgrims approached the *prie-Dieu*, knelt for one moment, kissed the relic, and passed out. Many would also point out to the Father a wish to have the seat of their maladies touched. Quick to catch these indications, he would lay it for a moment on eye or ear, or suffering limb, with a readiness of sympathy which the sufferers could not fail to appreciate.

On this occasion, as well as on others, we felt very forcibly that, from whatever cause, the promise to

S. Winifride of the spiritual blessings that should attend those faithful to her, was fulfilled to the uttermost. Looking into the faces of the hundreds who for themselves, or vicariously, performed this simple act of faith, one could not fail to remember yet another promise, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." The same look of child-like faith, of open-heartedness, of simple expectation of the gift, was upon each, and even if their maladies were not removed, surely few that evening went empty away. Many there were—blind, crippled, trembling—to whom even so simple an act would have been one of difficulty had it not been for the ready helpfulness of all around.

During the whole time—and the scene lasted over an hour—I sat and watched the faces of the pilgrims as they filed past, young and old, sick and well, men and women, all with the same rapt look of expectation! We discussed afterwards the question, what would be the effect of the probable reaction, would the last state of the disappointed be worse than the first? For myself, I think not. I believe that the promise of healing would be in one way or other, in its degree, fulfilled. There is a fine old Persian proverb, "Hold all skirts of thy mantle when heaven is raining gold," and some share of the golden shower of hope, or resignation, or strength, or capacity for effort, or bodily cure awaited each.

6. Sunday was a gloriously bright day. My friend went early to the well to see the women bathing. I was coward enough to await her report, for I dreaded a spectacle that might be full of horror, and I attended the early Mass instead. She came back regretful at my absence, and assuring me of what I afterwards found to be the case, that one easily overcomes the first shock of fastidious dislike in the intense interest of the scene, and the possibilities of being of use.

We discussed her experiences in the little steep graveyard which encloses S. Winifride's Chapel, behind which stands the parish church, a small stone building with a short square tower, of no interest or antiquity.

Sitting in the green churchyard that sunny June morning, we could look over into the hilly street, which, beginning far above us, led down to the crypt beneath our feet. Great numbers of pilgrims and persons interested thronged the winding street, or awaited the mid-day service at the well.

The scene was orderly and quiet; from first to last we were impressed by the reverent stillness of the place, perhaps the more striking when we remembered that for hundreds present this was perhaps the first holiday from pit or loom, of any duration, for several years.

It was a stillness, not of indifference, but of expectation—almost of tension. The bathing, with its attendant excitement, was but just over; last night's exhibition of relics was fresh in the mind; to-day's procession, though to the Roman Catholics present a more or less familiar act of faith, was looked forward to by the larger proportion of Protestants as something strange—almost miraculous.

In the distance, from the many dissenting chapels which alternate with public-houses in Holywell, came sounds of vigorous, if somewhat unmusical, worship. The little Roman church, almost bare in its simplicity—no one can accuse the Mission here of extravagance or ornateness of ritual—was perched high above us; nevertheless, many empty wheel chairs about the doors testified to the efforts made by the helpless to complete the Novena urged upon them, while the constant tapping of crutches on the pavement intimated that yet more were climbing the steep hillside. We could see the overflow gathered about the doors, women and children on the steps, men standing in silent groups below.

We watched, too, the respectable townsmen as they entered the church beside which we sat, and where we proposed to join them, according to Sunday morning custom, presently. We were very anxious to see what share our own Mother Church was taking in all the work done at Holywell, what was her special form of ministrations to the hungry and thirsty, expectant in mind, and body, and soul. It is but seldom that such an opportunity presents itself, seldom that the unemotional British working man or woman comes before us with open-hearted unity of aim, and obviousness of intention, as now; tender and receptive, with an emotion which is individual, not cosmic, which arises from no party or political sentiment, but has its roots in the sanctities of family and home.

All over England, from many a village church, thousands of prayers would go up that morning from hard working men and women like themselves, from those to whom health and strength mean all else that life can hold for themselves and others—mean work and bread, and the possibility of loving ministrations to the old, and the children, and the feeble, and the poor.

We would tear ourselves away from the scene before us, with all its suggestiveness and teaching, and we, too, would join, as is our Sunday morning wont, that prayer of hundreds of thousands—

*"Finally, we commend to Thy Fatherly goodness all those who are anyway afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate, that it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions."*

We passed out of the sunshine into the church beyond, into an atmosphere eminently clean, respectable, and orthodox, but hideous, bare, and cold. It was half empty. Not a single flower suggested acknow-

ledgment of the festival, not a hint of any occasion of special interest; and a printed notice announced a sermon and collection for the Church Missionary Society!

Since the hour when, on our way from the station, we had found ourselves in the crypt, had stood beside the well under its grey stone canopy, and among the groups of patient, suffering humanity, we had been conscious of some share in the emotions of our surroundings, of an atmosphere of energy, self-conquest, and exaltation.

For the moment all was extinguished! Unspoken indifference, perhaps contempt, was in the air. "We have seen it all before," one seemed to hear, "it is the story of the Ages. Men must work, and women must weep. Let us hear about the missionaries in Honolulu."

We did not remain. It seemed like passing out of a sunrise sky into a gas-lighted, suburban villa. I felt some sympathy for the member of our party, who observed, "If ever I join the Church of Rome I shall date my perversion from that Church Missionary Society sermon!"

Empty as we knew it to be, alas! there would be more of sympathy for our mood in the deserted chapel of S. Winifride, and I had been longing, ever since we came, to penetrate behind its close-locked doors. After some delay an obliging sexton procured the key, and, descending several steps, we found ourselves in this miniature specimen of Henry VII. architecture.

The proportions are extremely beautiful; the east end is a pentagonal apse, and has five windows with graceful tracery. The details of all the carving are very fine, both in wood and stone; but by way of practical illustration of the decadence of reverence and taste, everything is covered thick in dirty whitewash, the floor is decaying, the walls are scrawled and defaced in every direction, and even the hideous deal

benches, which are all the furniture contained, are broken and disorderly.

We were told that there would be a service in Welsh here in the evening. We hoped that some ventilation would be effected first, and thankfully regained the shade of the chestnut-trees.

Hundreds besides ourselves, sons and daughters of our Mother Church, lacked ministrations that day, or sought refuge, as did we, in a strange communion, where at least we found recognition of the common brotherhood of those who were passing, each one alone, through a crisis, in which perhaps more than in most, they had need of human fellowship.

The history of S. Winifride's Chapel is somewhat complex. The original building was presented, in 1093, by the Countess of Chester to the monastery of that city. In 1240, David Prince of Wales gave it to the monks of Basingwerk. The present building, of 1495 or thereabouts, seems to have escaped much injury at the Reformation, and in 1625 we have proof that it had then been for twenty years in the care of a certain Father Bennett (or Price) of the Society of Jesuits. In 1686 it was definitely made over by the king to the Fathers of the Mission, it having apparently been secularised in the meantime. At the Revolution it seems to have been again desecrated, but of the facts of its subsequent history, or how it ever came to be considered town-property, I can find no record. Its present condition is, from every point of view, deplorable.

