

DEATH-BED VISIONS

BY

SIR WILLIAM BARRETT, F.R.S.



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS book is sent out to the public in an unfinished state. It will be seen that in the introduction the author has only sketched the line of discussion which he would have elaborated, and even this outline is incomplete.

The editor prefers, however, to leave untouched both the introduction and the discussion of cases, believing that by so doing the thought of the author will be more truly conveyed than would be the case were any elaboration undertaken by another hand. The outline was clearly unfinished, for several passages in the books of reference had been marked by him for discussion, and particularly paragraphs in Professor Bozzano's recently published book, "*Phénomènes Psychiques au Moment de la Mort*," translated from Italian to French by C. de Vesme (Editions de la B.P.S., 8 Rue Copernic [16c], Paris), 1923.

He was specially interested in Bozzano's observation that if the phenomena were caused by the thoughts of the dying person being

directed to those he loved, the appearances might be expected to represent living persons at least as frequently as deceased persons who had long passed from this world, whereas no records had come to hand of dying persons seeing at their bedside visions of friends still living.

He would have liked to ask those who believe the visions to be the product of intense desire or thought to collect evidence in support of their theory, showing that desire for living friends may produce visions of them at the bedside seen *during moments of full consciousness*.

There are, no doubt, cases of so-called travelling clairvoyance (see Chapter IV), in which the dying persons, *after a period of trance or unconsciousness*, said they had seen living relatives at a distance; and there was in some instances reciprocal vision by the distant relative of the figure of the dying person—usually mistaken for a real appearance. This is clearly a very different type of phenomenon.

Another point which the author had discussed with friends was that in the cases of phantasms of the living collected by the

Society for Psychical Research it has usually been the person thinking, and not the one thought of, whose image was projected in vision.

On this analogy, when a dying person sees the phantasm of one already deceased the initiative would appear to come from the thought of the latter, whose survival is thereby demonstrated.

He was greatly impressed by a feature not uncommon at the death-beds of young children, viz., the description of the vision in terms not in keeping with ideas arising from their religious upbringing. He considered that in such circumstances the hallucination could hardly be ascribed to a mere flight of fancy.

In arranging the groups of cases he gave the first place to those relating to visions of a deceased person whom the dying percipient did not know to be dead. A recent and striking experience was that of Mrs. B., the first narrative in Chapter II. He recognized that where the death was known to anybody present in the room an attempt might be made to stretch telepathy to cover the incident, but he maintained that such an explanation would

not account for the cases in this chapter, in which the percipient and the bystanders were equally unaware of the death.

The author had given considerable time and thought to the subject, and looked forward to making the groups of cases as complete and representative as possible before publication. This, however, was not to be, for he himself, in the midst of active work, passed suddenly into "that little-known country" towards which his thought had so often taken wing.

He was anxious to prove that even people who have been sceptical all their lives of any survival after death have sometimes given evidence that at the very end they knew there was an after life.

He did not therefore choose material representing visions seen only by believers in survival of the soul, or by those with special psychic powers, but also visions seen by people with no belief in a future life (see cases at the end of Chapter III).

He put each case fairly, without keeping weak points in the background, and he left it to the reader himself to consider how far

telepathy or some other mental attribute could be stretched to cover the circumstances. He expected impartial critics to realize that sometimes such an explanation would appear itself to involve a flight or extension of the soul incompatible with the material bounds of life.

It is hoped that this little book, though it falls short of what the author contemplated, will to some extent carry out his plan and direct attention in this country to phenomena which seemed to him to deserve more study than they have received.

The editor gratefully acknowledges the help given by Mr. Trethewy, in his careful reading of the manuscript, in preparation of the index and in many valuable suggestions.

F. E. B.

April 1926

DEATH-BED VISIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

IT is well known that there are many remarkable instances where a dying person, shortly before his or her transition from the earth, appears to see and recognize some deceased relatives or friends. We must, however, remember the fact that hallucinations of the dying are not very infrequent. Nevertheless, there are instances where the dying person was *unaware* of the previous death of the spirit form he sees, and is therefore astonished to find in the vision of his or her deceased relative one whom the percipient believes to be still on earth. These cases form, perhaps, one of the most cogent arguments for survival after death, as the evidential value and veridical (truth telling) character of these Visions of the Dying is greatly enhanced when the fact is undeniably established that the dying person was wholly ignorant of the decease of the person he or she so vividly sees.

With reference to these visions that eminent

physiologist of European fame, Prof. Richet, writes as follows :

“ Facts of this kind are very important. They are much more explicable on the spiritist theory than by the hypothesis of mere cryptesthesia. Among all the facts adduced to prove survival, these seem to me to be the most disquieting (i.e. from a materialistic point of view). I have therefore thought it a duty to be scrupulous in mentioning them.”

As is well known Prof. Richet does not believe in the existence of a soul, or of survival after death, and explains the evidence afforded by psychical research of a spiritual world by his theory of *cryptesthesia*, by which he means the perception of things or beings, by some sensory organ at present unknown to science, a faculty not possessed by every one, but, in my opinion, conclusively established to exist in certain individuals. These sensitives are to be found in all countries, in both sexes, and may be old or young, rich or poor, educated or ignorant. This faculty of clairvoyance—this vision of persons or things invisible to normal eyesight—may occur when the sensitive is quite conscious, but is more often observed in the trance condition, especially when this is induced by deep hypnosis—the “mesmeric trance” as it used to be called.

The older mesmerists employed the word "lucidity," or "travelling clairvoyance," for the perception of things at a distance. The term clairvoyance is, however, ambiguous, for it is now used in two different senses, namely, either for :

- (a) The perception of hidden *material* objects remote from the sensitive, such as underground water ; or
- (b) For the perception by the sensitive of *immaterial* objects, such as apparitions of deceased persons.

To avoid this confusion Myers suggested the term "telesthesia" instead of clairvoyance for the perception of material things. Telesthesia he defines as the sensation or perception of objects or conditions independently of the recognized channels of sense, and also independently of any possible telepathic communication as the source of the knowledge thus gained. Hence the term telesthesia would be inapplicable to apparitions of the dead or visions of the dying ; whereas Richet would include both of these, as well as the vision of hidden material things, under his word "cryptesthesia," which appears to have the same connotation as the familiar word clairvoyance, and therefore it labours under the same ambiguity as that word.

Other terms for clairvoyance have been suggested ; in America Mr. Henry Holt uses the word "telopsis," and Dr. Heysinger the word "telecognosis" ; but these terms could hardly be applied to apparitions or visions of the dying, which appear near to, and not far from, the sensitive.

Miss Cobbe in her "Peak in Darien" makes some interesting remarks on the subject of Visions of the Dying. She states :

"The dying person is lying quietly, when suddenly, in the very act of expiring, he looks up—sometimes starts up in bed—and gazes on (what appears to be) vacancy, with an expression of astonishment, sometimes developing instantly into joy, and sometimes cut short in the first emotion of solemn wonder and awe. If the dying man were to see some utterly-unexpected but instantly-recognized vision, causing him a great surprise, or rapturous joy, his face could not better reveal the fact. The very instant this phenomenon occurs, Death is actually taking place, and the eyes glaze even while they gaze at the unknown sight."

As regards the general subject of Visions of the Dying, Mr. Myers has some interesting remarks in "Phantasms of the Living." He states that in his view such an occurrence "must probably often take place though it can seldom leave any record behind it. For

here we have an account of that side only of a reciprocal incident which is usually lost to human knowledge altogether : I mean of the supernormal percipience of a man in the very article of death ; while there is no record of any corresponding sound or vision as experienced by those to whom he seemed to pay his visit of farewell.¹

There are, however, several cases on record where the vision of those who have passed over is shared by friends at the bedside of the dying person. Instances of these will be given in a later chapter.

In considering the value of evidence for supernormal phenomena the importance of the cumulative character of the evidence must be taken into account. It is the undesigned coincidence of witnesses who have had no communication with each other that constitutes its value taken as a whole, whilst a single case may be doubtful or disproved, just as a single stick may be broken but a faggot may defy all our attempts at breaking a bundle of sticks.

On this point Archbishop Whately has some admirable remarks on the value of testimony. He states :

“ It is evident that when many coincide in their testimony (where no previous concert can have

¹ “ Phantasms of the Living,” Vol. II, p. 305.

taken place), the probability resulting from this concurrence does not rest on the supposed veracity of each considered separately, but on the improbability of such an agreement taking place by chance. For though in such a case each of the witnesses should be considered as unworthy of credit, and even much more likely to speak falsehood than truth, still the chances would be infinite against their all agreeing in the same falsehood.”¹

About fifty years ago the learned incumbent of a church in Birmingham, the Rev. J. S. Pollock, published a collection of cases of supernormal phenomena under the curious title of “Dead and Gone.” Although some five hundred cases are quoted, taken from various sources, no attempt has been made at the investigation of any single case, so that the book as a whole has little evidential value.

Here I may quote some suggestive remarks made by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick soon after the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research, and published in the “Proceedings” for 1885 (p. 69) :

“Most of those to whom this paper is addressed probably belong to some Christian denomination, and to them the continued existence of the soul after death is, of course, no new theory invented to account for such phenomena as we are discussing,

¹ See Whately’s “Rhetoric,” Chapter I.

or requiring such phenomena to support it. But few will have any difficulty in agreeing with me that (1) the possibility of receiving [visions of or] communications from the dead, here and now, would not follow as a necessary consequence from the immortality of the soul ; (2) that if communication of what I may call an objective kind—distinguishable, I mean, from our own thoughts and emotions—is possible to all those of the departed who desire it, we should naturally expect it to occur *more frequently* than the most sanguine can suppose that it actually does ; and (3) that its possibility, while not in contradiction with any of the known facts of physical science, is certainly not supported, or in any way suggested, by any of these facts. However firmly, therefore, we may believe in the continued existence of dead human beings, we cannot regard the supposition of their action on the minds of the living as if it were merely the reference of an effect to a *vera causa* known to be adequate to produce it. We must treat it as we should treat the hypothesis—in any department of physical investigation—of an entirely new agent, for the existence of which we have no evidence outside the phenomenon which it is introduced to explain. If this be so, it will, I think, be admitted that we should be violating an established rule of scientific method if we introduced such a hypothesis except in the last resort, when all other modes of explanation seem clearly to fail.

“ Exactly at what point of improbability this

failure of other explanations is to be regarded as established, cannot, I think, be defined—at any rate, I feel quite unable to define it. But I may perhaps say that, in my opinion, it is a point which can hardly be reached in the case of any narrative of a *single event* considered by itself: if we had only a *single* ghost-story to deal with, I can hardly conceive the kind or amount of evidence which would lead me to prefer the hypothesis of ghostly agency to all other possible explanations. The existence, therefore, of phantasms of the dead can only be established, if at all, by the accumulation of improbabilities in which we become involved by rejecting a large mass of apparently strong testimony to facts which, as recounted, would seem to admit of no other satisfactory explanation; and in testing the value of this testimony we are bound, I think, to strain to the utmost all possible suppositions of recognized causes, before we can regard the narrative in question as even tending to prove the operation of this novel agency.”

On the other hand, every scientific society ought to have as its motto the opinion expressed by Sir John Herschel in his discourse on “Natural Philosophy” (p. 127), “that the perfect observer . . . will have his eyes as it were opened that they may be struck at once with any occurrence which, according to received theories, ought *not* to happen; for these are the facts which serve as clues to

new discoveries." Unfortunately, as Goethe remarked in one of his conversations with Eckermann, "in the sciences . . . if anyone advances anything new . . . people resist with all their might ; they speak of the new view with contempt, as if it were not worth the trouble of even so much as an investigation or a regard ; and thus a new truth may wait a long time before it can win its way."

CHAPTER II

VISIONS SEEN BY THE DYING OF PERSONS BY THEM UNKNOWN TO BE DEAD

THE evidence of Visions of the Dying, when they appear to see and recognize some of their relatives of whose decease they were unaware, affords perhaps one of the strongest arguments in favour of survival. Even Prof. Richet regards this evidence as impossible to explain by cryptesthesia. I have given some striking instances of these visions of the dying in my book "On the Threshold of the Unseen," and other cases will be found in the "Proceedings" of our Society.

A recent case of the kind was related to me by Lady Barrett, which occurred when she was in attendance on a patient in the Mothers' Hospital, at Clapton, of which she is one of the Obstretic Surgeons.

Lady Barrett received an urgent message from the Resident Medical Officer, Dr. Phillips, to come to a patient, Mrs. B., who was in labour and suffering from serious heart failure. Lady Barrett went at once, and the child was delivered safely, though the mother was dying at the time. After seeing other patients Lady Barrett went back to Mrs. B.'s ward, and the

following conversation occurred which was written down soon afterwards. Lady Barrett says :

“ When I entered the ward Mrs. B. held out her hands to me and said, ‘ Thank you, thank you for what you have done for me—for bringing the baby. Is it a boy or girl ? ’ Then holding my hand tightly, she said, ‘ Don’t leave me, don’t go away, will you ? ’ And after a few minutes, while the House Surgeon carried out some restorative measures, she lay looking up towards the open part of the room, which was brightly lighted, and said, ‘ Oh, don’t let it get dark—it’s getting so dark . . . darker and darker.’ Her husband and mother were sent for.

“ Suddenly she looked eagerly towards one part of the room, a radiant smile illuminating her whole countenance. ‘ Oh, lovely, lovely,’ she said. I asked, ‘ What is lovely ? ’ ‘ What I *see*,’ she replied in low, intense tones. ‘ What do you see ? ’ ‘ Lovely brightness—wonderful beings.’ It is difficult to describe the sense of reality conveyed by her intense absorption in the vision.

“ Then—seeming to focus her attention more intently on one place for a moment—she exclaimed, almost with a kind of joyous cry, ‘ Why, it’s Father ! Oh, he’s so glad I’m coming ; he *is* so glad. It would be perfect if only W. (her husband) could come too.’

“ Her baby was brought for her to see. She looked at it with interest, and then said, ‘ Do you

think I ought to stay for baby's sake? ' Then turning towards the vision again, she said, ' I can't—I can't stay; if you could see what I do, you would know I can't stay.'

" But she turned to her husband, who had come in, and said, ' You won't let baby go to anyone who won't love him, will you? ' Then she gently pushed him to one side, saying, ' Let me see the lovely brightness.'

" I left shortly after, and the Matron took my place by the bedside. She lived for another hour, and appeared to have retained to the last the double consciousness of the bright forms she saw, and also of those tending her at the bedside, e.g. she arranged with the Matron that her premature baby should remain in hospital till it was strong enough to be cared for in an ordinary household.

" (Signed) FLORENCE E. BARRETT "

Dr. Phillips, who was present, after reading the above notes writes to me saying that she " fully agrees with Lady Barrett's account."

The most important evidence is however given by the Matron of the Hospital, who has sent the following account :

" I was present shortly before the death of Mrs. B., together with her husband and her mother. Her husband was leaning over her and speaking to her, when pushing him aside ¹ she said, ' Oh, don't

¹ This is not the incident mentioned by Lady Barrett, but a later incident of the same kind.

hide it ; it's so beautiful.' Then turning away from him towards me, I being on the other side of the bed, Mrs. B. said, 'Oh, why there's Vida,' referring to a sister of whose death three weeks previously she had not been told. Afterwards the mother, who was present at the time, told me, as I have said, that Vida was the name of a dead sister of Mrs. B.'s, of whose illness and death she was quite ignorant, as they had carefully kept this news from Mrs. B. owing to her serious illness.