The ceremony of kissing the relic and the procession round the well was practically, except for an increase in numbers, the same as on Saturday night. There were more clergy, including the Bishop of Shrewsbury, and there were many more pilgrims and patients. We did not remain when we had once satisfied ourselves that there would be no new features—we desired no after-touches to the previous picture.

On Monday morning I went for the first time to watch the bathing. A thousand pilgrims of the Guild of Ransom were expected to arrive at Holywell at mid-day, and special services had been arranged for them. As all able-bodied pilgrims were to join a procession organised to meet them, the bathing was arranged at an early hour. We arrived at the well before eight o'clock, however, and soon found ourselves among old friends. Nearly all the women and children we had talked to at the hospice, and many whom we had remarked in the procession were already there, in every variety of bathing costume.

The floor of the crypt was an inch deep in water from the drippings of the bathing-gowns, for the ceremony began, in the case of nearly all those at all able to walk, by a preliminary dip in the piscina, where S. Winifride's Stone was duly kissed. Then, with bare feet and dripping garments, shivering with cold, the women made their way, one by one, to the *prie-Dieu* in front of the shrine, where they would remain in prayer for a few minutes, many audibly entreating help for themselves and others. Then, perhaps, back to the well to drink, or to dip again, and finally, when their courage was sufficiently aroused, across the damp cold flags into the pool itself.

Still and green and cold it looked in that morning hour, but bravely the poor creatures plunged in. Little children were carried down in the arms of their mothers, or sometimes even by compassionate strangers. Helpless cripples were brought between two men, one of whom I identified as my blind giant of the hospice, "Pat" they called him, and it was touching to see how confident the poor helpless women seemed to be in his strong arms.

A few friends of the patients remained, as we did, on dry ground, ready to help those who needed it, for many were too feeble or too sorely crippled to go out of arm's reach of the platform above.

S. Beuno's Stone, which lay at the foot of the steps, just under water, was the sacred spot to which all, sooner or later, resorted. Sometimes four or five clinging together would say a rosary, each with perhaps one foot on the stone, and then, with fresh courage, would plunge again into the water, leaving the coveted spot for others.

Now and then some poor helpless creature, near to fainting, would cry out for support, and all were more than ready to give help to others weaker than themselves. One woman, who had the great advantage of being able to swim, remained in the water for at least an hour, solely, as far as we could discover, to be of use.

Never a single word of complaint was heard, all were helpful, hopeful, strong, for themselves and others.

We were very anxious to be of use, and were glad of opportunities for advising and helping. But our main idea was to sing our little part in the general chorus of suggestion, the suggestion of encouragement, example, and hope. We listened in reverent silence while the rosary was being told; we urged the example of others already brave in the consciousness of having made the first plunge; and, above all, we encouraged every suggestion of cure accomplished.

My friend found one patient whom she had already helped on earlier occasions, who was an excellent illustration of the value of suggestion. We knew her by sight in Holywell, a poor, feeble, young woman, with dragging limbs and trembling gait. Before we left, we saw her walking briskly up and down the hills at a pace many a Londoner would have envied. When she came out of the water the poor creature shivered so that she could not stand, and was with difficulty got into the dressing cabin. My friend rubbed some warmth into her, accompanying her efforts with verbal suggestions.

"I have often cured people by rubbing—can't you feel the life coming back? Now, when I have counted ten your limbs will not shake any more. Now I will hold your head still in my warm hands for a minute [it was shaking like an aspen leaf], when I release it, it will be perfectly steady. Now you are quite able to dress yourself, then you will feel quite strong, and will walk home comfortably."

Every suggestion was obeyed implicitly, and over and over again we found the value of treatment of this kind.

I had at first a heterodox longing to fetch a spirit lamp and distribute cups of hot comforting tea to some of the old and feeble as they emerged from their dressing-rooms, but suppressed the guilty thought and distributed suggestions instead. It was not for me to interfere with a treatment the results of which were in so many cases immediate and beneficial.

There were, of course, certain cases which I watched with anxiety—I had almost said with *agony*. However, all the patients in the hospice were under medical supervision, and I am bound to say that in no single instance did we hear of evil effects.

Hope, as every doctor and nurse knows, is a more potent tonic than any they can administer, and self-forgetfulness yet more strong for good, mental and physical, is never so vigorous as when learnt in the service of others.

It is only just to consider the question from all sides, and I should like to say, in conclusion, one word on the question of suggestion from the religious point of view.

Although the little town was literally crowded with pilgrims, we witnessed no religious excitement whatever. Even on occasions so picturesque as the blessing of the well and the veneration of the relic, though the emotion of the crowd was obvious enough, it was so

absolutely restrained that a careless observer might have considered it entirely lacking.

The good Father, though ready to help all who sought him—weary and exhausted as we often perceived him to be—had yet *to be sought* in chapel or presbytery; we never once met him, or any of his assistants, engaging in any sort of propaganda. The Sisters never once, while we were there, assisted at the bathing-place, and we regretted, and were even inclined to reproach them, for their absence. However, sorely as help was needed there, it was perhaps even more essential that they should not neglect their onerous duties of nurses and housewives in the hospice. Indeed, except for those who desired it, there was no attempt made to emphasise the religious aspect. All that there was of sympathy, of hospitality, of charity, was done, I am ashamed to say, solely by our Sister Church; but except for those who wished it otherwise, it was done not in the name of the Church, but of humanity. The well is rented from the town by the Jesuit Fathers, but it is open to all alike at a nominal charge, and even at the hospice, necessity and not religious opinion is the passport to hospitality.

Holywell has been called the Welsh Lourdes, but in the aspect we have just been considering, the difference between the two places is, if M. Zola is to be believed, immense. In appreciating the emotional atmosphere of the place we have to discount neither for religious frenzy nor southern sentiment.

But, as says good old Butler in his "Lives of the Saints," "As such extraordinary miracles are to be received with veneration when authentically attested, so are they not to be lightly admitted; and, as we know not what vouchers the writer of this saint's life had for these miracles, the credibility of them is left to every one's discretion."

## IX

### SAINT COLUMBA, THE FATHER OF SECOND SIGHT

1. Iona to-day.—2. The story of the Saint.—3. His “supernatural” gifts.—4. Second Sight stories: (a) Thought-transference and Clairvoyance; (b) Premonition.—5. Characteristics of the traditions.

“There are some, though very few, who are enabled by divine grace to see most clearly and distinctly the whole compass of the world, and to embrace within their own wondrously enlarged mental capacity the utmost limits of the heavens and the earth at the same moment, as if all were illumined by a single ray of the sun.”—*S. Columba of Iona.*

1. IT is a grey September afternoon in the island of Iona. All day the wind has raged, and the storm has beaten pitilessly upon the poor little shocks of oats and bere standing out in the marshy fields. The sea-gulls are flying low, and not even a fishing-boat puts out to sea in the hurricane. There are neither trees nor hedges in this island, so the drenched starlings and thrushes have taken refuge in the chimneys, and in the upper rooms we can hear them chattering and complaining. The lesser birds, the robins and sparrows, are sheltering in the hollows of the rough stone walls, and now and then the jackdaws rise screaming from the abbey tower. Across the grey sea rise the grey hills of the island of Mull, and the sea, beaten back from its broken shore-line, returns with added force to the Martyr's Bay below our windows.

Yesterday all was different. Sky and sea were of the deepest blue, and the shore glowed with intense whiteness in the brilliant sunshine. Thrushes and

robins sang gaily, perching fearlessly on rock or wall, knowing nothing of the sheltering branches of the kindlier woodlands. We walked southward, turning now and then to look far north to the dim hills of Skye, or to the nearer Ben More on the one hand, or towards the low outline of Tiree on the other. The island of Iona is but three miles long, but before we had reached its southern extremity we had crossed three ranges of hills, and had at least trebled that distance. We left behind us all trace of habitation, the fifty dwelling-houses, the two hundred and sixty human beings. Over low bog and high-placed heather we wandered, until at length, just as the glorious pageant of sunset was beginning, we stood beside the cairn which marks the spot where, thirteen centuries ago, S. Columba, gazing southward, found that at length he had reached an island where the sacrifice of his exile was complete, the Carn Cul ri Eirin—"the cairn which turns its back on Ireland," the place sacred for ever as the home of one who, among many lofty attributes, is, for us, at this moment, above all else, the Father of Second Sight.

Far below us lay the bay in which, in his wicker coracle, S. Columba and his twelve companions came ashore, the beach glittering, as if with jewels, from its abundance of brilliantly-coloured pebbles, green serpentine, green quartz, and rosy felspar. It was not difficult to picture his landing in that spring evening so long ago—the eve of the Feast of Pentecost. In all likelihood, except for some slight surface changes due to a landslip, nothing that we could see had altered during these thirteen hundred years. The whole scene of human life the world over, had developed or faded away, or moved elsewhere, but here, mountain and sky and sea remained for us as they looked for S. Columba long ago, when England was still a Roman colony, when Angles and Saxons and Jutes were still hanker-

ing for a share of her possession, before S. Augustine had brought her teaching, or Bede had begun her literature, or Alfred had given her learning, a time familiar to us only as that of the days of good King Arthur, the days when Merlin wrought spells, and the Knights of the Round Table saw visions. The very stones below us have their tradition, and to this day but few boatmen in the Hebrides fail to think themselves the better provided when at sea if they carry a morsel of yonder gleaming green quartz in their pocket as a preservative from drowning.<sup>1</sup> In no place is the lover of the beautiful more conscious of the indescribable glamour of the Hebrides, than in such a spot as this, face to face with Nature, whatever be her mood at the moment, far from the haunt of men, or from sight or sound of human life.

Second sight is a common gift of the Celtic Highlander, and though we associate its possession largely with the Highlander of Scotland, there is no doubt that his brother of the neighbouring island has his share of the faculty. By birth the saint was an Irishman, yet nearly half his seventy-five years of life were passed in the Hebrides. He was eminently Celtic, a man of fine stature and pleasing appearance, fierce and passionate by nature, affectionate, compassionate, emotional, imaginative, artistic.

“The powerfulest preacher,  
The tenderest teacher,  
The kindest creature  
In old Donegal.”

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<sup>1</sup> I am inclined, however, to think that this may be a modern specialisation of an older superstition. Even so late as the first quarter of this century we find the tradition in the form quoted by Sir Walter Scott, who, sending to Miss Joanna Baillie an ornament of Iona stone, says that the wearer shall have *one wish* granted. The natives, who never learn to swim (by reason of another superstition), would naturally wish to be saved from drowning. Martin's account is that these stones are fortunate, but only for some particular thing which the person thinks fit to name to the exclusion of everything else.

My object is to consider the saint as the earliest Highland seer, and, with his career, except from this point of view, we have nothing to do. Still less do I propose to describe the island of Iona, dearly as I love its every creek, and bay, and hill, carefully as we have studied its every ruin. A score of books already exist which tell, with more or less accuracy and sympathy, the little that can be *told*, and the customs of the visitors who, during the season, invade the shores of Iona to "do the sights" in an hour and twenty minutes are ample testimony to the impossibility of reaching the understanding, far less the heart, of average humanity, even when the voice of nature calls, and the hand of Time points out the lesson which the saint "being dead yet speaketh." True, alas! it is, that the natives ask extortionate prices for the smallest service, that the children offer shell necklaces and damaged photographs for sale with the persistency of Italian beggars; worst of all, they speak with a Glasgow accent. But the tourists make them what they are, and when the Yankee and the Cockney have taken their loud voices and their tartans (or rather somebody else's tartans) back to the "Grenadier," the wretched little booths are emptied, and the boys go back to their herding and the girls to their housework or their Board School, and, till the next invasion, are self-respecting Highlanders once more.

2. The biographer of S. Columba is S. Adamnan (the English reader may like to be told that the name of the latter saint is accentuated on the second syllable). Countless biographies have, of course, been written from every conceivable point of view, but S. Adamnan is the fountain-head and source of whatever is worthy in all the rest. He became Abbot of Iona in the year 679 only eighty-two years after S. Columba's death, at the age of fifty-five. He had thus much opportunity of studying the life of his great prede-

cessor among the scenes in which it had been passed, and even of hearing the stories of his gifts of second sight, and prophecy, and healing, from those who could vouch for them at first hand. Here is his own testimony on this point:—

“Let no one think of me as either stating what is not true regarding so great a man, or recording anything doubtful or uncertain. Let him know that I will tell the truth with all candour, and without any ambiguity, what I have learned from the consistent narrative of my predecessors—trustworthy and discerning men—and that my narrative is founded either on written authorities anterior to my own times, or on what I have myself heard from some learned and faithful ancients, unhesitatingly attesting facts, the truth of which they had themselves diligently inquired into.”—  
*From the Second Preface.*

So far as history so remote can be authenticated, we may feel that the second sight cases here recorded are told with every desire to be truthful and accurate. They were written down within measurable distance of their occurrence, and dictated by those whose testimony was first hand. Further, in so small a community as that of the monastery in Iona, there would be less temptation to misrepresent and exaggerate, than in the case of a body of men living among an incredulous and critical public where reaction from the unfaith of the outer world might produce superstition within. Again, though doubtless something may be said *per contra* for the blinding intensity of the enthusiasm of which the Highlander is capable, it must not be forgotten that this remote island was a centre of intellectual culture, nor that her sons were men of exceptional learning and intelligence.

Among those monks who remained in Iona we find poets and artists of high merit. In the admirable little pamphlet by Muir & Rendell (published at the

Iona Press) we are told, "The book of Kells, now in Dublin, and the Gospels of Lindisfarne, now in the British Museum, still exist as bewildering witnesses to their skill with the pen. Nothing else comparable with these MSS. is known. They must be seen to be appreciated. How some parts of them were done without a microscope passes modern understanding."

Abroad, their work was that not only of propagandists but of scholars. By the time of Charlemagne (*ibid.* 51), "the followers of Columba had founded seven monasteries in France, seventeen in Alsace-Lorraine, ten in Alsatia, sixteen in Bavaria, and fifteen in Switzerland and Germany, and one monk had become bishop of Tarento in Italy." Moreover, the Universities of Pavia and Paris were founded by four monks who were sent from Iona at the earnest request of Charlemagne, among whom was Albinus, the writer of the celebrated Caroline Books. They sent professors also to Cologne and Louvain. To enumerate the seats of learning and religion which they founded in Scotland would be an endless task; but it is worth while to remember that Aldhelm, said to be the first Englishman who wrote Latin, was a pupil of the Columbite Macduff, who founded the monastery of Malmesbury (*Cave Hist. Lit. Secul.* 7, A.D. 680). Moreover, we are told by Bede that they sent missionaries to "the Middle Angles, Mercians, and East Saxons, whose chief city was London, and instructed them in the liberal arts." In short, the monks of Iona were men of learning and critical ability; for our purpose, what the Society of Psychological Research would call "good witnesses."