“ (Signed) MIRIAM CASTLE

“ *Matron* ”

I asked Dr. Phillips to try and obtain the independent report of Mrs. B.'s mother, who, as the Matron stated, was also present at the time. This was kindly done, and I have received the following interesting and informative letter from Mrs. Clark (Mrs. B.'s mother) :

HIGHBURY, N. 5.

“ I have heard you are interested in the beautiful passing of my dear daughter's spirit from this earth on the 12th day of January, 1924.

“ The wonderful part of it is the history of the death of my dear daughter, Vida, who had been an invalid some years. Her death took place on the 25th day of Dec., 1923, just 2 weeks and 4 days before her younger sister, Doris, died. My daughter Doris, Mrs. B., was very ill at that time, and the Matron at the Mothers' Hospital deemed it unwise for Mrs. B. to know of her sister's death.

Therefore when visiting her we put off our mourning and visited her as usual. All her letters were also kept by request until her husband had seen who they might be from before letting her see them. This precaution was taken lest outside friends might possibly allude to the recent bereavement in writing to her, unaware of the very dangerous state of her health.

“ When my dear child was sinking rapidly, at first she said, ‘ It is all so dark ; I cannot see.’ A few seconds after a beautiful radiance lit up her countenance ; I know now it was the light of Heaven, and it was most beautiful to behold. My dear child said, ‘ Oh, it is lovely and bright ; you cannot see as I can.’ She fixed her eyes on one particular spot in the ward, saying, ‘ Oh, God, forgive me for anything I have done wrong.’ After that she said, ‘ I can see Father ; he wants me, he is so lonely.’ She spoke to her father, saying, ‘ I am coming,’ turning at the same time to look at me, saying, ‘ Oh, he is so near.’ On looking at the same place again, she said with rather a puzzled expression, ‘ He has Vida with him,’ turning again to me saying ‘ Vida is with him.’ Then she said, ‘ You do want me, Dad ; I am coming.’ Then a very few parting words or sighs were expressed—nothing very definite or clear. With great difficulty and a very hard strain she asked to see ‘ the man who married us ’ : this was to her husband, who was standing on the opposite side of the bed. His name she could not say ; it was the Rev. Maurice Davis, of All Saints, Haggerston, E., and

he was sent for.¹ He had known my dear child for some years, and was so impressed by the vision that he quoted it in his 'Parish Magazine' for February last.

"Yours respectfully

"(Signed) MARY C. CLARK"

Before passing on to other cases it is desirable to discuss somewhat in detail the foregoing case. The vision seen by the dying woman, Mrs. B., was obviously not due to her normal sight, otherwise the figures would have been seen by others present in the room; the appearance therefore was not due to any ordinary material objects, nor is it likely to have been due to some illusion, that is to say, the misinterpretation of some object actually present to sight—as when a dressing-gown is mistaken for a woman—for not only was there nothing in the room to suggest such an illusion, but she recognized both her deceased father and sister, moreover she was quite unaware of the death of the latter. A more probable explanation is that it was an hallucination, which may be defined as "a sensory perception which has no objective counterpart within the field of vision." The question therefore becomes whether it was merely a delusive

¹ He came, but Mrs. B. had then become incapable of speech though still alive.

hallucination, when there *is* nothing whatever to which it corresponds, or a veridical hallucination—corresponding to some real event, which was invisible to normal eyesight. This must not be confused with a delusion, which applies to cases where there is *no* corresponding reality. There are many well-known cases of vivid illusions of sight which sometimes accompany the oncoming of sleep, as when a dream figure persists for a short time, or when faces in the dark are vividly seen by certain persons ; these illusions are termed hypnagogic. Externalized impressions of this kind are the frequent source of imaginary apparitions, such as occur to nervous people walking through lonely places at night time. To many of my readers this commonsense explanation will appear to be the origin of the vision of the dying which we have just related, the whole matter being dismissed as a mere coincidence. If this case stood alone this would be the probable explanation ; it will however be seen that mere chance coincidence cannot apply to the numerous cases which will be recited later on. Another explanation is the creation of hallucination in the percipient by some transference of thought or telepathic influence from those around the bedside. In the case just recited however this explanation fails for Lady Barrett and Dr.

Phillips knew nothing about the decease of the percipient's father, when the latter looking steadily at one place, said, "Why, it's Father. Oh, he's so glad I'm coming." Nor was her husband present at the time. Moreover the sceptical reader is likely to deny the existence of telepathy and would reject any explanation based upon that ground.

The next case has reached me from America and is a well authenticated instance on the authority of a distinguished man, Dr. Minot J. Savage, with whom I was acquainted. Dr. Minot Savage was for many years a valued member of our S.P.R., he died in 1920. Dr. Hyslop¹ has recorded the following case in one

¹ As some of my readers may not be acquainted with Dr. Hyslop's name, I may mention that he was for some years the Professor of Ethics and Logic in Columbia University, New York. He studied for some years in Germany, where he took his Ph.D. and was also an LL.D. He was at first a sceptic and severe critic of psychical research, but afterwards became convinced of the importance of the subject, and resigned his university chair and all its emoluments to devote the rest of his life to the investigation of psychical phenomena. His zeal and energy and acumen were remarkable, in fact he sacrificed his life through the incessant labour involved in his duties as treasurer, hon. secretary and research officer of the American S.P.R. His literary output was enormous; he seemed to live and move and have his being in psychical research to the exclusion of almost every other subject. He spent some time with me in Ireland, and gave a learned address to the recently founded Dublin Section of the S.P.R. He died in 1920.

of his books ¹ and remarks : “ Dr. Savage told me personally of the facts and gave me the names and addresses of the persons on whose authority he tells the incidents,” which Dr. Savage narrates, as follows :

“ In a neighbouring city were two little girls, Jennie and Edith, one about eight years of age and the other but a little older. They were school-mates and intimate friends. In June, 1889, both were taken ill of diphtheria. At noon on Wednesday Jennie died. Then the parents of Edith, and her physician as well, took particular pains to keep from her the fact that her little playmate was gone. They feared the effect of the knowledge on her own condition. To prove that they succeeded and that she did not know, it may be mentioned that on Saturday, June 8th, at noon, just before she became unconscious of all that was passing about her, she selected two of her photographs to be sent to Jennie, and also told her attendants to bid her good-bye.

“ She died at half-past six o’clock on the evening of Saturday, June 8th. She had roused and bidden her friends good-bye, and was talking of dying, and seemed to have no fear. She appeared to see one and another of the friends she knew were dead. So far it was like other similar cases. But now suddenly, and with every appearance of surprise, she turned to her father and exclaimed, ‘ Why,

¹ “ *Psychical Research and the Resurrection* ” (Boston, U.S.A.), 1908, p. 88.

papa, I am going to take Jennie with me ! ' Then she added, ' Why, papa ! you did not tell me that Jennie was here ! ' And immediately she reached out her arms as if in welcome, and said, ' Oh, Jennie, I'm so glad you are here ! ' "

In connexion with this case Dr. Savage remarks that it is difficult to account for the incident by any ordinary theory of hallucination. If this vision were a solitary case, a mere casual coincidence might perhaps account for it, but as it is only one of a considerable group of similar cases an explanation of chance coincidence becomes incredible. My readers will doubtless agree with Dr. Savage's remark, as they peruse the other cases narrated in this volume.

The following case¹ was given in a paper contributed to the S.P.R. by Mr. Edmund Guruey and Mr. F. W. H. Myers.² It was received by them through the Rev. C. J. Taylor. The narrator, who does not wish his name published, was the Vicar of H—— :

" On November 2nd and 3rd, 1870, I lost my two eldest boys, David Edward and Harry, from scarlet fever, they being then three and four years old respectively.

¹ This case and the next one are quoted from pp. 99 and 100 respectively of the same book as the last. See footnote p. 18.

² " Proceedings S.P.R.," Vol. V, p. 459.

“ Harry died at Abbot’s Langley on November 2nd, fourteen miles from my vicarage at Aspley, David the following day at Aspley. About an hour before the death of this latter child he sat up in bed, and pointing to the bottom of the bed said distinctly, ‘ There is little Harry calling to me.’ Of the truth of this fact I am sure, and it was heard also by the nurse.

“ (Signed) X.Z., Vicar of H—— ”

In letters and conversations with Mr. Podmore, Mr. Taylor adds the following details : “ Mr. Z. [the Vicar] tells me that care was taken to keep David from knowing that Harry was dead, and that he feels sure that David did not know it. Mr. Z. was himself present and heard what the boy said. The boy was not delirious at the time.”

The next case was communicated to the S.P.R.¹ by the Rev. J. A. Macdonald, who has for some years been a useful helper to the Society in the careful collection of evidence. Mr. Macdonald received it at first hand from Miss Ogle, who was the sister of the percipient. She writes as follows :

“ My brother, John Alkin Ogle, died at Leeds, July 17th, 1879. About an hour before he expired he saw his brother—who had died about sixteen years before—and John, looking up with fixed

¹ See “ Proceedings S.P.R.,” Vol. V, p. 460.

interest, said, ' Joe ! Joe ! ' and immediately after exclaimed with ardent surprise, ' George Hanley ! ' My mother, who had come from Melbourne, a distance of about forty miles, where George Hanley resided, was astonished at this, and said, ' How strange he should see George Hanley ; he died only ten days ago.' Then turning to my sister-in-law she asked if anybody had told John of George Hanley's death ; she said ' No one.' My mother was the *only* person present who was aware of the fact. I was present and witnessed this.

“ (Signed) HARRIET H. OGLE ”

In answer to inquiries, Miss Ogle states :

“ J. A. Ogle was neither delirious nor unconscious when he uttered the words recorded. George Hanley was an acquaintance of John A. Ogle, not a particularly familiar friend. The death of Hanley was *not* mentioned in his hearing.”

The “ Revue Spirite ” for December, 1924, contains the following interesting case :

“ The Review ‘ Verdade e Luz ’ of San Paolo, Brazil, in its number of September, 1924, has remarks on the striking incident of which the dying Adamina Lazaro was the heroine.

“ A few hours before her death, the patient said to her father that she saw near her bed several members of the family, all deceased some years previously. The father attributed this declaration *in extremis* to a state of delirium, but Adamina

insisted with renewed force, and among the invisible 'visitors' named her own brother, Alfredo, who was employed at the time at a distance of 423 kilometres, on the lighthouse of the port of Sisal.

"The father was more and more convinced of the imaginary nature of these visions, well knowing that his son Alfredo was in perfect health, for a few days previously he had sent the best possible news of himself.

"Adamina died the same evening, and the next morning her father received a telegram informing him of the death of the young Alfredo. A comparison of times showed that the dying girl was still living at the time of the death of her brother."

I am indebted to Mr. C. J. Hans Hamilton for the following case, which he translated from the Review "*Psychica*"¹ of 1921. It was contributed by M. Warcollier, of the Institut Metapsychique, Paris, who says :

"My uncle, M. Paul Durocq, left Paris in 1893 for a trip to America, with my aunt and other members of the family. While they were at Venezuela my uncle was seized with yellow fever, and he died at Caracas on the 24th June, 1894.

"Just before his death, and while surrounded by all his family, he had a prolonged delirium, during which he called out the names of certain friends left

¹ Published in France.

in France, and whom he seemed to see. 'Well, well, you too—, and you ——, you as well!'

"Although struck by this incident, nobody attached any extraordinary importance to these words at the time they were uttered, but they acquired later on exceptional importance when the family found, on their return to Paris, the funeral invitation cards of the persons named by my uncle before his death, and who had died before him. It is only recently that I have been able to collect the testimony of the only two survivors of this event, my cousins Germaine and Maurice Durocq."

Germaine Durocq writes, as follows :

"You ask me details of the death of my poor father. I well remember him as he lay dying, though it is many years ago. The thing which probably interests you is that he told us of having seen some persons in heaven and of having spoken to them at some length. We were much astonished on returning to France to find the funeral cards of those same persons whom he had seen when dying. Maurice, who was older than I was, could give you more details on this subject."

Maurice Durocq writes :

"Concerning what you ask me with regard to the death of my father, which occurred a good many years ago, I recall that a few moments before his death my father called the name of one of his old companions—M. Etcheverry—with whom

he had not kept up any connexion, even by correspondence, for a long time past, crying out, ' Ah ! you too,' or some similar phrase. It was only on returning home to Paris that we found the funeral card of this gentleman. Perhaps my father may have mentioned other names as well, but I do not remember."

Mr. Hans Hamilton, who translated and sent the above incident to me comments on it as follows : " The date of the deaths of the persons seen by M. Durocq when dying, should have been verified at the time of the return of the family to Paris, since we have otherwise no *certainty* that they died before M. Durocq. However, the whole of the story makes it more than probable that this point would not have been overlooked by the family ; and M. Warcollier states in his own account that the persons in question were deceased at the time of the apparitions."

The following incident was sent to the " Spectator " by " H. Wedgwood " in 1882. He says :

" Between forty and fifty years ago a young girl, a near connexion of mine, was dying of consumption. She had lain for some days in a prostrate condition taking no notice of anything, when she opened her eyes, and looking upwards, said slowly, ' Susan—and Jane—and Ellen,' as if recognizing

the presence of her three sisters, who had previously died of the same disease. Then after a short pause she continued, 'and Edward too!'—naming a brother then supposed to be alive and well in India—as if surprised at seeing him in the company. She said no more, and sank shortly afterwards. In the course of the post, letters came from India announcing the death of Edward, from an accident a week or two previous to the death of his sister.

"This was told to me by an elder sister who nursed the dying girl, and was present at her bedside at the time of the apparent vision." ¹

Miss Frances Power Cobbe, Authoress of "The Peak in Darien," recites an incident of a very striking character as having occurred in a family united very closely by affection :

"A dying lady, exhibiting the aspect of joyful surprise, spoke of seeing, one after another, three of her brothers who had been long dead, and then apparently recognized last of all a fourth brother, who was believed by the bystanders to be still living in India. The coupling of his name with that of his dead brothers excited such awe and horror in the mind of one of the persons present that she rushed from the room. In due course of time letters were received announcing the death of the brother in India, which had occurred some time before his dying sister seemed to recognize him." ²

¹ See R. Pike's "Life's Borderland and Beyond," p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Dr. E. H. Plumptre (the Dean of Wells), writing to the "Spectator," August 26, 1882, remarks :

"The mother of one of the foremost thinkers and theologians of our time was lying on her death-bed in the April of 1854. She had been for some days in a state of almost complete unconsciousness. A short time before her death, the words came from her lips, 'There they are, all of them—William and Elizabeth, and Emma and Anne'; then, after a pause, 'and Priscilla too.' William was a son who had died in infancy, and whose name had never for years passed the mother's lips. Priscilla had died two days before, but her death, though known to the family, had not been reported to her."¹

In connexion with the subject of this chapter the case of Mrs. Z. in Chapter V, p. 102, should also be read.

¹ See R. Pike's "Life's Borderland and Beyond," p. 15.