Further, the power of careful and accurate narration is a fine art among the Highlanders. I have, scores of times, heard stories told by boatmen and farm-labourers, to say nothing of farmers or ministers, with a precision as well as a charm, which I hold

absolutely matchless. A story worth telling at all becomes a classic, and I have heard the same tale told by a dozen witnesses with scarcely any variation. The Highlander is by temperament and habit a visualiser; his tales are told in a series of pictures, and their outlines become so stereotyped, that even without claiming any special desire for truthfulness among them (not that I should hesitate to claim even this), I believe that a recognised Highland story has few variants.

There is a reason for this. In a country where the winter is long and the days are short, where the climate drives all living creatures under shelter, and the nature of the ground makes even outdoor games impossible, the telling of stories is among the few amusements they possess. Stories are told, as elsewhere songs are sung, over and over again, till the listeners know them by heart. Some are so long that the responsibility for them is divided, and one after another will take his turn at recitation after the fashion of the Arabian Nights. The Scialachies, the professional tale-tellers, may be extinct now, but the amateur is by no means their unworthy successor. In my long wanderings in the Western Highlands I have but twice met with men who were accused of "improving" the classics, and they were held in some contempt in consequence. This veneration for unwritten classics is well, in the interests alike of folk-lore and psychical research.

The seer, like the poet, is born, not made. The possession of the gift is a state to live in, not an art to acquire. It is largely a question of heredity and surroundings. On most questions of psychical inquiry I am an avowed agnostic—one who does not know—*yet*; but to these articles of faith I steadfastly adhere, and from this point of view it seems worth while to inquire who was S. Columba, and what was his training?

Columba was of the royal blood of Ireland. On his mother's side he descended from the kings of Leinster; on his father's, from the kings of Donegal, and through his paternal grandmother, he was related to the kings of Argyle in Scotland.

Before his birth his mother had a vision of a beautiful flowered mantle brought to her by an angel, and then taken away, expanding as it receded, till it seemed to cover all the landscape: plain, and mountain, and forest. Then she heard the words, "Woman, do not grieve, for to the man to whom thou hast been joined by the marriage bond, thou shalt bring forth a son of so beautiful a character that he shall be reckoned among his own people as one of the prophets of God, and hath been predestined by God to be the leader of innumerable souls to the heavenly country."

The saint bore two names, which, as he grew up, seem to typify the two sides of his character—Crimthann, a wolf; and Colum, a dove. He was confided to the care of a certain priest, who one day saw the child's face shining so brightly that it illuminated the whole house. Again and again we hear, at different parts of the saint's life, of the intense brilliancy of this aura. As he grew older, he was sent, for education, to the great monastery of Moville, and later to Clonard, in his mother's county of Leinster. He had also among his teachers the Christian bard, Gemman, who, to the training the saint had already received in theology, and letters, and agriculture, and penmanship, and handicraft of various kinds, added other learning of a kind the bards, of all men, knew best how to bestow: poetry and music, and medicine, and polished manners, and heraldry, and the laws of precedence, which completed his training as a scholar and a gentleman.

3. The first story told of his supernatural powers was of just such a kind as one might expect from a

man so born and reared—a man “tender and true, and strong and pitiful.”

Columba and Gemman were reading together in the fields, when a young girl, fleeing before an angered father, rushed up to the bard and claimed sanctuary. Both did their utmost to protect her, but in vain; she was thrust through by her father's spear, and the murderer escaped and fled. Then the old bard cried, “How long, O Colum, holy lad, will God, the Just Judge, suffer this crime and our dishonour to go un-avenged?” “He will avenge it even now,” replied Columba. “The murdered one's soul soars to Heaven, the murderer's soul sinks to hell.” And as they looked, the murderer, hastening in his fury, struck his foot against a stone, and fell dead.

After this, Columba entered the monastery of Glasnevin, where he remained till he was twenty-three years old, after which his public life began, and for nineteen years was one of intense activity, organising and founding monastic work, and in his leisure hours copying manuscripts and illuminating their pages. His love of books became a snare, and was finally the cause of his exile from his native land.

To the collector much may be forgiven, and churlishness in lending is enough to irritate even a saint. One day S. Columba visited an old man in Ossary who had a valuable collection, and asked permission to copy some of them—the only method then possible of enlarging one's library. The greedy old man refused; perhaps he did not know how carefully and exquisitely Columba could write, and feared injury to his treasures.

Columba then cursed him with a mighty curse. “May thy books never more do good either to thee or to those that shall come after thee!” To him they were already of little use, for he never allowed himself the pleasure of sharing them, and when he did they

were found to be unintelligible. Perhaps he wrote badly, and had the saint copied them, they might be, to this day, as are some of Columba's manuscripts, a source of pleasure and instruction.

On a later occasion the saint, perhaps not daring to risk a like refusal, having borrowed a psalter from S. Finian, his former master, proceeded to copy it without permission. He did this secretly, and at night, being lighted, we are told, by a flame, which proceeded from his left hand, while he wrote with his right. This led to trouble, and finally to war, but the saint succeeded in retaining possession of his copy, and when at last his clan was victorious, he presented them with the disputed volume, and it was thereafter used as a charm to compel success in war.

This was not the end. Columba's quarrels had led to bloodshed, and he was excommunicated by the Synod. One of their number, however, having second sight, perceived the glorious aura of the saint, and said that "a pillar of fire goes before him, and angels walk by his side, and I know that he will be the guide of a whole people to their heavenly fatherland." The sentence was then withdrawn, but S. Columba was ordered to win to eternal life men as many as, on account of his quarrels, he had been the cause of sending out of the life of this world. And this led to his migration to Scotland, then called Albyn, in search of a centre of missionary work.

This brings us to the year 563, six years before the birth of Mahomet, 34 before the landing of S. Augustine, 765 before Chaucer. From 563 we may date the beginning of the period when Columba was recognised as a Highland seer.

Few biographers have ventured to ignore, or even to intentionally minimise, the element of the "supernatural" in S. Columba's history. The Duke of Argyll, writing as a Presbyterian and a man of science about a

saint of the early Church and a reputed seer and worker of miracles, opens his discussion of the subject with the following severe reflections:—

“Some of the stories told are not only childish and utterly incredible, but of a character which makes it very difficult to understand how they could ever be seriously believed even in a very ignorant and a very superstitious age.”—Duke of Argyll, “Iona,” p. 43.

However, as is the custom in the Highlands, where, as a rule, having entirely denied any belief in the supernormal, every one proceeds to relate some story establishing its existence, the Duke, a page or two later, modifies his previous statement.

“Putting aside the exaggerations of detail which transform the providential into the miraculous, this is to be remembered—that not only may such interpretations be sincere, but, what is more, they may be true. Not even the fullest belief in what men vaguely call ‘The Supernatural’ compels us to accept every manifestation of it which a puerile fancy or a superstitious purpose may invent. We are not shut up to the alternative of denying the possibility of Divine Power becoming unusually visible among men, or else of believing that it is exerted without reason, without measure, and without proportion of means to ends. The agencies which work in and through the characters of great men at great epochs of human history, and in the great achievements of their lives, are agencies which may either be called natural or supernatural, according to our conception and definition of the term. They are spiritual agencies, and sometimes work in almost a visible manner, through unusual combinations of ordinary laws.”—Duke of Argyll, “Iona,” p. 47.

The account which S. Adamnan gives of the faculty of second sight is much what, with all the wisdom of the intervening thirteen hundred years, we give to-day, that it is the power of perception of facts or scenes,

often still in the future, by some extension of our ordinary faculties for which at present we are unable to account. The special interest of second sight is, that as it relates to what is distant in time as well as (sometimes) in space, no hypothesis of thought-transference, or subconscious activity, or subliminal observation can in any degree account for it. It is a mystery still, for all our science, and as such, perhaps the most important psychic phenomenon under observation.

“Among the miracles which this same man of God, while dwelling in mortal flesh, performed by the gift of God, was his foretelling the future . . . and making known to those who were present what was happening in other places, for though absent in body he was present in spirit, and would look on things that were widely apart. According to the word of S. Paul, ‘he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.’ Hence, this same man of the Lord, S. Columba, when a few of the brethren would sometimes inquire into the matter, did not deny but that *by some divine intuition, and through a wonderful expansion of his inner soul, he beheld the whole universe drawn together and laid open to his sight as in one ray of sun.*”—S. Adamnan, Book I., chap. i.

Writing a thousand years later—two hundred years ago—Martin, whose book on the Western Highlands is a classic, tells us much the same: “The second sight is a singular faculty of seeing an otherwise invisible object, without any previous means used by the person that sees it for that end” (p. 300), that is to say, it is spontaneous, not an affair of “mediums” and “séances”; and elsewhere (p. 311): “There are visions seen by several persons in whose days they are not accomplished [*i.e.*, they often relate to the remote future], and this is one of the reasons why some things have been seen that are said never to come to pass, and there are also several visions seen which are not understood until they be accomplished.”

## SECOND-SIGHT STORIES

## (a) THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE AND CLAIRVOYANCE

4. The following stories are quoted, generally verbatim, from S. Columba's biographer, and in their arrangement we will accept the distinction observed both by S. Adamnan and by Martin. (1) The vision of things distant in space only, which in these days we should classify as thought-transference; and (2) those removed in time; that is, the premonition of future events, as to which not the most ingenious speculation of the Society for Psychical Research can afford as yet any explanation whatever.

We begin, then, with a group of stories selected from a large number of the same type, and which are, so far, of the less complex and mysterious character, that they may possibly be susceptible of explanation as cases of thought-transference.

## THE VISION OF LAISRAN

"One very cold day, in winter, the saint was much afflicted, and wept bitterly. His attendant, Diormit, asked the cause of his sadness, and received this answer: 'With just reason am I sad to-day, my child, seeing that my monks, now wearied after their severe labours, are engaged by Laisran in building a large house; with this I am very much displeased.' Strange to say, at that very moment Laisran, who was living at that time at the monastery of the Oakwood Plain, felt somehow impelled, and as it were consumed with a fire within him, so that he commanded the monks to cease from working, and some refreshments to be made ready for them. He also gave directions that they were to rest not only that day, but also on other

occasions of severe weather. The saint, hearing in spirit these words of consolation addressed by Laisran to his brethren, ceased weeping . . . and told all these circumstances to the brethren."

#### ERC THE ROBBER

"The saint called two of the brethren, Lugbe and Silnan, and gave them this charge: 'Sail over now to the Malean Island, and on the open ground, near the seashore, look for Erc, a robber, who came alone last night in secret from the Island Coloso. He strives to hide himself among the sandhills during the daytime under his boat, which he covers with hay, that he may sail across at night to the little island where our young seals are brought forth and nurtured. When this furious robber hath stealthily killed as many as he can, he then fills his boat and goes back to his hiding-place.' They proceeded at once, in compliance with their orders, and found the robber lying hid in the very spot that was indicated."

It should be remembered that the Scotia of the following story is Ireland, what we now call Scotland being in those days known as Albyn.

#### BATTLES OF ONDEMONE AND MIATHI

"The very day, and at the same hour, when the battle called in Scotie, Ondemone, was fought in Scotia, the same man of God was then living in Britain, with King Connall, the son of Corngell, and told him everything, as well about the battle itself as also about those kings to whom the Lord granted the victory over their enemies. . . . And the saint, in like manner, prophesied of the king of the Cruithne, who was called Echoid Laib, and how, after being defeated, he escaped, riding in his chariot.

“Another time . . . when the holy man was in the Iouan Island (Iona) he suddenly said to his minister, Diormit, ‘Ring the bell.’ The brethren, startled at the sound, proceeded quickly to the church, with the holy prelate himself at their head. There he began, on bended knees, to say to them, ‘Let us pray now earnestly to the Lord for this people and King Aidan, for they are engaging in battle at this moment.’ Then, after a short time, he went out of the oratory, and, looking up to heaven, said, ‘The barbarians are fleeing now, and to Aidan is given the victory—a sad one though it be.’ And the blessed man in his prophecy declared the number of the slain in Aidan’s army to be 303 men.”

#### THE VISION OF AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

“On a day when the tempest was fierce and the sea exceedingly boisterous, the saint, as he sat in the house, gave orders to his brethren, saying: ‘Prepare the guest chamber quickly, and draw water to wash the stranger’s feet.’ One of the brethren upon this inquired: ‘Who can cross the Sound safely, narrow though it be, on so perilous and stormy a day?’ The saint, on hearing this, thus made answer: ‘The Almighty has given a calm even in this tempest to a certain holy and excellent man, who will arrive here among us before evening.’ And lo! the same day, the ship for which the brethren had some time been looking out arrived, according to the saint’s prediction, and brought S. Cainnach. The saint went forth with his brethren to meet him and received him with all honour and hospitality. But the sailors who had been with S. Cainnach, when they were asked by the brethren what sort of voyage they had had, told them, even as S. Columba had predicted, about both the tempest and the calm which God had given in the same sea and

at the same time, with an amazing distinction between the two. The tempest they saw at a distance, yet they said they did not feel it."

The next two stories may be regarded as belonging to both groups, as they include knowledge of things distant in time as well as of present facts distant in space.

It is interesting to notice how, in his exile, the saint's thoughts turned continually to his native land, and how often his visions related to the friends he had left behind. This is entirely consistent with the views now held by many on such subjects, that thought-transference is often facilitated by a strong emotional impulse on the part of either agent or percipient.