CHAPTER III

VISIONS SEEN BY THE DYING OF PERSONS KNOWN BY THEM TO BE DEAD, AND DEATH- BED VISIONS SEEN BY OTHERS

“ I believe no soul is left to wing its viewless flight to Paradise in solitude. I believe the ‘ Gloria in Excelsis ’ of the shining host of God welcomes the disembodied spirit upon the confines of the new world. I remember hearing once of a little dying child shrinking timidly from the idea of going alone ; but just before the end there came a spirit of sublime confidence, a supernatural opening of vision, a recognition of some companionship, and the little one cried out : ‘ I am not afraid ; they are all here.’ . . . I believe the chamber of the dying is filled with the holy angels.”

—BASIL WILBERFORCE

THERE are a great many records authenticated by those who have attended the last moments of a dying friend or patient, wherein shortly before death an ecstatic vision seems to have been granted to the dying person, whose face lights up with joy and apparent recognition of some relative before he passes into the Unseen. It is needless to quote a great number of cases, as doubtless many of my readers will be familiar with instances. Such cases are not confined to one country or one nation, but they

appear to be more or less common all over the world. Here for instance is a case which occurred amongst the Cree Indians of Saskatchewan :

The Assistant Matron of the Ahtahkakoops Indian Hospital, Sandy Lake Reserve, Saskatchewan, Canada, writes to me on January 28, 1925, about a patient in the hospital, as follows :

“ He was a Cree Indian lad, about 20 years of age, son of Chief Papewyn, of a neighbouring Reserve. He was in the last stage of phthisis and had been brought here to be cared for till the finish. He was placed in a wigwam about a 100 yards distant.

“ At last the supreme day arrived. It was evening and I was with him. He was lying quietly in his bed when suddenly he sat up, stretched forth his arms with a yearning gesture, while an ecstatic smile broke over his face. It was not simply a smile of pleasure, but something far beyond it. The veil was lifted, and no one who was looking on could fail to realize that it was a glorious vision that met his gaze. He then lay back in his bed, looked at me with a smile, and passed away. He had been calm and collected during the day, there was no delirium ; it was an unclouded glimpse of that higher life into which he was just entering.

“ (Signed) R. HUTCHINSON

“ *Assistant Matron* ”

Some interesting cases of visions seen by dying persons are given in a little book by Mrs. Joy Snell,¹ who was a nurse in a large hospital, and the cases she narrates are her own personal experiences, and not narratives related at second-hand. Mrs. Snell seems to be a careful and conscientious recorder, and she has kindly furnished me with the names and other particulars of the cases given anonymously in her book.

I quote below a few of these cases as given by her :

“ I recall the death of a woman (Mrs. Brown, aged 36) who was the victim of that most dreadful disease, malignant cancer. Her sufferings were excruciating, and she prayed earnestly that death might speedily come to her and end her agony. Suddenly her sufferings appeared to cease ; the expression of her face, which a moment before had been distorted by pain, changed to one of radiant joy. Gazing upwards, with a glad light in her eyes, she raised her hands and exclaimed, ‘ Oh, mother dear, you have come to take me home. I am so glad ! ’ And in another moment her physical life had ceased. ”

“ The memory of another death which occurred about the same time comes back to me. It was that of an old soldier (Mr. Auchterlonie, aged 59) who was in the last stages of tuberculosis brought

¹ “ The Ministry of Angels.”

on by exposure while fighting his country's battles. He was brave and patient but had frequent paroxysms of pain that were almost unendurable, and he longed for the relief which he knew death alone could bring him. One of these spasms had seized upon him, and his features were convulsed with agony as he fought for breath, when he suddenly grew calm. A smile lit up his face, and looking upwards he exclaimed, with a ring of joy in his voice, 'Marion, my daughter!' Then the end came. His brother and sister were at the bedside. The sister said to the brother, 'He saw Marion, his favourite daughter. She came and took him where he will suffer no more.' And she added fervently, 'Thank God! he has found rest at last.' "

In Chapter VI other cases related by Mrs. Snell will be found.

Miss R. Canton, of Garway Road, London, W., sends me the following case, which I quote in her own words, as follows :

"Some years ago I went to see a cousin of mine at Acton, who was very ill, and I was told by her sister that on the previous evening as she sat down on a chair by the bedside, the invalid exclaimed, 'Oh, don't J—! Oh, you have sent Mother away, she was sitting there!' and she continued to seem much distressed. My aunt had died some years previously. The dying girl told me about this herself when we were alone."

The following is a case of Vision of the Dying, translated from "La Revue Spirite" for January, 1925.

"Mr. A. R. Besancon writes as follows :

" ' At the commencement of February, 1915, at M——, when I was only ten years old, I had the grief of losing my mother. Her death was accompanied by circumstances which I take the liberty of relating. My mother was attended by my grandmother during her illness. One night the latter was surprised at hearing my mother, who was sleeping in the next room, pronounce certain sentences, among others this :—" Marie, I can see you at last, I am glad you have come. Help me." (Marie was my sister who died a few years before this.) Grandmother thought it was a dream ; she rose and approached my mother's bed, and to her great surprise she found her in a perfectly normal state. My mother even told her the satisfaction she had had in seeing her daughter. Later on in the night the " conversation " was resumed, but we paid no further attention. But on the next morning, Mother was no more.

" ' Moreover, during the same night, one of my aunts who lived in the neighbouring village of V——, had the clear impression of seeing mother. " She passed," she said to me the following day, " beside my bed without speaking, then went to embrace my two daughters and disappeared." Such are the facts.' "

The following case is quoted from Mr.

Richard Pike's "Life's Borderland and Beyond" (p. 46) :

"In the summer of 1883, a young man named Giles, of Nottingham, had the misfortune to lose several children after long and painful periods of illness. The two eldest, Fred and Annie, aged respectively seven and eight, had died and been buried for some weeks when his little boy of four years old showed symptoms of approaching death.

"The father and mother were constantly by his side, as will be readily believed, to mitigate the little fellow's sufferings as much as possible. On the night when he died the father came to his bedside with the customary medicine, when the little boy, sitting upright in bed, cried out : ' There's Fred and Annie.' ' Where, my boy ? ' asked the father. ' Don't you see them there—there ? ' said the lad, pointing to the wall, ' they're waiting for me to go to them,' and the next minute the little sufferer fell back on the pillow dead. It should be mentioned that the father saw nothing of the apparition to which his dying boy so vividly pointed, but he quite believes its reality."

Mrs. Kinloch, of Boundary Road, St. John's Wood, N.W., sends me instances of Visions of the Dying, which had been told her, and which I quote in her words :

"My sister—who has recently passed over—who was with our mother when she died, told me that on the day before her death she suddenly called

out, 'Oh, look at your father over there,' and pointed to a corner of the room, but my sister could see nothing.

"A poor woman whom I knew told me the other day that just before her mother died, she said suddenly, 'Tom, bring the boat nearer; I can't get in.' 'Tom' was her husband."

In this case, and the next three cases, the apparitions seem to have had a more or less premonitory purpose. The incident was related to the editor of the review "Psychica," who considered it so interesting that she requested the lady to repeat it by letter, which she willingly did, only requesting that nothing more than her initials should be published, though her name and address were known to the editor of the review.

The letter is as follows :

"DEAR MADAM,

"With reference to the incident I related to you, which happened several years ago, the following are the facts just as they occurred :

"I lost my daughter when she was seventeen years of age; she had been ill for some five years, and for eight months before her death had been confined to her bed. During all this time, and up to her death, she maintained a remarkable degree of intelligence and will. A fortnight before her

death, one evening when I was leaning over the head of her bed, I asked her what she was thinking of, seeing her absorbed. She replied, 'Little mother, look there,' pointing to the bed-curtains. I followed the direction of her hand and saw a man's form, completely white, standing out quite clearly against the dark curtain. Having no ideas of spiritism, my emotion was intense, and I closed my eyes not wishing to see any longer. My child said to me, 'You do not reply.' I had the weakness to declare to her, 'I see nothing'; but my trembling voice betrayed me doubtless, for the child added with an air of reproach, 'Oh, little mother, I have seen the same thing for the last three days at the same hour; it's my dear father who has come to fetch me.'

"My child died 15 days later, but the apparition was not repeated; perhaps it attained its greatest intensity on the day I saw it.

"(Signed) Z. G."

The editor of "*Psychica*" remarks: "The lady who signs this letter is not a credulous person, and she declares that she saw the vision near the bed of her dying child at a time when her thoughts were far from the creation of a phantasmal form.

"CARITA BORDERIEUX"

(*Editor of "Psychica"*)

Mr. Hans Hamilton, who translated the above extract, remarks: "The interest of this

case lies in the fact of the apparition having taken place 15 days before death ; in its being visible to two persons ; and in the fact that there is not the least suspicion of either delirium or coma on the part of the dying girl."

A striking case of *collective hallucination* (that is to say, a vision seen by the relatives of the dying person as well as by the dying person herself) is given in the "Proceedings S.P.R." for 1889.¹

The narrator, Miss Emma Pearson, writes an account of her aunt's illness and death, which is here given considerably abridged :

"My aunt, Miss Harriet Pearson, who was taken very ill at Brighton in November, 1864, craved to be back in her own home in London, where she and her sister Ann (who had died some years previously) had spent practically all their lives. I accordingly made the necessary arrangements, and had her moved home. Her two nieces (Mrs. Coppinger and Mrs. John Pearson), Eliza Quinton the house-keeper, and myself did the nursing between us. She became worse and worse. On the night of Dec. 23rd Mrs. John Pearson was sitting up with her, while Mrs. Coppinger and I lay down in the adjoining room, leaving the door ajar to hear any sound from the next room. We were neither of us asleep, and suddenly we both started up in bed,

¹ See "Proceedings S.P.R.," Vol. VI, p. 20. Also "Human Personality," Vol. II, p. 334.

as we saw someone pass the door, wrapped up in an old shawl, having a wig with three curls each side, and an old black cap. Mrs. Coppinger called to me, 'Emma, get up, it is old Aunt Ann!' I said, 'So it is; then Aunt Harriet will die to-day!' As we jumped up, Mrs. John Pearson came rushing out of Aunt Harriet's room, saying, 'That was old Aunt Ann. Where has she gone?' I said to soothe her, 'Perhaps it was Eliza come down to see how her old mistress is.' Mrs. Coppinger ran upstairs and found Eliza asleep. Every room was searched—no one was there; and from that day to this no explanation has ever been given of this appearance, except that it was old Aunt Ann come to call her sister. Aunt Harriet died at 6 p.m. that day."

Eliza Quinton, the housekeeper, confirms the above statement, and adds: "We searched in every room but could not find anyone in the house. Miss Harriet died on the evening of that day, but before that she told us all that she had seen her sister, and that she had come to call her."

This last statement is further confirmed by Miss Emma Pearson in a later letter, in which she states that she remembers her Aunt saying that "her sister had come for her, for she had seen her."

In the following case the premonitory purpose seems to be strongly marked:

Louise F., aged forty-eight, died after an abdominal operation in January, 1896. During her illness she frequently asked that, when cured, she might take her little niece Lily, aged three

years and three months, of whom she was very fond, to live with her in the country. About a month after the death of her aunt little Lily, who was intelligent and precocious and in quite good health, often stopped in her play to look fixedly out of the window. Her mother asked her what she was looking at, and she answered, "It is Aunt Louise, who holds out her arms to me and calls me." Her mother, much frightened, tried to distract her attention, but the child drew her chair to the window and continued to look for several minutes. Her brother, M. F., who gave me these details, said, "I was then eleven years old and my little sister said, 'What! Don't you see Tata?' as she called her aunt. Of course I could see nothing." For some months nothing further was seen by the child, the visions ceased. Towards May 20th, little Lily fell ill, and when in bed she looked up to the ceiling saying that she saw her aunt calling her, surrounded by little angels. "Mother, how pretty!" she said. From day to day her illness increased, but she always repeated, "My aunt has come to fetch me; she is holding out her arms to me," and as her mother wept, she said, "Don't cry, Mother, it is very beautiful, there are angels round me." She died on the 9th of June of tubercular meningitis, four and a half months after the death of Louise F.

Such is the story told by her brother, M. F., confirmed by his sister, G. F., and her mother. The family lived very quietly in a country

town. None of them know anything of psychic science.

The following case was first printed in the "Religio-Philosophical Journal," May 5, 1894.¹ Mr. B. B. Kingsbury, who contributed it, states that the informant is a member of the Presbyterian Church, and her husband confirmed her statement of voices heard by the little boy calling him. Mr. Kingsbury adds that both his informants, Mr. and Mrs. H., are worthy of the highest credit. The father is somewhat of a "sensitive," and the mother has had two or three clairvoyant experiences herself.

The statement just as it was given by the mother runs as follows :

" Had I ever doubted that there is a life beyond, my doubt would have been removed by what I call a vision. In 1883 I was the mother of two strong, healthy boys. The eldest was a bright boy of two years and seven months. The other a darling baby boy of eight months. August 6th, 1883, my baby died. Ray, my little son, was then in perfect health. Every day after baby's death (and I may safely say every hour in the day) he would say to me, 'Mamma, baby calls Ray.' He would often leave his play and come running to me, saying, 'Mamma, baby calls Ray all the time.' Every

¹ See " Human Personality," Vol. II, p. 334.

night he would waken me out of my sleep and say, 'Mamma, baby calls Ray all the time. He wants Ray to come where he is ; you must not cry when Ray goes, Mamma ; you must not cry, for baby wants Ray.' One day I was sweeping the sitting-room floor, and he came running as fast as he could run, through the dining-room where stood the table with baby's high chair (which Ray now used) at the side. I never saw him so excited, and he grabbed my dress and pulled me to the dining-room door, jerked it open, saying, 'Oh, Mamma, Mamma, come quick ; baby is sitting in his high chair.' As soon as he opened the door and looked at the chair, he said, 'Oh, Mamma, why didn't you hurry ; now he's gone ; he laughed at Ray when he passed the chair ; oh, he laughed at Ray so nice. Ray is going with baby, but you must not cry, Mamma.' Ray soon became very sick. Nursing and medicine were of no avail. He died Oct. 13th, 1883, two months and seven days after baby's death. He was a child of high intelligence and matured far beyond his years. Whether it is possible for the dead to return, and whether my baby came back and was seen by his little brother or not, we leave for others to judge."

Dr. Hodgson, whose name is well known to all psychical researchers as one of the most careful and critical investigators, made inquiries regarding the case, and in reply to Dr. Hodgson's inquiries, Mrs. H. wrote :

“ DEFIANCE, OHIO

“ *December 13th, 1894*

“ When the child ran to me telling me the baby was sitting in his chair at the table, there was no one in the house but the servant girl, little Ray, and myself. I told the girl nothing about it and she did not hear the child, but as soon as my husband came to dinner I told him. After that we talked freely of the matter to several of our friends. Little Ray knew nothing of death ; we had never spoken of it to him in any way ; the last time I took him to the baby’s grave, shortly before he was taken sick, we were sitting by the grave, and I thought, ‘ Oh, if I could only take baby up and look at it for just one minute, I would feel so glad.’ *Instantly* Ray said to me, ‘ Mamma, let us take baby up and look at it just one minute ; then we will feel better.’ Just as we were leaving the grave he smoothed it with his little hand, and said, ‘ Ray is going to lie down and sleep right here beside little brother, but you must not cry, Mamma.’ He is now lying just where he said he would.