#### TWO NOBLEMEN KILLED IN SINGLE COMBAT

"The saint, on a sudden, while he was reading, and to the great surprise of all, moaned very heavily. Lugbe, who was beside him, on seeing this asked him the cause of this sudden grief. The saint, in very great affliction, answered him, 'Two men of royal blood in Scotia have perished of wounds mutually inflicted near the monastery called Cellrois in the province of the Mangdorna (Monaghan), and on the eighth day from the end of this week, one shall give the shout on the other side of the Sound, who has come from Hibernia, and will tell you all as it happened.' On the eighth day, accordingly, the voice was heard. Then the saint called quietly to Lugbe, and said to him, 'This is the aged traveller to whom I alluded, who now crieth aloud beyond the Strait; go and bring him here to me.' The stranger was speedily brought, and told, among other things, how two noblemen in the district of Mangdorna, near the confines of the territory in which is situate the monastery of Cellrois, died of wounds received in single combat."

If the following is to be regarded as a case of thought-transference, it is interesting to observe that the distance was considerable. From Iona to Istria was "a far cry" in times when a wicker boat was the only means of transport by sea, and a horse by land.

THE ROMAN CITY BURNED BY A SULPHUROUS FIRE  
WHICH FELL FROM HEAVEN

"Another time . . . Lugbe of the tribe Mocumin . . . ventured to ask the saint (whose countenance shone with such wonderful brilliancy that he could not look on it), 'Hath any awful vision been shown to thee just now?' The saint answered, 'A very fearful vengeance hath just now been exacted in a distant corner of the world.' 'What vengeance?' says the youth, 'and where hath it taken place?' The saint then addressed him thus: 'A sulphurous fire hath been poured down from heaven this moment upon a city which is subject to Rome, and within the Italian territory, and about 3000 men, besides women and children, have perished. Before the end of this year Gallican sailors shall come here from the provinces of Gaul and shall tell thee these same things.' His words proved true in a few months, for the same Lugbe, happening to accompany the saint to the head of the land, inquired at the captain and crew of a bark that had just arrived, and received from them all the news regarding the city and its inhabitants, exactly as it was foretold by the illustrious man."

The curious little story which follows is best classified as "clairvoyance." It is, however, a case of second sight, in so far as it is knowledge of the unseen.

## THE VOWEL I

“One day Baithene came to the saint and said: ‘I want some one of the brethren to look over with me and correct the Psalter which I have written.’ Hearing this, the saint said: ‘Why give us this trouble without any cause? In that Psalter of thine of which thou speakest, there is not one superfluous letter to be found, nor is any wanting, except the one vowel I.’ When the whole Psalter was read over, what the saint had said was found to be true.”

The next is somewhat similar in type.

## DEATH OF TWO KINGS TOLD

“At another time, while travelling through the rough and rocky country, which is called Artdamuir-chol, he heard his companions speaking on the way of two kings, and addressed them in these words: ‘O my dear children, why do you talk thus foolishly of these men? Both of these kings of whom you are now conversing are newly slain, and have had their heads cut off by their enemies. And this very day some sailors shall come here from Scotia and tell you the same about these kings.’ That same day some sailors arrived from Hibernia and told the two companions . . . how these kings had been slain.”

## (b) PREMONITION

The gift of premonition is so essentially characteristic of the Highland second sight, and so much the more interesting part of the phenomenon, that I quote freely from the examples furnished us by S. Adamnan.

## FOREKNOWLEDGE OF A FIRE

“One night, while travelling in Drumalban, the saint and his companions had retired to rest, when he suddenly aroused them to fetch the boat from its anchorage and house it near them. Shortly after this was done, and they were again asleep, he aroused Diormit, saying, ‘Stand outside the door, and see what has happened to the village in which you had left your boat.’ The whole village was in flames.”

## FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE WHALE

“A certain brother named Berach, wishing to sail for Tiree, was warned by the saint of danger from ‘a huge monster.’ He disregarded the warning, encountered a whale, and hardly escaped with his life. The same day, Baithene (afterwards S. Columba’s successor in Iona), who was going the same voyage, received the same warning, and answering, ‘That beast and I are under the power of God,’ received the saint’s benediction and promise of safety, ‘Thy faith in Christ shall defend thee from this danger.’ The boat encountered the whale, but Baithene, undismayed, blessed the sea and the monster, and passed on in safety, seeing the whale no more.”

A specially pleasing feature of S. Columba’s character was his care for all that was weak and helpless, especially for birds and beasts. The following is a story which cannot fail to appeal to all animal lovers, and which places the saint among those who are partakers of the divine nature of Him who commends the care of those faithful in that which is least.

## THE CRANE FROM IRELAND

“At another time the saint called one of the brothers, and thus addressed him: ‘In the morning of the third day from this date thou must sit down and watch on the shore on the western side of this island; for a crane, which is a stranger from the northern region of Hibernia, and hath been driven about by various winds, shall come, weary and fatigued, after the ninth hour, and lie down before you on the beach quite exhausted. Treat that bird tenderly, take it to some neighbouring house where it may be kindly received and carefully nursed and fed by thee for three days and three nights. When the crane is refreshed with the three days’ rest, and is unwilling to abide any longer with us, it shall fly back with renewed strength to the pleasant part of Scotia from which it originally hath come. This bird do I consign to thee with such special care, because it cometh from our own native place.’ The brother obeyed, and on the third day, after the ninth hour, he watched as he was bid for the arrival of the expected guest. As soon as the crane came and alighted on the shore, he took it up gently in its weakness and carried it to a dwelling that was near, where in its hunger he fed it. On his return to the monastery, the saint, without any inquiry, but as stating a fact, said to him, ‘God bless thee, my child, for thy kind attention to this foreign visitor, that shall not remain long upon its journey, but return, within three days, to its own home.’ As the saint predicted, so exactly did the event prove, for after being nursed carefully for three days, the bird then rose gently on its wings to a great height in the sight of its hospitable entertainer, and marking for a little its path through the air homewards, it directed its course across the sea to Hibernia, straight as it could fly, on a calm day.”

## THE BOOK WHICH FELL INTO THE WATER-VESSEL

“On another day, as he was sitting by the hearth in the monastery, he saw at some distance Lugbe reading a book, and suddenly said to him, ‘Take care, my son, take care, for I think the book thou readest is about to fall into a vessel full of water.’ When the youth rose soon after, he forgot the word of the blessed man, and the book which he held negligently under his arm suddenly fell into the water-pot.”

## THE SPILLED INKHORN

“On another day a shout was given on the other side of the Sound. The saint . . . said: ‘The man who is shouting beyond the Sound is not of very sharp wits, for when he is here to-day he will upset my inkhorn and spill the ink.’ Diormit, his minister, hearing this, stood a little in front of the door, and waited for the arrival of this troublesome guest, in order to save the inkhorn. But for some cause or other he had soon to leave his place, and after his departure the unwelcome guest arrived; in his eager haste to kiss the saint, he upset the inkhorn with the hem of his garment and spilled the ink.”

## PROPHECY OF THE BATTLE OF CETHIRN

“One day S. Columba was sitting by a well near the fortress of Cethirn with Abbot Comgell. Water was brought to them to wash their hands, and the saint said to the abbot, ‘A day shall come, O Comgell! when the well whence this water now poured out for us was drawn will be no longer fit for man’s use.’ ‘How shall the water of this be defiled?’ said the abbot. ‘From this answered the saint, ‘that it shall be filled with

human blood ; for thy relatives and mine—that is, the people of the Cruithni and the race of Niall—shall be at war in the neighbouring fortress of Cethirn. At this well an unhappy relative of mine shall be slain, and his blood, mingling with that of many others, shall fill it up.’ An old man present at the battle, many years after, referred to this prophecy, and pointed out its literal fulfilment in the dead bodies in the well and the death of S. Columba’s kinsman.”