P.S.—I wish to say that I have never known much of what is called modern Spiritualism, but was born and reared a Presbyterian and still belong to that Church, of which I am an active member.

“ F. H.”

Dr. Hodgson also wrote to Mr. H., who replied as follows :

“ *Feb. 27th, 1895*

“ I can truly say that my wife related it [that is,

about Ray seeing baby in the chair] to me the day it occurred when I came to dinner. I frequently heard our little boy tell his mamma that the baby called him all the time.

“ W. H. H.”

The following corroboration was also received by Dr. Hodgson :

“ 116 SUMMIT STREET

“ DEFIANCE, OHIO

“ *Feb. 25th, 1895*

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I can truly say that Mrs. and Mr. H. often spoke to me of Ray seeing the baby in the chair before he took sick. They told me the next day after it happened.

“ (Mrs.) J. H. SHULTERS ”

The following case was given by Dr. Paul Edwards, and was published in the Journal “ Light ” for April, 1906 :

“ While living in a country town in California (U.S.A.) about the year 1887, I was called upon to visit a very dear lady friend who was very low and weak from consumption. Every one knew that this pure and noble wife and mother was doomed to die, and at last she herself became convinced that immediate death was inevitable, and accordingly she prepared for the event. Calling her children to her bedside she kissed each in turn, sending

them away as soon as good-bye was said. Then came the husband's turn to step up and bid farewell to a most loving wife, who was perfectly clear in her mind. She began by saying 'Newton' (for that was his Christian name) . . . 'do not weep over me, for I am without pain and am wholly serene. I love you upon earth, and shall love you after I have gone. I am fully resolved to come to you if such a thing is possible, and if it is not possible I will watch you and the children from Heaven, where I will be waiting when you all come. My first desire now is to go. . . . I see people moving—all in white. The music is strangely enchanting. Oh! here is Sadie; she is with me—and—she knows who I am.' Sadie was a little girl she had lost about ten years before. 'Sissy!' said the husband, 'you are out of your mind.' 'Oh, dear! why did you call me here again?' said the wife, 'now it will be hard for me to go away again; I was so pleased while there—it was so delightful—so soothing.' In about three minutes the dying woman added, 'I am going away again and will not come back to you even if you call me.'

"This scene lasted for about eight minutes, and it was very plain that the dying wife was in full view of the two worlds at the same time, for she described how the moving figures looked in the world beyond, as she directed her words to mortals in this world.

". . . I think that of all my death scenes this was the most impressive—the most solemn."

My friend Miss Dallas has sent me some cases of Visions of the Dying which occurred to persons she knew.

In one case the face of her friend's mother, just before death, suddenly lighted up with an intense brilliancy. When this had passed away, the dying woman opened her eyes and said that she had looked into Heaven, and had seen many people they knew who had passed over, and also that many of the things she had seen it was impossible to describe. Shortly after this she died.

In another case Miss Dallas tells of a widow, living with her youngest surviving son, Jim, then dying of consumption. Miss Dallas visited the mother shortly after her son's death, and recorded the following in her notebook the same day :

“ Jim had died on a Thursday, and on the previous Sunday his end appeared to be near, but he revived, and told his mother that he had seen something beautiful. Again he had a relapse, and on reviving he said he had seen two of his sisters and a brother who had died previously, but he added, ‘ Mother, I cannot find Bessie.’ His mother told Miss Dallas that Bessie had died twelve years before, when Jim was still a child. Not long after this Jim died.”

The following case is taken from the Journal

of the American S.P.R. for July, 1909 (p. 422). The editor, Prof. Hyslop, relates how the original letter came into his possession, and remarks that it may be taken as documentary evidence of the incident narrated. The original letter was enclosed in one addressed to the editor of the "Open Court," a well-known American periodical. In it the writer, Mr. William C. Church, states that the letter he forwards was written to the late Captain J. Ericsson, inventor of the Monitor, by Lady Ellen Chute, a relative of his wife, and concerns the death of Ericsson's sister-in-law, Louisa Browning. The "Amelia" referred to in the letter was the wife of Captain Ericsson; who had died in July, 1867, many years previously; and "Aunt Louisa Browning" was the sister of "Amelia."

"BRACKNELL, BERKS

"November 5th, 1883

"DEAR CAPT. ERICSSON,

"Since I last wrote to you our fond aunt, Louisa Browning, died on Sunday morning, October 28th, at the age of 78. On her death-bed she appeared to see her deeply loved sister [Capt. Ericsson's wife, Amelia], who had gone before. Those watching by her heard her say—though she had before been quite unconscious—'Oh, Amelia! Amelia!' and she reached out her hand to welcome someone their

earthly eyes were not permitted to see, and then all was over. . . .

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ (Signed) ELLEN CHUTE ”

In the case ¹ here abridged, the singing and voice of the unseen visitant were heard by the mother as well as by her dying child ; and a cousin of the deceased child appears to have had a vision of the child and heard a premonitory intimation of her death.

“ Mrs. G., with her two little girls, Minnie and Ada, of the respective ages of eight and nine years, had been staying in the country on a visit to her sister-in-law, but having taken a house near London, she sent the two children with their nurse off by an early train, following herself by one a few hours later. Towards the evening of the same day, one of the little girls walked into the room of the house which they had quitted in the morning, where a cousin to whom she was much attached was sitting at his studies, and said to him, ‘ I am come to say good-bye, Walter ; I shall never see you again.’ Then kissing him she vanished from the room. The young man was greatly startled and astonished, as he had himself seen both the little girls and their nurse off by the morning train.

“ At this very time of the evening both the

¹ See R. Pike’s “ Life’s Borderland and Beyond,” p. 28, in which the “ Atlantic Monthly,” of March, 1879 is quoted as the source.

children in London were taken suddenly ill, while playing in their new home, a few hours after they had arrived. The doctor called in pronounced their complaint to be small-pox of the most malignant kind. They both died within the week, but the youngest, Minnie, died first. The day after she was buried, the poor bereaved mother was anxiously watching the last hours of the one still left, for whom she well knew no chance of life remained. Suddenly the sick child woke up from a kind of stupor, and exclaimed, 'Oh, look, Mamma, look at the beautiful angels!' pointing to the foot of the bed. Mrs. G. saw nothing, but heard soft sweet music, which seemed to float in the air. Again the child exclaimed: 'Oh, dear Mamma, there is Minnie! She has come for me'; she smiled and appeared greatly pleased. At this moment Mrs. G. distinctly heard a voice say, 'Come, dear Ada, I am waiting for you!' The sick child smiled once again and died without a struggle."

Some time before their death the poor mother overheard a childish conversation between the two little ones, in which the youngest, Minnie, said to the other that she felt sure she should die first, and would be certain to come and fetch her sister. This conversation was long remembered by the mother, as it was strikingly confirmed by the actual facts. It is, of course, possible that

expectancy on the part of the mother (if at the time she recalled her children's conversation) may discount the evidential value of this striking case.

It has been recorded of the celebrated mathematician, Prof. De Morgan, that during the last two days of his life there were indications of his passing through the experience which he had himself considered worthy of investigation and of record. He seemed to recognize all those of his family whom he had lost—his three children, his mother and sister, whom he greeted, naming them in the reverse order to that in which they left the world. No one seeing him at that moment could doubt that what he seemed to perceive was, to him at least, visible and real.¹

Mrs. De Morgan in her book, "From Matter to Spirit," relates the following incident, which she gives as it was told by the mother of the dying child.

"On the morning on which John died, having bade all the family farewell, he lay for some time quite quiet, and then he spoke, his voice sounding strong and clear, and was evidently replying to some question which he had heard asked. We were astonished and awestruck. We felt that he

¹ See R. Pike's "Life's Borderland and Beyond," p. 15.

saw and heard an angel invisible to us. Then he spoke again and said, 'Mother, here is Grandmother come ! . You must see her ! . And she is with such a great company, and they say that they are come to take me away with them.' Soon after that he gently breathed his last." ¹

The Rev. W. G. Horder relates the following incident, and says :

" A friend of mine, of a mind naturally indisposed to faith, and at the time quite sceptical about a future life, tells me of the following incident, which made a deep impression upon him, and even wakened belief in immortality :

" His brother, a young man of about 25 years of age, had been seized with brain fever, which at last rendered him quite unconscious for about 24 hours, but just before death he raised himself in his bed, resting himself upon his hand and said, ' Who is that at the bottom of my bed ? ' His mother, who was sitting by his bedside, said, ' There is no one there, my dear.' He said, ' Don't you see Emma ' (a departed sister) ' standing at the foot of the bed ? ' She said, ' No, there is no one there, my dear.' ' Yes, there is,' he said, ' it is Emma. I am coming, I am ready'; and fell back and died." ²

The following three cases were sent to me by Mrs. Shepherd Munn, widow of the late Vicar

¹ See Mrs. De Morgan's " From Matter to Spirit," p. 184.

² See R. Pike's " Life's Borderland and Beyond," p. 35.

of Orleton, Brimfield, Herefordshire, to whom all the people concerned in the narratives were known personally. She writes as follows :

“ A young boy, aged fourteen, named Charles Dyer, who lived with his parents at Orleton, was dying of consumption, and had wasted away very rapidly in four or five months. During the whole of that period he was very bright, full of interest in all around, and did not seem to be aware of his rapidly failing strength. About a week before he died he slept in a room off his mother's, with no door between—he called her, and when she went in, he was full of excitement about a door he could see at the corner of his room, which he said was ‘ opening wider and wider, and when it is open wide I shall be going through it, Mother.’

“ On the morning of the day he died, his mother having left the room to fetch him something, heard him call and hastening back, found him sitting up in bed, looking towards the corner of the room, and he said to her, ‘ There is a nice old man come for me ; he is holding out his arms for me. I must go. Don't fret, Mother ’ ; and he fell back gently on his pillow and was gone, without any struggle for breath, and with a smile of joy on his face, which remained.

“ His mother was full of ecstasy, and came down to the Vicarage that same morning to tell me of it. The impression this experience made upon her has continued to the present day, and has influenced her life for the better.”

The following case, also related to me by Mrs. Shepherd Munn, took place some years previous to the last, but is connected with the same family.

“ An old man, named John George—grandfather of the consumptive boy, Charles Dyer, already referred to—lay dying. He and his wife, Mary Ann George, had had a great sorrow that same year in the death of their youngest son, Tom, a young man who had been killed on the railway line on which he worked.

“ The dying man had been quiet for some time as though sleeping, when he suddenly looked up, opened his eyes wide, and looking at the side of the bed opposite to where his wife was, exclaimed, ‘ Why, Mother, here is Tom, and he is all right, no marks on him. Oh, he looks fine.’ Then after another silence he said, ‘ And here’s Nance too.’ A pause, then ‘ Mother, she is all right. She has been forgiven.’ And very soon after he passed away, taking with him a sorrow which had long pressed upon the mother’s heart, for Nance had fallen into sin, and had died soon after the child was born, and as the poor mother thought ‘ never having had time to repent.’ ”

The next case is also given by Mrs. Shepherd Munn, and it also, like the two preceding cases, occurred in Orleton, Herefordshire.

“ A woman, named Mary Wilding, was dying of cancer. She was passionately fond of her husband,

Charles Wilding. They had worked together, brought up their children, saved some money, and bought a nice little house in Orleton, where they spent some comfortable and happy years together. When she realized that she would die and leave 'Charlie,' she became very unhappy and made them all very miserable by fretting and constantly complaining of her fate.

"One day as the end drew near, when a sister of hers, who was helping to look after her, happened to be alone in the room with Mary Wilding, she suddenly looked up with such a bright expression of face and said, 'Oh, Emmie, Mother is here ; she has come for me, and is going to take me with her.' She never lost the feeling of confidential joy, and passed away the day after quite peacefully."

Dr. Hyslop narrates the following case, which he received from a friend whose testimony he had no reason to question :

"I called this afternoon (May 14th, 1906) upon a lady whose child, a boy of nine years old, had died two weeks previously. He had been operated upon for appendicitis some two or three years ago, and had had peritonitis at the same time. He recovered and was apparently quite well for a time. Again he was taken ill, and was taken to hospital and operated upon. He was perfectly rational, recognizing his parents, the doctor and the nurse—after recovering from under the influence of the anæsthetic. Feeling that he was going, he asked his mother to hold his hands until he should be

gone. Soon he looked up and said, 'Mother, dear, don't you see little sister over there?' 'No, where is she?' 'Right over there. She is looking at me.' Then the mother to pacify him said she saw the child. In a few minutes his face lighted up full of smiles, and he said, 'There comes Mrs. C.' (a lady of whom he was very fond, who had died nearly two years before), 'and she is smiling just as she used to. She is smiling and wants me to come.' In a few moments he said, 'There is Roy! I'm going to them. I don't want to leave you, but you'll come to me soon, won't you? Open the door and let them in. They are waiting outside,' and he was gone."

The mother confirms this narrative, and inquiry brings out the following facts. The "little sister" he refers to had died four years before his own birth. "Roy" is the name of a friend of the child, who had died about a year previous.

The following case is taken from the "Life of the Rev. Dwight L. Moody," the celebrated Evangelical preacher of the United States. The last moments of Mr. Moody are described by his son, the biographer, as follows :

"Suddenly he murmured, 'Earth recedes, heaven opens up before me. I have been beyond the gates. God is calling. Don't call me back. It is beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death it is sweet.'

“ Then his face lit up and he said in a voice of joyful rapture, ‘ Dwight ! Irene ! I see the children’s faces ’ (referring to his two little grandchildren, who had gone before). Turning to his wife he said, ‘ Mamma, you have been a good wife to me,’ and with that he became unconscious.”

The following case is related by Mr. Alfred Smedley in his book of “ Reminiscences ” (pp. 50, 51). He gives an account of his wife’s last moments, and states :

“ A short time before her decease, her eyes being fixed on something that seemed to fill her with pleasant surprise, she exclaimed, ‘ Why ! there is sister Charlotte here, and Mother and Father, and brother John and sister Mary ! And now they have brought Bessie Heap !! They are all here. Oh ! how beautiful ! Cannot you see them ? ’ she asked. ‘ No, my dear ; I very much wish I could,’ I answered. ‘ Cannot you see them ? ’ she again asked in surprise ; ‘ why they are all here, and they are come to bear me away with them ! ’ Then she added, ‘ Part of our family have crossed the flood, and soon the other part will be gathered home, and then we shall be a family complete in heaven ! ’

“ I may explain here that Bessie Heap had been the trusted family nurse, and my wife had always been a favourite with her.

“ After the above ecstatic experience my wife lingered for some time. Then fixing her gaze steadily upward again, and lifting up her hands, she joined the convoy of angel friends, who had

come to usher her into that brighter spiritual world of which we had learned so little."

The next case ¹ is given on the authority of Dr. Wilson of New York, who was present at the death a few years ago of the well-known American tenor, Mr. James Moore, who was a patient of his. Dr. Wilson gives the following narrative :

"It was about four o'clock, and the dawn for which he had been watching was creeping in through the shutters, when, as I bent over the bed, I noticed that his face was quite calm and his eyes clear. The poor fellow looked up into my face, and taking my hand in both of his, he said, 'You've been a good friend to me, Doctor. You've stood by me.' Then something which I shall never forget to my dying day happened, something which is utterly indescribable. While he appeared perfectly rational and as sane as any man I have ever seen, the only way that I can express it is that he was transported into another world, and although I cannot satisfactorily explain the matter to myself, I am fully convinced that he had entered the Golden City—for he said in a stronger voice than he had used since I had attended him, 'There is Mother ! Why, Mother, have you come here to see me ? No, no, I'm coming to see you. Just wait, Mother, I am almost over. I can jump it. Wait, Mother.' On his face there was a look of inexpressible

¹ See "Psychical Research and the Resurrection." J. H. Hyslop. Boston, U.S.A., 1908, p. 97.

happiness, and the way in which he said the words impressed me as I have never been before, and I am as firmly convinced that he saw and talked with his mother as I am that I am sitting here.

“In order to preserve what I believed to be his conversation with his mother, and also to have a record of the strangest happening of my life, I immediately wrote down every word he had said. . . . His was one of the most beautiful deaths I have ever seen.”

My friend, Mrs. Carter, of St. Erth, Hayle, Cornwall, sends me the following case, which occurred on April 13, 1924, when she was present, and she wrote the following notes a few days later. She says :

“On Sunday, April 13th, I went to Hillside to sit with a Mr. Williams, who was dying of consumption, so that those belonging to him might have a little rest. He was in a state of great physical distress, and unable to lie down, and could only breathe with the greatest difficulty, with his head leaning down to within a few inches of the mattress.

“He suddenly raised himself and stretched out his hands, and said very clearly, as though speaking to someone present and whom he was glad to see, ‘Edmund!! my dear brother Edmund!!’ I was alone with him at the time, but when the family returned to the room later I at once related to them what he had said, and then learnt from them that his brother Edmund was dead.

“ During the time that I was with him—from 3.15 to 9.15—although breathing very heavily all the time, he appeared to be quite conscious when he spoke, and called for the different members of his family. He knew me quite well, and kissed my hand and called me by my name. He also asked to have water at intervals, and asked for hot tea. In spite of his great bodily distress, his trust in God remained quite unshaken, and it was very moving to hear him say at intervals, ‘ Dear Lord, let me go ! ’

“ I was told that before I arrived he had exclaimed, ‘ Mrs. Hooper ! ’ She had been a great friend of his, and died here about 18 months or two years ago. He died about ten hours after I had left.”

The following account of the last days of a little child was published in the “ Journal of the American S.P.R.,” edited by Dr. James H. Hyslop (Vol. XII, No. 6), and a considerably abridged report was compiled by Miss H. A. Dallas,¹ a summary of which is given below :

“ Daisy Irene Dryden was born in Marysvill, Yuba County, California, on September 9th, 1854. She died in San José, California, on October 8th, 1864, aged ten years and twenty-nine days.

“ Her mother writes : ‘ In the summer of 1864 Daisy was attacked by bilious fever. After five weeks of illness the fever left her, and for two weeks

¹ See “ The Nurseries of Heaven,” Vale Owen and Dallas. London, 1920, p. 117.

she seemed to continue to gain strength. She smiled and sang and seemed like herself again, until one afternoon, as her father sat by her bed, he noticed a singular expression on her face. It was one of both pleasure and amazement. Her eyes were directed to one place above the door. Her father asked, "Daisy, what is it? What do you see?" She replied softly, "It is a spirit, it is Jesus. And He says I am going to be one of His little lambs." "Yes, dear," said her father, "I hope you are one of His Lambs." "Oh, papa!" she exclaimed, "I am going to heaven, to Him."

"That night she was taken with enteritis and only lived four days. She suffered much for the first twenty-four hours, being unable to retain food, water, or medicine. From that time on she had very little pain. Her poor little body had in fact become so attenuated that there was little left for the disease to work upon. But her mind was very active and remarkably clear. Her faculties appeared sharpened. She could remember recitations she had learned in school, always having been fond of memorizing poetry. And when Lulu sang to her from the Sunday School Hymnal, she would give the name of the song and the page on which to find it.

"She loved to have us read the Scriptures to her. I read, in John xiv, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." At this she looked up to me so heavenly as she said, "Mamma, when I go away

the Comforter will come to you ; and maybe He will let me come too sometimes ; I'll ask Allie about it." She often said this after this time, when she felt uncertain about anything. Allie was her brother who had passed to the other life at the age of six, of scarlet fever, seven months before. He seemed to be with her a great deal of the time during those last three days, because when we asked her questions which she could not answer she would say, " Wait till Allie comes, and I will ask him." On this occasion she waited only a short time and then said, " Allie says I may go to you sometimes ; he says it is possible, but you will not know when I am there ; but I can speak to your thought."

" ' As I have said, Daisy lingered on the borderland for three days, after the first agonizing twenty-four hours had passed. Her physical frame had become so emaciated that there was only enough to hold the spirit in its feeble embrace ; and it was manifested to us, as it were, through the thin veil of the attenuated flesh which enwrapped it. During this time she dwelt in both worlds, as she expressed it. Two days before she left us, the Sunday School Superintendent came to see her. She talked very freely about going, and sent a message by him to the Sunday School. When he was about to leave, he said, " Well, Daisy, you will soon be over the ' dark river.' " After he had gone, she asked her father what he meant by the " dark river." He tried to explain it, but she said, " It is all a mistake ; there is no river ; there is no

curtain ; there is not even a line that separates this life from the other life." And she stretched out her little hands from the bed, and with a gesture said, " It is here and it is there ; I know it is so, for I can see you all, and I see them there at the same time." We asked her to tell us something of that other world and how it looked to her, but she said, " I cannot describe it ; it is so different, I could not make you understand."

" " One morning while I was in the room, putting it in order, Mrs. W., one of our kind neighbours, was reading to her these words from the Testament : " Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you " (John xiv, 1, 2). Daisy remarked, " Mansions, that means houses. I don't see real houses there ; but there is what would be places to meet each other in. Allie speaks of going to such and such a place, but says nothing of houses. You see, perhaps the Testament tells about mansions so we will feel we are going to have a home in heaven, and perhaps when I get there I'll find a home. And if I do, the heavenly flowers and trees that I love so much here—for I do see them, and that they are more beautiful than anything you could imagine—they will be there." I said, " Daisy, don't you know the Bible speaks of heaven being a beautiful city ? " She said, " I do not see a city," and a puzzled look came over her face, and she said, " I do not know ; I may have to go there first."

" " Mrs. W., a kind neighbour, the one who had

read of the mansions to Daisy, and who was with us a great deal, told Mrs. B., a neighbour of hers, about Daisy's inner sight being open. Mrs. B. was a lady who did not believe in a future state. She was, moreover, in deep distress, having just lost her husband and a son who was about twelve years old, named Bateman. She came with Mrs. W. one evening, and, sitting beside the bed, began to ask questions. Daisy said to her: "Bateman is here, and says he is alive and well, and is in such a good place, he would not come home for anything. He says he is learning how to be good." Mrs. B. then said, "Ask him if he has seen his father." Daisy replied, "He says he has not, he is not here, and says to you, 'Mother, don't fret about me, it is better I did not grow up.' " This communication set the mother to thinking and she became a firm believer in a future state.

"The following morning, when alone with Daisy, Mrs. W., who had brought Mrs. B. to see her, asked Daisy how she could think Mrs. B.'s son was happy. "For," said she, "when he was here, you know he was such a bad boy. Don't you remember how he used to swear, and steal your playthings, and break them up? You know we did not allow him to play with you nor with my children, because he was so bad." Daisy replied, "Oh, Aunty, don't you know he never went to Sunday School, and was always hearing so much swearing? God knows he did not have half a chance."

"The same day her Sunday School teacher

Mrs. H., who also was with her a great deal, was sitting beside her, when Daisy said to her, "Your two children are here." Now, these children had gone to the other life several years before, and if they had lived in this world would have been nearly grown up. Daisy had never heard anyone speak of them, nor did the mother have any pictures of them, so she could not have known anything whatever about them before seeing them in the spiritual world. When asked to describe them, her description of them as full-grown did not agree with the mother's idea of them, so she said, "How can that be? They were children when they died." Daisy answered, "Allie says, 'Children do not stay children; they grow up as they do in this life.'" Mrs. H. then said, "But my little daughter Mary fell, and was so injured that she could not stand straight." To this Daisy replied, "She is all right now; she is straight and beautiful; and your son is looking so noble and happy."

"Once she said: 'Oh, papa, do you hear that? It is the singing of the angels. Why, you ought to hear it, for the room is full of it, and I can see them, there are so many; I can see them miles and miles away.'"

"Mrs. W., already mentioned, who had lost her father a short time previous, wanted to know if Daisy had seen him, and brought his picture to let her see if she could recognize him. But in the evening, when she came again, Daisy told her she had not seen him, and that Allie, whom she had asked about him, had not seen him, but that Allie

had said he would ask someone who could tell him about him. In a moment Daisy said, "Allie is here and says, 'Tell Aunty her father wants her to meet him in heaven, for he is there.' Mrs. W. then said, "Daisy, why did not Allie know at once about my father?" "Because," replied she, "those who die go into different states or places and do not see each other at all times, but all the good are in the state of the blest."

"During those last days of illness Daisy loved to listen to her sister Lulu as she sang for her, mostly from the Sunday School song-book. Lulu sang one song, the chorus of which was :

" 'Oh ! come angel band,
Come and around me stand,
Oh ! bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home.

When she had finished, Daisy exclaimed, "Oh, Lulu, is it not strange? We always thought the angels had wings! But it is a mistake; they don't have any." Lulu replied, "But they must have wings, else how do they fly down from heaven?" "Oh, but they don't fly," she answered, "they just come. When I think of Allie, he is here."

"Once I inquired, "How do you see the angels?" She replied, "I do not see them all the time; but when I do, the walls seem to go away, and I can see ever so far, and you couldn't begin to count the people; some are near, and I know them; others I have never seen before." She

mentioned the name of Mary C., the sister of Mrs. S., who was a neighbour of ours in Nevada City, and said, " You know she had such a bad cough, but she is well now, and so beautiful, and she is smiling to me."

" " I was then sitting beside her bedside, her hand clasped in mine. Looking up so wistfully to me, she said, " Dear Mamma, I do wish you could see Allie ; he is standing beside you." Involuntarily I looked round, but Daisy thereupon continued, " He says you cannot see him because your spirit-eyes are closed, but that I can, because my body only holds my spirit, as it were, by a thread of life." I then inquired, " Does he say that now ? " " Yes, just now," she answered. Then wondering how she could be conversing with her brother when I saw not the least sign of conversation, I said, " Daisy, how do you speak to Allie ? I do not hear you or see your lips move." She smilingly replied, " We just talk with our think." I then asked her further, " Daisy, how does Allie appear to you ? Does he seem to wear clothes ? " She answered, " Oh, no, not clothes such as we wear. There seems to be about him a white, beautiful something, so fine and thin and glistening, and oh, so white, and yet there is not a fold, or a sign of a thread in it, so it cannot be cloth. But makes him look so lovely." Her father then quoted from the Psalmist : " He is clothed with light as a garment." " Oh, yes, that's it," she replied.

" " She often spoke of dying, and seemed to have such a vivid sense of her future life and happiness

that the dread of death was all dispelled. The mystery of the soul's departure was to her no more a mystery. It was only a continuation of life, a growing up from the conditions of earth-life into the air and sunshine of heaven.

“ ‘ The morning of the day she died she asked me to let her have a small mirror. I hesitated, thinking the sight of her emaciated face would be a shock to her. But her father, sitting by her, remarked, “ Let her look at her poor little face if she wants to.” So I gave it to her. Taking the glass in her two hands, she looked at her image for a time, calmly and sadly. At length she said, “ This body of mine is about worn out. It is like that old dress of Mamma's hanging there in the closet. She doesn't wear it any more, and I won't wear my body any more, because I have a new spiritual body which will take its place. Indeed, I have it now, for it is with my spiritual eyes I see the heavenly world while my body is still here. You will lay my body in the grave because I will not need it again. It was made for my life here, and now my life here is at an end, and this poor body will be laid away, and I shall have a beautiful body like Allie's.” Then she said to me, “ Mamma, open the shutters and let me look out at the world for the last time. Before another morning I shall be gone.” As I obeyed her loving request, she said to her father, “ Raise me up, Papa.” Then, supported by her father, she looked through the window whose shutters I had opened, and called out, “ Good-bye, sky. Good-bye, trees. Good-bye,

flowers. Good-bye, white rose. Good-bye, red rose. Good-bye, beautiful world," and added, "how I love it, but I do not wish to stay."

"That evening, when it was half-past eight, she herself observed the time, and remarked, "It is half-past eight now ; when it is half-past eleven Allie will come for me." She was then, for the time being, reclining on her father's breast, with her head upon his shoulder. This was a favourite position, as it rested her. She said, "Papa, I want to die here. When the time comes, I will tell you."

"Lulu had been singing for her, and as half-past eight was Lulu's bedtime she arose to go. Bending over Daisy, as she always did, she kissed her, and said, "Good night." Daisy put up her hand and, stroking tenderly her sister's face, said to her, "Good night." When Lulu was half-way up the stairs, Daisy again called out after her, in a clear, sweet, earnest tone, "Good night and good-bye, my sweet, darling Lulu."

"At about a quarter past eleven she said, "Now, Papa, take me up ; Allie has come for me." After her father had taken her, she asked us to sing. Presently someone said, "Call Lulu," but Daisy answered promptly, "Don't disturb her, she is asleep," and then, just as the hands of the clock pointed to the half-hour past eleven, the time she had predicted that Allie was to come to take her with him, she lifted up both arms and said, "Come, Allie," and breathed no more. Then tenderly laying her loved but lifeless form upon the pillow,

her father said, "The dear child has gone," and added, "she will suffer no more." " "

There are one or two specially interesting points about this case—like Case I in Chapter II—the dying child kept a consciousness of the visions which came to her, together with clear recognition of her earthly friends, and ability to converse with them sensibly. With Daisy Dryden the double consciousness lasted a few days, whereas in the case of Mrs. B. it only lasted an hour or two.

Again the descriptions Daisy gave of her vision evidently did not accord with her pre-conceived ideas of a spiritual world, yet it did not once occur to her to doubt the reality of what she was learning of a life apart from a material body—and the possession of a spiritual body.

In p. 118 of "The Nurseries of Heaven" (see p. 56 above) is the following statement made by her mother: "Although she was on the whole a good child, possessing ordinary good sense, yet in no way was she more remarkable than many other children. Her dying experience, therefore, was not the outgrowth of a life highly spiritual, nor was it one which had been educated in the least degree on the lines of mysticism or modern spiritualism."

Her father was so deeply impressed "by

what she most undoubtedly said, heard and revealed to them," that he began a careful study of the New Testament in the original Greek, and published a series of articles later on the subject.¹

The following incident taken from the "American S.P.R. Journal" for 1918 (Vol XII, p. 623), was reported by Dr. E. H. Pratt, of Chicago :

"My sister Hattie, while attending school at Mt. Carroll Seminary, suffered an attack of malignant diphtheria. She was brought home to be under our father's care, but he was unable to save her, and after a few days of extreme suffering her spirit took its flight into what seems to most of us such a dark, impenetrable expanse of appalling immensity. A death-bed scene occurred, so wonderful, realistic, and impressive, that although I was but ten years of age at the time, my memory picture of that event is as vivid and distinct as though it were taken but yesterday.