In the Western Highlands a very large proportion of the second sight stories one hears are premonitions of death. Of these, on the part of S. Columba, S. Adamnan gives a considerable number, from which I quote several examples. It is interesting to note that they are of precisely the same type which we are daily hearing from the boatmen and fishermen we meet in these very islands.

#### PROPHECIES OF DEATH—TWO BOYS

“Of two boys, brought by their father to the saint, he foretold that one should die within a week, the other live to be an old man and die on the island. This was fulfilled.”

#### COLCA, SON OF AID DRAIGNICH

“To Colca the saint gave this warning. ‘In thine own beloved country thou shalt be head of a church for many years ; and when at any time thou happenest to see thy butler making merry with a company of his friends at supper, and twirling the ladle round in the strainer, know then in a short time thou shalt die.’ This, too, was exactly fulfilled.”

## ARTBRANAN, THE PICTISH CHIEF

“One day, in the island of Skye, the saint struck a spot of ground near the sea and said, ‘Strange to say, my children, this day an aged heathen, whose natural goodness has been preserved through all his life, will receive baptism, die, and be buried on this very spot.’ An hour after, a boat, bearing an aged man, landed on the shore, and the saint was enabled to fulfil his prophecy, by teaching, baptizing, and finally burying the old man, whose name, Artbranan, was given to the spot.

A similar story is told of an old Pict on the shores of Loch Ness. “Travelling close by, the saint said to the brethren: ‘Angels wait for us by the bedside of an old Pict who has lived well by the light of nature; we must hasten and baptize him before he dies.’ They hurried on, and found the old man in a hut in Glen Urquhart, and the saint was thus able to instruct and baptize him before his death.”

The death of his friend Ernan the priest and of Cronan the poet were also foreseen.

## OTHER PREMONITIONS OF DEATH

“On hearing the voice of a man calling across the Sound, the saint said of him that he was coming for a cure for the body, but had better seek penance for his sins, for he should die at the end of the week. The man took no heed to the warning, but it was literally fulfilled.

“A like prophecy was made to the monk Cailtan, whom the saint sent for from his cell on Loch Awe, that he might end his days with his master ‘in true obedience.’

“Of two brothers who came to take the vows and

to reside for a year in probation, the saint foretold a speedy end, saying, 'These two strangers, who are presenting themselves "a living sacrifice" to God, and within a short time are fulfilling a long time of Christian warfare, shall pass away in peace this very month to Christ our Lord.' He admitted both that night to the Order. One died in seven days, the other a week later.

"He also warned a peasant of his death, to be caused by 'a travelling companion of whom he had no suspicion.' The saint refused to tell him more distinctly of the companion that was to injure him, 'lest the frequent thought of the fact should make thee too unhappy,' he said. The man died from a wound inflicted by his own knife which he always wore, and accidentally dropped."

#### PROPHECIES AS TO LIFE

It is satisfactory to be able to show that the saint had also the gift of foretelling life as well as death, as alleged in the next group of stories.

#### PROPHECY OF S. ERNAN

"While at Cloyne, where he was much honoured, and a grand procession accompanied him to the church, a boy of the family, ugly and ill-dressed, the despised of all, came up behind him and touched his robe. The saint drew him forward, and, when urged by the others to take no notice of the troublesome lad, answered, 'Suffer me a while, my brethren'; and then turning to the boy, he said, 'O son, open thy mouth and put forth thy tongue.' The boy obeyed him, and the saint then gave him his blessing and uttered the prophecy: 'Though this boy seems of no account to you, let none despise him; for from this hour he will

please you well. Upright and strong of soul shall he be ; wisdom and foresight shall be his portion, and he will be great in this house. His tongue also shall receive from God the gift of both wholesome doctrine and eloquence.' The boy was the celebrated S. Ernan, known and revered in Ireland to this day."

## THE SONS OF KING AIDAN

"King Aidan having consulted the saint as to the succession to the crown, was told by him that none of the three sons of whom he spoke should survive ; all should die in battle ; but that of the younger sons, 'that one whom the Lord shall choose should rush into my lap.' Eochoid Buide, the one who advanced and rested on his bosom, was afterwards Aidan's successor, the three elder brothers being all slain in battle."

## DOURNALL, SON OF AID

"Of Dournall, son of Aid, also, the saint prophesied the future succession to a kingdom, a victorious life, and a peaceful end. All this was truly fulfilled.

"Of Oingus, son of Aid Common, a like prophecy of survival after the death of his family, a happy reign, and a peaceful end was foretold, and was fully accomplished.

"Of Scanlan, then a prisoner, the saint prophesied freedom, and a return to his own kingdom for thirty years ; then exile, a second return, and death after 'three short terms.' All this was fulfilled, the 'three short terms' being three *months*, not, as the king expected, years.

"The saint warned him in these words: 'Thou must take care, my son, lest, for the sin of murdering thy kinsman, thou lose the right of governing the whole of Hibernia, as was first assigned thee by God ; for if at any time thou dost commit that sin, thou shalt

not hold the whole of thy father's kingdom, but only a part of it in thine own tribe, and that but for a short time.' Aid afterwards slew treacherously Suibne, son of Columban, and reigned only four years and three months, and that only as a colleague in his own kingdom."

5. It would be easy to multiply instances. There is hardly any known phenomenon of second sight which is not represented in the life of the saint. Unlike many seers among the Highlanders of the present day, he valued and cherished his sacred gift, and regarded it as a privilege and responsibility, an endowment apart from himself, which he had not sought, and could not command.

His visions and impressions, like—as I believe—all that are worth having, were purely spontaneous, welcomed and revered always, but never sought after by artificial means.

In another respect the saint's experiences resembled those of the most credible of his modern representatives. They were of use to others rather than to himself, they were never given to further selfish ends or for his own advantage. On various occasions we hear of the glorious aura which surrounded him, and which communicated to others the sense of his sanctity and the beauty of his character, but he seems to have been personally unconscious of its existence.

It is not till we come to S. Columba's death that we find him receiving information for his own use; it was not till he came within sight of the heavenly shore, that the divine light of wisdom was poured directly upon himself, and not only reflected on to objects beyond.

"One day his holy face lighted up with a certain wondrous and joyous cheerfulness, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, filled with incomparable joy he was

intensely gladdened. Then, after a moderate interval of some little moment or so, that savoury and delightful gladness is turned into a mournful sadness. When his friends asked the reason he answered, 'Because I love you I will not give way to sadness. Ye must promise me first that never in my lifetime will ye betray to any man the holy secret about which ye are inquiring.' When the promise was given he continued: 'Up to this present day thirty years of my sojourning in Britain are accomplished. Meanwhile, for many days past, I have devoutly besought my Lord, that at the end of this present thirtieth year He would release me from my dwelling here and call me thither to the celestial country. And this was the cause of my gladness about which you in your sorrow are asking me. For I saw holy angels sent from the throne on high to meet me and to lead out my soul from the flesh . . . but they are not permitted to come near because that which the Lord granted me, He, giving more heed to the prayers of many churches for me, hath changed quicker than can be said. To which churches, indeed, so praying for me, it has been granted by the Lord that, although against mine own will, four years from this day are added for my remaining in the flesh. This delay, so sad for me, has not unreasonably been the cause of my sadness to-day. And when you see these four years yet to come in this life, please God, are ended, I shall pass away rejoicing to the Lord, by a sudden departure, without any previous bodily pain, with holy angels coming to meet me at the time.' According to these words, which, as it is said, the venerable man did not speak without much sighing and sadness, and also great shedding of tears, he remained in the flesh after that for four years."