"Her bed was in the middle of the living-room, and my mother, father, younger sister, and a few friends were standing about it, gazing earnestly upon my sister's dear features, as the light of life gradually went out, and the ashy pallor of death settled over them. Hattie's going out was not abrupt. It was a gradual fading away, very calm

¹ "Resurrection of the Dead," published by Hitchcock and Walden, Cincinnati, in 1872.

and apparently free from pain. Although her throat was so choked up with diphtheritic membrane that her voice was very thick, and it required close attention to catch all of her words, her mind seemed unusually clear and rational.

“ She knew she was passing away, and was telling our mother how to dispose of her little personal belongings among her close friends and playmates, when she suddenly raised her eyes as though gazing at the ceiling toward the farther side of the room, and after looking steadily and apparently listening for a short time, slightly bowed her head, and said, ‘ Yes, Grandma, I am coming, only wait just a little while, please.’ Our father asked her, ‘ Hattie, do you see your grandma?’ Seemingly surprised at the question she promptly answered, ‘ Yes, Papa, can’t you see her? She is right there waiting for me.’ At the same time she pointed toward the ceiling in the direction in which she had been gazing. Again addressing the vision she evidently had of her grandmother, she scowled a little impatiently and said, ‘ Yes, Grandma, I’m coming, but wait a minute, please.’ She then turned once more to her mother, and finished telling her what of her personal treasures to give to different ones of her acquaintances. At last giving her attention once more to her grandma, who was apparently urging her to come at once, she bade each of us good-bye. Her voice was very feeble and faint, but the look in her eyes as she glanced briefly at each one of us was as lifelike and intelligent as it could be. She then fixed her eyes

steadily on her vision but so faintly that we could but just catch her words, said, 'Yes, Grandma, I'm coming now.' Then without a struggle or evidence of pain of any kind she gazed steadily in the direction she had pointed out to us where she saw her grandma, until the absence of oxygen in her blood-stream, because respiration had ceased, left her hands and face all covered with the pallor of lifeless flesh.

"She was so clear-headed, so positive of the vision and presence of her grandma, with whom she talked so naturally, so surprised that the rest of us could not see grandma, the alternation of her attention and conversation between her grandma and father and mother were so distinctly photographed upon the camera of my brain that I have never since been able to question the evidence of the continuance of distinct recognizable life after death. Her grandmother had died a few years previously, and before that she and grandma had always been such close friends, and the recognition of each other as Hattie left her body to join her dearly beloved grandma in the realms beyond the vision of our physical eyes was so unquestionable and complete in every detail that it seems impossible to account for the remarkable event on any theory except that her grandma was alive and so completely like herself while on earth that Hattie's recognition of her was instantaneous and unquestionable, a real genuine experience."

The following case was communicated to the

American S.P.R. by Mr. S. B. Bennett (see "American S.P.R. Journal" for 1918, Vol. XII, p. 607) :

"PITSTON, PA.,

"December 15, 1906

"Mr. G. H. Tench died in 1902, after years of patient though intense suffering of cancer. He lived in Wilkes-Barre, but was formerly a near neighbour of mine in West Pittston, during a portion of the time he was a foreman under me enjoying mutual confidence and esteem. He received deserved promotion by another Coal Co., but our personal relation remained the same.

"During the last weeks I watched with him as often as I could, going back and forth by rail. While suffering intensely he would not take narcotics nor stimulating medicine, saying, 'I have lived Hall Tench and I am going to die that way.' The night the end came he roused his younger son, telling him to call the family as he was going away. He talked entirely rationally to them and was fully conscious. Later a brother came to the house and upon entering the room G. H. Tench said, 'Good-bye, Will; I am going soon,' and closed his eyes. The family thought the end had come, but after a short interval he opened his eyes and, looking over and above the bed foot, with raised head and every appearance of interest, said clearly and distinctly, 'Why, they're all plain people.' This closed the scene, which was described to me by his wife soon after the funeral.

“ Now Tench was not a religious man, although attended by a Methodist minister at the last, but a moral, upright man in every relation of life, thoroughly courageous, as was shown by his refusal to have his sensibilities dulled in his suffering. Not highly educated, nor a great reader, yet I have no doubt he had thought about conditions he had to face, and was *likely* to have imbibed the wings and harp idea. Is it not possible that he at the last expressed surprise that the people waiting for him should be ‘ all plain people ’ ? I give you this as a *fact*.

“ (Signed) S. B. BENNETT ”

The following narrative was recorded in the “ Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research ” (1918, p. 603), having been sent to Prof. Hyslop by Mr. Rud. C. Gittermann, a member of the English S.P.R. He writes as follows :

“ My father died in Germany on March 18th, 1892, and my mother then came to live with us at Odessa. Shortly after she fell ill, and died on May 6th of the following year, 1893. Both she and my father had always been most sceptical of anything concerning the existence and survival of the soul.

“ A few minutes before her death she regained consciousness (having been in a state of coma for two hours previously), raised herself in her bed, stretched out her arms, and with a happy smile on

her face, cried out, ' Papa ! Papa ! ' just as if she suddenly saw him in front of her. Immediately after she fell back into the arms of my wife, and expired.

" My mother used to call her husband ' Papa,' just as we children did.

" I certify that this is a perfectly true account of what took place.

" (Signed) RUD. C. GITTERMANN "

The following abridged account of the last days of the American poet, Horace Traubel, is taken from a fuller narrative in the American S.P.R. " Journal " for 1921 (Vol. XV, pp. 114-123).

Horace Traubel (1858-1919) was the Boswell of Walt Whitman ; he was also author of a number of volumes of poems of the Whitman type, which some of his own disciples regard as equalling those of his master. He was also the founder of the well-known Contemporary Club of Philadelphia.

The abridged account was contributed by Mrs. Flora Macdonald Denison, who was present at the death-bed, to the April-May issue of a Magazine entitled, " The Sunset of Bon Echo," as follows :

" All day on August 28th Horace was very low spirited. Anne's illness and the going of the Bains was too much for him. Mildred was with him a

good deal and we decided not to leave him a minute. He had been brought in from the veranda but absolutely radiant, and on seeing me, he called out, 'Look, look, Flora, quick, quick, he is going.' 'What, Horace,' I said, 'what do you see? I cannot see anyone.' 'Why just over the rock Walt appeared, head and shoulders and hat on in a golden glory—brilliant and splendid. He reassured me—beckoned to me, and spoke to me. I heard his voice but did not understand all he said, only "Come on."'

"Frank Bain soon came in and he repeated the story to him. All the rest of the evening Horace was uplifted and happy. So often Horace would say, 'Do not despise me for my weakness,' but now he was quite confident, even jocular, as I handed him a drink.

"On the night of September 3rd Horace was very low. I stayed for a few hours with him. Once his eyes rolled; I thought he was dying, but he just wanted me to turn him. As I did so, he listened and seemed to hear something. Then he said, 'I hear Walt's voice, he is talking to me.' I said, 'What does he say?' He said, 'Walt says, "Come on, come on."' After a time he said, 'Flora, I see them all about me, Bob and Bucke and Walt and the rest.'

"Colonel Cosgrave had been with Horace in the afternoon and had seen Walt on the opposite side of the bed, and felt his presence. Then Walt passed through the bed and touched the Colonel's hand, which was in his pocket. The contact was

like an electric shock. Horace was also aware of Walt's visible presence and said so. There was no gloom about the house. No one seemed depressed. A feeling of triumph, of pride, and of exultation permeated the atmosphere."

A letter was afterwards received by Mr. Walter Prince of the American S.P.R., from Col. Cosgrave, confirming the statement given by Mrs. Flora Denison as above.

There are several cases of which records have been preserved in the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research and elsewhere, in which an account is given of those watching beside a dying relative having had a vision of spirit forms near the bed.

"In one case ¹ two women watching by their dying sister, Charlotte, saw a bright light and within it two young faces hovering over the bed, gazing intently at Charlotte; the elder sister recognized these faces as being two of her brothers, William and John, who had died when she was young. The two sisters continued to watch the faces till they gradually 'faded away like a washed-out picture,' and shortly afterwards their sister Charlotte died."

Mr. Podmore, who investigated this case, remarks that it is possible the vision was due to a telepathic impact from the dying person,

¹ See "Proceedings S.P.R.," Vol. VI, p. 293.

but this explanation is less tenable and quite as unlikely as is the percipience of spirit forms by the dying person and sometimes by those present. Mr. Podmore, with his usual prejudice against any supernormal explanation remarks on this that "the images traditionally associated with death receive a sensory embodiment," but this point of view is not appropriate to the two following cases where the percipients being very young children could hardly be supposed to have any mental images traditionally associated with death, nor does it account for the "collective hallucination" described in Miss Pearson's case, pp. 35, 36.

This case is quoted by Stainton Moses :

"Miss H., the daughter of an English clergyman, was tending a dying child. His little brother, aged three to four years, was in a bed in the same room. As the former was dying, the little brother woke up, and, pointing to the ceiling with every expression of joy, said, 'Mother, look at the beautiful ladies round my brother! How lovely they are, they want to take him.' The child died at that moment."

Another instance is reported by M. Pelusi, librarian at the Victor Emmanuel Library at Rome (Luce e Ombra, 1920, 20) :

“ A little girl of three, Hippolyte Notari, partly paralysed, was in the same room with her little brother of four months, who was dying. The father, the mother, and the grandmother of the two children were present. About fifteen minutes before the death of the infant, little Hippolyte stretched out her arms, saying, ‘ Look, mother, Aunt Olga.’ This Aunt Olga was a younger sister of Mme. Notari, who had killed herself a year previously owing to a disappointment in love. The parents asked, ‘ Where do you see Aunt Olga ? ’ The child said, ‘ There, there ! ’ and tried insistently to get out of bed to go to her aunt. They let her get up, she ran to an empty chair and was much discountenanced because the vision had moved to another part of the room. The child turned round and said, pointing to a corner, ‘ Aunt Olga is there.’ Then she became quiet and the baby died.”

In the following case which was communicated by Prof. W. C. Crosby, Associate Member, Society for Psychical Research [“ Proceedings S.P.R.,” Vol. VIII, pp. 229-231] the vision was seen by the nurse during the unconsciousness of the dying patient. The phantom seen was unknown to the percipient.

“ Mrs. Caroline Rogers, seventy-two years old, a widow who had been twice married, and whose first husband, a Mr. Tisdale, died about thirty-five years ago, has lived on Ashland Street, in Roslindale, Mass., for the last twenty-five years ; and

since the death of her last child some years ago she has lived quite alone. Early in March of this year she was stricken with paralysis, and after an illness of nearly six weeks died on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 15th.

“ Mrs. Mary Wilson, a professional nurse, forty-five years old, attended Mrs. Rogers during her illness, remaining with her almost constantly until she died. She had never seen Mrs. Rogers before the latter’s illness, and knew nothing of her family or history. Mrs. Rogers spoke frequently to Mrs. Wilson, and also to others, as had long been her custom, of her second husband, Mr. Rogers, and children, expressing a desire to see them again, etc.

“ On the afternoon of April 14th, Mrs. Rogers became unconscious, and remained so all the time until her death twenty-four hours later. Mrs. Wilson sat up with her through the whole of Monday night. Mrs. Wilson’s daughter Ida, twenty-five years old, kept her mother company, and a boy of ten or twelve years slept in an adjoining chamber, to be called in case of an emergency. These four were the only persons in the house. The outer doors were securely locked, the door leading from the sick chamber on the second floor into the hall was kept locked all the time, because it was near the foot of Mrs. Rogers’ bed; and entrance to the sick chamber was gained by passing from the upper hall into the living-room by a door which was locked that night, and thence through the chamber in which the boy slept—the two

chambers having been made to communicate by cutting a door through the back of a small closet. This door was diagonally facing the bed on which Mrs. Rogers lay. Mrs. Wilson rested on a settee placed at right angles to the head of Mrs. R.'s bed, so that when lying down her face was almost directly opposite this door and not more than ten or twelve feet from it. The lamp, which burned brightly all night, stood on a small table in the corner of the room directly opposite the door; and Ida occupied a couch against the wall and between the lamp and door.

"Mrs. Wilson was pretty well worn out with her long vigil; believing that Mrs. Rogers was dying, she was naturally very nervous and timid; and having heard Mrs. R. speak frequently of seeing her departed friends, etc., she had a feeling of expectancy and dread with regard to supernatural visitations. Between two and three a.m., while her daughter was asleep, and while she was resting on the settee, but wide awake, she happened to look toward the door into the adjoining chamber and saw a man standing exactly in the doorway, the door being kept open all the time. He was middle-sized, broad-shouldered, with shoulders thrown back, had a florid complexion, reddish-brown hair (bareheaded) and beard, and wore a brown sack overcoat, which was unbuttoned. His expression was grave, neither stern nor pleasant, and he seemed to look straight at Mrs. Wilson, and then at Mrs. Rogers without moving. Mrs. Wilson supposed, of course, that it was a real man,

tried to think how he could have got into the house. Then, as he remained quite motionless, she began to realize that it was something uncanny, and becoming frightened, turned her head away and called her daughter, who was still asleep on the couch, awakening her. On looking back at the door after an interval of a minute or two the apparition had disappeared ; both its coming and going were noiseless, and Mrs. Rogers remained perfectly quiet, and so far as could be known entirely unconscious during this time. The chamber into which this door leads being quite dark, there was no opportunity to observe whether or not the apparition was transparent. Mrs. Wilson shortly afterwards went into this chamber and the living-room, but did not examine the lower part of the house until morning, when the doors were found properly locked and everything all right.

“In the morning Mrs. Rogers’ niece, Mrs. Hildreth, who lives in the neighbourhood, and has known Mrs. R. and her family for many years, called at the house. Mrs. Wilson related her experience to her and asked if the apparition resembled Mr. Rogers, and Mrs. Hildreth replied emphatically that it did not. (All who knew Mr. Rogers are agreed on this point.) Their conversation was interrupted then, but when resumed later in the day Mrs. Hildreth said that Mrs. Wilson’s description agreed exactly with Mr. Tidsale, Mrs. Rogers’ first husband. Mrs. Rogers came to Roslindale after marrying Mr. Rogers,

and Mrs. Hildreth is the only person in that vicinity who ever saw Mr. Tisdale ; and in Mrs. Rogers' house there is no portrait of him nor anything suggestive of his personal appearance. Mrs. Wilson is also very positive that the apparition was unlike anyone she ever knew.

“ Mrs. Wilson has had similar experiences before, and at least one, which occurred when she was eighteen years old, which appears to have been veridical.

“ The foregoing account of my experience is correct in every particular.

“ (Signed) MARY WILSON ”

“ The foregoing is a full and accurate statement of Mrs. Wilson's experience as she related it to me on the morning of April 15th.

“ (Signed) F. E. HILDRETH ”

June 5th, 1890

“ Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Hildreth have both impressed me as being intelligent and perfectly honest and truthful ; and I have no doubt that Mrs. Wilson's experience was real and substantially as she has described it.

“ (Signed) W. O. CROSBY ”

CHAPTER IV

VISIONS SEEN BY THE DYING OF LIVING PERSONS AT A DISTANCE—IN SOME CASES RECIPROCAL

WE now come to a somewhat different and large class of cases where the veil which hides the spiritual world is not for a few moments lifted for the dying percipients, but their souls appear to be transported to a different place *on earth* and they are able to see persons who may be at a remote distance. Such cases are usually called instances of "travelling clairvoyance" and numerous well-attested facts of this kind have been collected in "Phantasms of the Living," to which my readers are referred.

There are, however, a few cases which are worthy of special notice, wherein the dying persons appear not only to make themselves visible at a distance, but also inform those around them where they have been, and that they have visited those whom they desired to see.

One of the most remarkable and pathetic of these so-called "reciprocal cases" was related to me by that gifted and venerable Quaker lady, Miss Anna Maria Fox, when we were on a

voyage to Canada for the British Association Meeting in 1884. Miss Fox and her sister Caroline were well known to *savants* in the last generation,¹ for their beautiful place "Penjer-rick," near Falmouth in Cornwall, was the rendezvous of many eminent scientific and literary men, and nearly fifty years ago I had the privilege of enjoying their hospitality. When narrating the incident, Miss Fox referred me to her relatives, the Birkbecks, for confirmation of it: and this was given me when I made inquiries shortly afterwards.

Mr. Myers has given an abridged record of the same case,² which he obtained from another member of the same family, Mrs. Charles Fox of Falmouth, who had heard the account from one of the percipients.

The incident is nearly two centuries old, but as Mr. Myers says, the Fox family is one which would carefully preserve evidence of this kind. As an illustration of this fact I may state that the narrative which Miss Anna Maria Fox gave me was practically identical with that given by Mrs. Charles Fox, which I now quote:

"In 1739 Mrs. Birkbeck, wife of William Birkbeck, banker, of Settle, and a member of the Society of Friends, was taken ill and died at

¹ See "Memoirs of Caroline Fox."

² See "Phantasms of the Living," Vol. II, p. 560.

Cockermouth, while returning from a journey to Scotland, which she had undertaken alone—her husband and three children, aged seven, five, and four years respectively, remaining at Settle. The friends at whose house the death occurred made notes of every circumstance attending Mrs. Birkbeck's last hours, so that the accuracy of the several statements as to time, as well as place, was beyond the doubtfulness of man's memory, or of any even unconscious attempt to bring them into agreement with each other.

“ One morning, between seven and eight o'clock, the relation to whom the care of the children at Settle had been entrusted, and who kept a minute journal of all that concerned them, went into their bedroom as usual, and found them all sitting up in their beds in great excitement and delight. ‘ Mamma has been here ! ’ they cried, and the little one said, ‘ She called “ Come, Esther ! ” ’ Nothing could make them doubt the fact, and it was carefully noted down, to entertain the mother on her return home. That same morning, as their mother lay on her dying bed at Cockermouth, she said, ‘ I should be ready to go if I could but see my children.’ She then closed her eyes, to reopen them, as they thought, no more. But after ten minutes of perfect stillness she looked up brightly and said, ‘ I am ready now ; I have been with my children ’ ; and then at once peacefully passed away. When the notes taken at the two places were compared, the day, hour, and minutes were the same.

“ One of the three children was my grandmother, *née* Sarah Birkbeck, afterwards the wife of Dr. Fell, of Ulverston. From her lips I heard the above almost literally as I have repeated it. The eldest was Morris Birkbeck, afterwards of Guildford. Both these lived to old age, and retained to the last so solemn and reverential a remembrance of the circumstance that they rarely would speak of it. Esther, the youngest, died soon after. Her brother and sister heard the child say that her mother called her, but could not speak with any certainty of having themselves heard the words, nor were sensible of more than their mother’s standing there and looking on them.”

The case of Mrs. Goffe is also of remote date, 1691, but is taken from a contemporary report made by the Rev. T. Tilson in a letter he addressed to the famous divine, Richard Baxter, who published it in a book he wrote.¹ The case is given in “Phantasms of the Living” (Vol. II, pp. 558, 559) and the authors state that the narrative cannot be impugned on the ground of any credulity on the part of Baxter, and quote an authority on this point. It will be seen that the incidents in the following narrative are curiously parallel to the preceding case of Mrs. Birkbeck. Though Mr. Tilson’s letter which we now quote, is somewhat

¹ See Baxter’s “The World of Spirits” (1691), pp. 147-51.

long, it is better to give his own words rather than an abstract.

“ *July 6th, 1691*

“ Mary, the wife of John Goffe, of Rochester, being afflicted with a long illness, removed to her father’s house at West Mulling, which was about nine miles distant from her own ; there she died, June 4th, 1691. The day before her departure she grew impatiently desirous to see her two children, whom she had left at home, to the care of a nurse. She prayed her husband to hire a horse, for she must go home to die with her children.

“ Between one and two o’clock in the morning she fell into a trance. One widow Turner, who watched with her that night, says that her eyes were open and fixed, and her jaw fallen ; she put her hand on her mouth and nostrils, but could perceive no breath ; she thought her to be in a fit, and doubted whether she was alive or dead. The next day this dying woman told her mother that she had been at home with her children. ‘ That is impossible,’ said the mother, ‘ for you have been here in bed all the while.’ ‘ Yes,’ replied the other, ‘ but I was with them last night while I was asleep.’

“ The nurse at Rochester, widow Alexander by name, affirms and says she will take her oath of it before a magistrate, and receive the sacrament upon it, that a little before two o’clock that morning she saw the likeness of the said Mary Goffe come out of the next chamber (where the elder child lay

in a bed by itself, the door being left open), and stood by her bedside for about a quarter of an hour ; the younger child was there lying by her ; her eyes moved, and her mouth went, but she said nothing. The nurse, moreover, says that she was perfectly awake ; it was then daylight, being one of the longest days in the year. She sat up in her bed, and looked steadfastly upon the apparition ; at that time she heard the bridge clock strike two, and a while after said, ‘ In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what art thou ? ’ Thereupon the appearance removed and went away ; she slipped on her clothes and followed, but what became of it she cannot tell. Then, and not before, she began to be grievously affrighted, and went out of doors, and walked upon the wharf (the house is just by the river-side) for some hours, only going in now and then to look at the children. At five o’clock she went to a neighbour’s and knocked at the door, but they would not rise ; at six she went again, then they rose and let her in. She related to them all that had passed ; they would persuade her she was mistaken, or dreamt ; but she confidently affirmed, ‘ If ever I saw her in all my life, I saw her this night.’ ” [The writer than gives an account of how one of those to whom she related the story confirmed the above narrative.]

“ The substance of this statement was related to me by John Carpenter, the father of the deceased, the next day after the burial—July 2. I fully discoursed the matter with the nurse and two neighbours, to whose house she went that morning.

Two days after I had it from the mother, the minister that was with her in the evening, and the woman who sat up with her last that night. They all agree in the same story, and every one helps to strengthen the other's testimony. They all appear to be sober, intelligent persons, far enough off from designing to impose a cheat upon the world, or to manage a lie ; and what temptation they should lie under for so doing I cannot conceive.

“ (Signed) THOMAS TILSON ”

The next case, also contributed by Mr. Myers, is an account given by the Ellis family to Mr. Myers, of a vision which their father, Mr. Ellis, who was dying in Kensington, had of his son, Robert, at that time in Australia. The Misses Ellis state :

“ On Wednesday, December 29th, 1869, my father, who was dangerously ill at the time, awoke from a sleep, and raising himself up in the bed pointed and looked most intently to one corner of the room and said to us (my sister Mary and me), ‘ Look ! don’t you see ? it is my poor boy Bob’s head ! ’ Then turning to me, he said, ‘ Norman Town, don’t forget, Gulf of Carpentaria.’ He then sank back exhausted. This happened about three p.m. We found, after his death, he had entered the address in red ink in his pocket-book—my brother having left Bourke Town and gone to Norman Town—so that the next packet of letters were sent there. My father died on Thursday, Dec. 30th,

1869. When my brother returned from Australia a few years after, he told us that one night, whilst camping out, he had gone to rest and had slept, and he awoke seeing my father's head distinctly in one part of his tent. It made such an impression on him that he went to his mate in the adjoining tent and said, 'I have seen my father; you must come and stay with me.' By the next mail he received my letter telling him of my father's death.

"My brother said it must have been about three a.m. when he saw my father. Would not that correspond with our three p.m.? I always think they must have seen each other at the same time.

" (Signed) ALICE ELLIS
" MARY ELLIS "

Mr. Myers states that in conversation with the narrators, he ascertained that Mr. Ellis was not in the least delirious during his last days, and that he was deeply attached to his absent son.

In this case in connexion with the Vision of his father seen by Mr. Robert Ellis, it may be interesting to note that another case of apparition, occurring to her husband some years later, is given by Mrs. Robert Ellis. She states that on *Tuesday, December 19, 1876*, between 6 and 7 p.m., when she and Mr. Ellis were sitting talking together, he suddenly looked over his shoulder with a startled, almost terrified look,

and on being asked what was the matter, he said that he had imagined he saw someone coming in at the door. Subsequently he stated that he distinctly saw the tall dark figure of a man, but could not distinguish his features. He was greatly agitated. Later on a telegram was received, giving news of the sudden death of Mrs. Robert Ellis' brother in Mexico on *Tuesday, the 19th December*, at seven o'clock in the evening. He and Mr. Robert Ellis had been very great friends.

This case is taken from "Phantasms of the Living," Vol. II, p. 253 :

"The lady who sends us the following narrative occupies a position of great responsibility, and desires that her name may not be published, but it may be given to inquirers :

" ' When I was eight months old, my mother's youngest sister, Mercy Cox, came to reside with us and to take charge of me. My father's position at the Belgian Court as portrait painter obliged him to be much abroad, and I was left almost wholly to the care of my very beautiful aunt. The affection that subsisted between us amounted almost to idolatry, and my poor mother wept many bitter tears when she came home to see how little I cared for anyone else. My aunt took cold, and for three years lingered in decline. I was a quick child and could read well and even play prettily, so that I was her constant companion day and night. Our

doctor, Mr. Field, of the Charter House, greatly disapproved of this close contact, and urged my parents to send me quite away. This was a difficult feat to accomplish, the bare mention of the thing throwing my aunt into faintings. At last Mr. Cumberland (the theatrical publisher) suggested that I should join his two daughters, Caroline, aged 16, and Lavinia, younger, at Mrs. Hewetson's, the widow of a clergyman resident at Stourpaine, in Dorsetshire, who only took four young ladies. This was represented to my aunt as something so wonderfully nice and advantageous to me that she consented to part with me. My portrait was painted and placed by her bed, and I remember how constantly she talked to me about our separation. She knew she would be dead before the year of my absence would be ended. She talked to me of this, and of how soon I should forget her; but she vehemently protested that she would come to me there. Sometimes it was to be as an apple-woman for me to buy fruit of, sometimes as a maid wanting a place, always *she* would know *me*, but I should not know her, till I cried and implored to know her.

“ ‘ I was but nine when they sent me away, and coach travelling was very slow in those days. Letters too were dear, and I very rarely had one. My parents had sickness and troubles, and they believed the reports that I was well and happy, but I was a very miserable, ill-treated little girl. One morning at break of day—it was New Year's Day—I was sleeping beside Lavinia. We two shared

one little white tester bed with curtains, while Caroline—upon whom I looked with awe, she being 16, slept in another similar bed at the other end of a long, narrow room, the beds being placed so that the feet faced each other, and two white curtains hung down at the sides of the head. This New Year's morning I was roughly waked by Lavinia shaking me and exclaiming, "Oh, look there! There's your aunt in bed with Caroline." Seeing two persons asleep in the bed I jumped out and ran to the right side of it. There lay my aunt, a little on her right side, fast asleep, with her mouth a little open. I recognized her worked nightgown and cap. I stood bewildered, with a childish sort of wonder as to when she could have come; it must have been after I went to bed at night. Lavinia's cries awakened Caroline, who as soon as she could understand, caught the curtains on each side and pulled them together over her. I tore them open, but only Caroline lay there, almost fainting from fright. This lady, Miss Cumberland, afterwards became Mrs. Part, wife of a celebrated doctor at Camden Terrace [and now deceased].

" 'I never talked of what had occurred, but one day after I had returned home, I said to my mother, "Do you know, Mamma, I saw Auntie when I was at school." This led to an explanation, but my mother instead of commenting upon it, went and fetched her mother saying to her, "Listen to what this child says." Young as I was I saw they were greatly shocked, but they would

tell me nothing except that when I was older I should know all. The day came when I learned that my dear aunt suffered dreadfully from the noise of St. Bride's bells, ringing in the New Year. My father tried to get them stopped but could not. Towards morning she became insensible; my mother and grandmother seated on either side of her and holding her hands, she awoke and said to my mother, "Now I shall die happy, Anna, I have seen my dear child." They were her last words.

" ' (Signed) D. E. W.' "

" No general register of deaths was kept at the time of the incident here related, and we have exhausted every means to discover a notice of the death, without success. But we have procured a certificate of Mercy Cox's burial, which took place on January 11, 1829. This is quite compatible with the statement that the death was on January 1st (though such an interval, even in winter, is no doubt unusual), as the lady was buried in a family vault, and probably a lead coffin had to be made. January 1st would be, at the very least, a day of very critical illness. As to the date of the apparition, the marked character of New Year's Day decidedly favours the probability that Miss W.'s memory is correct.

" In answer to inquiries, Miss W. says :

" ' I was born in 1819. The death of my aunt took place in 1829. Though to my most intimate

friends—as Sir Philip Crampton, the late Earl and Countesses (2) of Dunraven—I have often mentioned the event (and to Judge Halliburton), I think I never wrote it fully except for Lord Dunraven and his mother, in 1850, who were very desirous to publish it, but I declined. I think that a great reason I have always had for not talking of it was the awe with which it inspired my mother, and her strict commands that “I should not mention it to anybody.” Then, too, I went to school and lost sight of Lavinia Cumberland, and I shrank from the comments of strangers.’

“In conversation Miss W. added that she had never experienced any other hallucination; also that the Cumberland girls had visited her home, and seen her aunt—which accounts for Lavinia’s recognition of the figure.

“[We learn through a relative of Miss Lavinia Cumberland that she herself does not recall the incident; but that she remembers hearing her sister speak of a ‘ghost case’ in which they had both been somehow concerned.]”

The following case Mr. Myers contributes to “Phantasms of the Living” (Vol. II, p. 305), and he remarks that it is a narrative of whose accuracy there is no reason to doubt, as the narrator, Dr. O. B. Ormsby—who wrote from a place called Murphysborough, Illinois, U.S.A., in 1884—had been in communication with Mr. Myers, and replied to his questions.

The narrative, which I abridge, is as follows :

In 1862 Dr. Ormsby was acting as Assistant Surgeon to the 18th Illinois Volunteers ; the regiment having gone forward to attack Fort Henry, he was left behind in charge of the sick. Among these was a young man called Albert Adams, a sergeant-major, in whom the doctor seems to have been specially interested. He removed him from the hospital and took him into a private house ; the adjoining apartment to that occupied by the patient was divided from his room only by a thin partition ; this other room was occupied by the doctor's wife.