Towards the close of this time, in the month of May, the saint, while visiting his brethren on the western side of the island, spoke again of his coming

departure, saying that he had been permitted to wait till the Easter season was over, "lest a joyous festival should be turned into mourning." A few days later, while celebrating Mass, he saw an angel hovering above the walls of his oratory, and when questioned by the brethren as to the cause of his evident joy, he told them that "an angel, who was sent to demand a certain deposit dear to God, had looked down on them and blessed them." After an interval of six days, on Saturday, June 8, he confided his knowledge of his approaching end to his faithful servant, Diormit, saying, "This day in the Holy Scriptures is called the Sabbath, which means rest. And this day is indeed a Sabbath to me, for it is the last day of my present laborious life, and on it I rest after the fatigues of my labours; and this night, at midnight, which commenceth the solemn Lord's Day, I shall go the way of my fathers. For already my Lord Jesus Christ deigneth to invite me; and to Him, I say, in the middle of this night shall I depart. For so it hath been revealed to me by the Lord Himself." At midnight, when the bell tolled for service, the saint rose hurriedly and proceeded to the church; Diormit, who followed him, saw the whole building lighted up with celestial brightness, but on entering the church found it still in darkness, the attendants not having yet lighted the lamps. The saint he found on the altar-step, and here, in the presence of the brethren, hastily summoned to receive his last blessing, "with a countenance full of joy and gladness, as seeing the angels coming to meet him," S. Columba breathed his last, June 9, 597.

The strong link with his native country and distant friends, which seems so often to have been the active cause of S. Columba's visions was not broken, even by his passing away. For in a distant monastery in Ireland, the moment of the saint's death was revealed to "a certain holy man, an aged soldier of Christ,"

who related his vision—as we say in the S. P. R.—“before the coincidence was known.”

“In the middle of this last night the holy Columba, the pillar of many churches, passed away to the Lord. And in the hour of his blessed departure, I saw in the spirit the whole of the Iona island to which I have never come in the body, irradiated by the brightness of angels, and the whole space of the air up to the ethereal regions of the heavens illumined by the brightness of the same angels, who, sent from heaven, descended in countless numbers to bear away his holy soul.”

The monk to whom the vision was described, “rowing over in those days from Scotia (Ireland), and spending the remainder of his life in Hinba Island [not very far from Iona], used very often to narrate to the monks of S. Columba this vision of angels. And he, as has been said before, had undoubtedly heard it from the lips of that aged saint to whom it had been revealed.”

How vividly one can picture the scene! To this day the boatmen in the pauses of their severer work, or when the little brown sails are hoisted, and the boat is sailing along like a live thing, are always ready to repeat some well-known song or story, and you can fancy the simple monks from Iona, prepared by their frequent experience of the marvels of their lost seer, to accept readily the story of the vision, perhaps thirsting after a renewal of the revelations now closed to them for ever.

Adamnan himself heard yet another story first hand from the percipient, also an Irish monk. He, with friends, had been “labouring in the taking of fish in the valley of the fishful river Fenda,” in S. Columba’s own county of Donegal, when they saw on the night of the saint’s death a great pillar of fire, which rose out of the water and enlightened the whole world, even as

the summer's noonday sun. And this was seen by many other fishermen also.

To the *mere* psychical researcher, for whom a story is of no value unless attested by two independent witnesses, these legends are of little interest, they are matter rather for the folk-lorists, for the student of human nature, for the physiologist.

Let it be granted; yet such stories, though specifically false, may be generically true; the detail may be merely an invention of time, the type is real for all eternity. We lose more than we gain by their rejection; they may not be evidential of the latest theory of science, but they remain as testimony to the inherent beauty of human life, they are immortal, because they are fragments of the divine life with which one day is as a thousand years.

They are like the grey rocks, tossed and scattered upon this little island of Iona; shattered, broken, distorted, but nevertheless fragments of the past, meaningful realities in the eyes of the sky and the sea, who alone have witnessed their life stories. Here and there we find among them some great boulder, relic of a different formation and another age, abiding testimony to the mysteries of nature and the ignorance of man. We theorise about volcanic upheavals and voyages upon floating ice, and generation after generation of man passes away and the problem remains unsolved.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those interested in S. Columba will find profit in the following books, among others:—

*Adamnan's Vita S. Columbae.* J. T. Fowler. Clarendon Press, 1894.

"Life of S. Columba, Founder of Hy." Written by Adamnan, ninth abbot. Edited by William Reeves. Edinburgh, 1874.

"Life of S. Columba or Columkille." Translated from the Latin of S. Adamnan. Edited, with copious notes, by the Right Rev. D. MacCarthy (late Bishop of Kerry). Dublin: Duffy & Co., 1896.

"Iona." By the Duke of Argyll. Edinburgh, 1894.

"Early Christian Missions of Ireland, England, and Scotland." By the author of "Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family." 1893.

Samuel Johnson, despite his English prejudice, and his literary narrowness, was deeply impressed by the mysteries of second sight, and the pathos of Iona. One is grateful to him that he should now and then forget the ill-temper which was almost chronic with him in the Western Islands, a consequence less of their demerits than of his own fatigued condition, and his irritated digestion. Here, and in S. Andrews, he felt, as is inevitable to any sensitive soul, the glamour of the past and the pathos of the present. It was in Iona that he wrote:—

“ We are now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roaming barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present,

“ S. Columba, his Life and Work.” By the Rev. E. A. Cooke. Edinburgh, 1893.

“ The Life of S. Columba.” By William Muir, aided by the Rev. J. C. Rendell (who translated the Latin of Adamnan). Iona Press. Iona, 1889.

Muir’s “ Characteristics of Scottish Ecclesiology.”

“ The Old Irish Life of S. Columba ” (tenth cent.). Edited by W. Hennesy.

“ Columba : A Drama.” John Huntley Skrine. 1893.

“ Iona and other Verses.” By William Bright, D.D.

Burton’s “ History of Scotland,” c. vii., viii.

Skene’s “ Celtic Scotland,” Vol. II.

Montalembert’s “ Monks of the West.”

“ An Historical Account of Iona.” L. Maclean. 1883 (scarce).  
Written for the Iona Club.

“ Iona and the Early Celtic Church and Mission of S. Columba.”  
By the late Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.

“ Description of the Western Islands,” circa 1695. By Martin Martin. Glasgow, 1884.

“ The Historic Episcopate in the Columban Church.” Rev. J. Archibald. Edinburgh, 1893.

advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us, indifferent and unmoved, over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

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