The man was dying and all the afternoon he could only speak in whispers ; his father was sent for, and at 11 p.m. Sergeant Adams to all appearance died. Dr. Ormsby, who was at the time standing beside the father by the bed, states that, thinking the bereaved man might faint in the keenness of his grief, he led him away to a chair in the back part of the room, and himself returned to the bedside, intending to close the eyes of Adams, who he thought had expired. Dr. Ormsby then states : " As I reached the bedside the supposed dead man looked suddenly up in my face, and said, ' Doctor, what day is it ? ' I told him the day of the month, and he answered, ' That is the day I died.' His father had sprung to the bedside, and Adams turning his eyes on him said, ' Father, our boys have taken Fort Henry, and Charlie (his brother)

isn't hurt. I've seen mother and the children, and they are well.'

"He then gave comprehensive directions regarding his funeral, speaking of the corpse as 'my body,' and occupying, I should think, as much as five minutes. He then turned towards me and again said, 'Doctor, what day is it?' and I answered him as before. He again repeated, 'That's the day I died,' and instantly *was* dead. His tones were quite full and distinct, and so loud as to be readily heard in the adjoining room, and were so heard by Mrs. Ormsby.

"(Signed) O. B. ORMSBY, M.D."

In reply to further questions, Dr. Ormsby wrote that he had no opportunity to learn whether what was said about the mother and children was correct, but that he learned afterwards that Fort Henry was taken, and the brother was uninjured.

CHAPTER V

MUSIC HEARD AT THE TIME OF DEATH BY THE DYING OR BY PERSONS PRESENT AT A DEATH-BED

AMONG the numerous cases in which music is heard at the time of death, the following incident, well attested by different observers, is quoted from "Phantasms of the Living," Vol. II, p. 639 :

A master of Eton College, Mr. L., wrote to Mr. Gurney in February, 1884, enclosing a memorandum which was made shortly after the death of his mother, which occurred in 1881.

It appears that at the time of her death there were several persons present in the room, namely, the Matron of Mr. L.'s house (Miss H.), a middle-aged, experienced woman ; the doctor in attendance (Dr. G.) ; a friend of the dying lady (Miss I.) ; and two other persons (Eliza W. and Charlotte C.).

Immediately after Mrs. L.'s death, Miss H. and Charlotte C. left the room to procure something, and shortly after they had left Miss I. heard a sound of " low, soft music, exceedingly sweet, as of three girls' voices." It seemed to

come from the street and passed away. Dr. G. also heard it and went to the window to look out. No one could be seen outside in the street. Eliza W. who was in the room also heard a sound as of "very low, sweet singing." Mr. L. himself, who sends the memorandum, heard nothing. The two others who had left the room, Miss H. and Charlotte C., distinctly heard the sound of singing as they were coming upstairs.

Later on, when those present were talking over the matter, they found that each one of them had heard the sound of singing and music—*except Mr. L.*

It was specially noticeable that the staircase, up which Miss H. and Charlotte C. were coming, was at the back of the house and away from the street. The time of Mrs. L.'s death was about 2 a.m. on July 28, 1881.

In reply to inquiries Miss I. sent the following memorandum which she made *immediately after* the death of her friend, Mrs. L. ; it is as follows :

" July 28th, 1881

" Just after dear Mrs. L.'s death between 2 and 3 a.m., I heard a most sweet and singular strain of singing outside the windows ; it died away after passing the house. All in the room [except Mr. L.] heard it, and the medical attendant, who was still with us, went to the window, as I did, and looked

out, but there was nobody. It was a bright and beautiful night. It was as if several voices were singing in perfect unison, a most sweet melody which died away in the distance. Two persons had gone from the room to fetch something and were coming upstairs *at the back of the house* and heard the singing and stopped, saying, 'What is that singing?' They could not, *naturally*, have heard any sound from outside the windows in the front of the house from where they were at the back.

"E. I."

Dr. G., who was in attendance upon Mrs. L., writes to Mr. Gurney in 1884, as follows :

"ETON, WINDSOR

"I remember the circumstance perfectly. I was sent for about midnight, and remained with Mrs. L. until her death about 2.30 a.m. Shortly after we heard a few bars of lovely music, not unlike that from an æolian harp—and it filled the air for a few seconds. I went to the window and looked out, thinking there must be someone outside, but could see no one though it was quite light and clear. Strangely enough, those outside the room heard the same sounds, as they were coming upstairs quite at the other side of the door [house]."

Mr. Gurney adds a note that as Mr. L., although present at the time of his mother's death, did *not* share the experience of the

others, this is strong evidence that the sounds did not come from any persons singing outside the house, and the other evidence quoted confirms this.

There are, however, many cases in which the dying persons or those near the bedside have heard musical sounds which could not be attributed to any earthly source. These sounds may have their origin, in some cases at least, in the minds of the living.

The following case appears to point to a hallucinatory origin of the music heard. It is an interesting case and worth quoting in an abbreviated form. It is printed in the "S.P.R. Journal," Vol. IV, p. 181.

Here the subject was a deaf mute, John Britton, who was taken dangerously ill with rheumatic fever, which caused his hands and fingers—which were his only means of conversation—to become so swollen that he could not use them, greatly to the distress of his relatives, to whom he could not make known his wants nor his sufferings.

The narrator, Mr. S. Allen, Steward of Haileybury College, and a brother-in-law of John Britton, states that the doctor thinking John could not recover, they had sent for members of his family. He adds that when he and his wife were in a room below John's

bedroom, they were greatly surprised to hear music coming from upstairs, and ran up at once to find out what it was. He narrates as follows :

“ We found Jack lying on his back with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, and his face lighted up with the brightest of smiles. After a little while Jack awoke and used the words ‘ Heaven ’ and ‘ beautiful ’ as well as he could by means of his lips and facial expression. As he became more conscious he also told us in the same manner that his brother Tom and his sister Harriet were coming to see him. This we considered very unlikely as they lived some distance off, but shortly afterwards a cab drove up from which they alighted. They had sent no intimation of their coming, nor had anyone else. After Jack’s partial recovery, when he was able to write or converse upon his fingers, he told us that he had been allowed to see into Heaven and to hear most beautiful music.”

Mr. Allen asks, “ How did John know that Tom and Harriet were travelling, and how could he have heard these musical sounds which we also heard ? ” He remarks that the music could not have come from next door or from the street, and he gives a rough plan of his house to show that it was not in a row, and that the sounds could not be due to any normal cause.

Mrs. Allen confirms her husband's statement, and says that she heard the sounds of singing which came from her brother's bedroom, and that when she entered the bedroom he was in a comatose state and smiling, and his lips were moving as if he were in conversation with someone, but no sound came from them. Mrs. Allen continues, "when he had recovered sufficiently to use his hands he told me more details of what he had seen, and used the words 'beautiful music.' " She adds that her brother died a few years later, and states "the nurse and I were watching in the room, my brother was looking just as he did on the former occasion, smiling, and he said quite distinctly and articulately 'Angels' and 'Home.' "

The Rev. L. S. Milford, a master at Haileybury College, in giving an account of the interview he had with Mr. and Mrs. Allen, states that "Mrs. Allen says the sounds she heard resembled singing—sweet music without distinguishable words—that she went upstairs directly she heard the music, which continued until she reached the bedroom. Mr. Allen's impression is that the sound resembled the full notes of an organ or of an aeolian harp."

The following interesting case is an instance in which the dying person heard the sound of

singing and also had a vision of a lady of whose death she was unaware. The case is taken from the "Proceedings S.P.R." for 1885,¹ and is as follows somewhat abridged :

Mrs. Z., wife of Col. Z. (a well-known Irish gentleman who does not wish his name published), was having some friends to stay with her and asked a Miss X., who was training as a professional singer, to spend a week with her and help to entertain her guests. This she did. Several years later Mrs. Z. became very ill and expected to die ; she was, however, perfectly composed and in the full possession of her senses, and was anxious to arrange some business affairs. For this purpose her husband came to her bedside and talked over these matters with her. Suddenly she changed the subject and said to her husband, "Do you hear those voices singing?" Col. Z., who narrates the incident, replied that he did not, and his wife continued, "I have heard them several times to-day, and I am sure they are the angels welcoming me to Heaven, but," she added, "it is strange, there is one voice among them I am sure I know, but I cannot remember whose voice it is." Suddenly she stopped and said, pointing straight over her husband's head, "Why, there she is in the corner of the room ; it is Julia X. She is coming on ; she is leaning over you ; she has her hands up ; she is praying. Do look ; she is going." Her husband

¹ See "Proceedings S.P.R.," Vol. III, pp. 92, 93 ; also "Human Personality," Vol. II, p. 339.

turned round but could see nothing. His wife then said, " She has gone."

These things the Colonel at the time believed to be merely the phantasms of a dying person, but two days afterwards on taking up " The Times " newspaper, he saw recorded in it the death of Julia, who some years previously had married a Mr. Webley. He was so astounded that a day or two after his wife's funeral he went to see Julia's father, and asked if his daughter were really dead. " Yes," he said, " poor thing, she died of puerperal fever, and on the day she died she began singing, and sang on and on till she died."

In a subsequent communication from Colonel Z. the following facts were given :

Mrs. Webley (*née* Julia X.) died on February 2, 1874.

Mrs. Z. (wife of Colonel Z.) died on February 13, 1874.

Colonel Z. saw notice of Mrs. Webley's death on February 14, 1874.

Mrs. Z. never was subject to hallucinations of any sort.

Mr. Gurney subsequently received a note from Mr. Webley (husband of Julia) in which he stated that beautiful as his wife's voice was,

it never had been so exquisitely beautiful as when she sang just before her death.

John Bunyan relates an incident of this kind which is worth quoting, though its evidential value is not very great.

He states :

“ Talking of the dying of Christians, I will tell you a story of one that died some time since in our town. The man was a godly old Puritan, for so the godly were called in times past. This man, after a long and godly life, fell sick, of the sickness whereof he died. And as he lay drawing on, the woman that looked to him thought she heard music, and that the sweetest that ever she heard in her life, which also continued until he gave up the ghost. Now, when his soul departed from him the music seemed to withdraw, and to go further and further off from the house, and so it went until the sound was quite gone out of hearing.” ¹

¹ See Bunyan's "Works." Edited by George Offor, Vol. III, pp. 653, 654. Glasgow, 1855.

CHAPTER VI

VISIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF A DYING PERSON LEAVING THE BODY

THE following case, which is taken from the "S.P.R. Journal" (Vol. XIII, pp. 308-311), was sent to Dr. Hodgson by Dr. Burgess, an Associate of the American S.P.R. The vision was seen only by the husband of the dying woman, and by none of the others present in the room. The doctor who was present, Dr. Renz, testifies that the percipient, Mr. G., "was in a perfectly normal state before and after, and that there were features in the vision that would not have been likely to occur to him."

The percipient, Mr. G., states as follows :

"My wife died at 11.45 p.m. on Friday, May 23rd, 1902. Gathered round the bedside were some of our most intimate friends, the physician in attendance, and two trained nurses. I was seated at the bedside holding my wife's hand. . . . Earlier in the evening, at 6.45, I happened to look towards the door, when I saw floating through the doorway three separate and distinct clouds in strata. Each cloud appeared to be about four feet in length, from six to eight inches in width, the lower one about two feet from the ground, the others at intervals of about six inches. . . . Slowly

these clouds approached the bed until they completely enveloped it. Then, gazing through the mist, I beheld standing at the head of my dying wife a woman's figure about three feet in height, transparent, yet like a sheen of brightest gold ; a figure so glorious in its appearance that no words can be used fitly to describe it. She was dressed in the Grecian costume, with long, loose and flowing sleeves—upon her head a brilliant crown. In all its splendour and beauty the figure remained motionless with hands uplifted over my wife, seeming to express a welcome with a quiet, glad countenance, with a dignity of calmness and peace. Two figures in white knelt by my wife's side, apparently leaning towards her ; other figures hovered about the bed, more or less distinct.

“ Above my wife, and connected with a cord proceeding from her forehead, over the left eye, there floated in a horizontal position a nude, white figure, apparently her ‘ astral body.’ At times the suspended figure would lie perfectly quiet, at other times it would shrink in size until it was no larger than perhaps eighteen inches, but always the figure was perfect and distinct. . . .

“ This vision, or whatever it may be called, I saw continuously during the five hours preceding the death of my wife. All through those five hours I felt a strange feeling of oppression and weight upon my head and limbs. . . .

“ At last the fatal moment arrived ; with a gasp, the astral figure struggling, my wife ceased to breathe ; she apparently was dead : however, a

few seconds later she breathed again, twice, and then all was still. With her last breath and last gasp, as the soul left the body, the cord was severed suddenly and the astral figure vanished. The clouds and the spirit forms disappeared instantly, and, strange to say, all the oppression that weighed upon me was gone ; I was myself, cool, calm, and deliberate, able to direct, from the moment of death, the disposition of the body, its preparation for a final resting-place.

“ I leave my readers to determine whether I was labouring under a mental delusion caused by anxiety, sorrow and fatigue, or if a glimpse of a spirit world of beauty, happiness, calmness, and peace was granted to my mortal eyes.”

The doctor who was present writes as follows :

“ From my own observations I can most positively put aside a temporary acute state of hallucinatory insanity during the time of the vision just recorded. . . . I knew Mr. G. well, and I had occasion to know that he never read anything in the occult line ; that everything that was not a proven fact was incompatible with his positive mind—so much so that during his vision (of which I did not know at the time) he asked me frequently if I thought he was going to become insane. . . .

“ As soon as Mrs. G. was dead, Mr. G., who for six hours was sitting almost motionless next to her, rose and gave all his orders in such a calm and business-like way that it surprised all who were

present. If he had laboured under a hallucination his mind would not have become clear as suddenly as it did. It is now $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks since the death and the vision. Mr. G. is absolutely normal physically as well as mentally. He has attended to his business as usual, and, besides, fulfilled many extraordinary duties.

“ (Signed) C. RENZ ”

Many well authenticated cases are on record where the relatives of a person, watching by the death-bed, have seen at the moment of death a cloudy form rising from the body of the deceased and hovering for a time in the room and then passing away.

Lady Mount Temple informed me that something of this kind was noticed by a psychic friend of hers, who was present at the death of Lord Mount Temple. Others present did not see it.

In a letter that has recently been sent me of a late well-known dignitary of the Church (a Dean) in New South Wales, he describes the death of his son a few years ago.

He says that at about 3.30 p.m. he and his wife were standing one on each side of the bed and bending over their dying son, when just as his breathing ceased they both saw “ something rise as it were from his face like a delicate

veil or mist, and slowly pass away.” He adds, “ We were deeply impressed and remarked, ‘ How wonderful ! Surely that must be the departure of his spirit.’ We were not at all distracted so as to be mistaken in what we saw.”

The following cases are recorded by Mrs. Joy Snell, in her book, “ The Ministry of Angels ” :

“ It was about six months after I began work in the hospital that it was revealed to me that the dying often really do see those who have come from the realms of spirit life to welcome them on their entrance into another state of existence.

“ The first time that I received this ocular proof was at the death of Laura Stirman, a sweet girl of seventeen, who was a personal friend of mine. She was a victim of consumption. She suffered no pain, but the weariness that comes from extreme weakness and debility was heavy upon her and she yearned for rest.

“ A short time before she expired I became aware that two spirit forms were standing by the bedside, one on either side of it. I did not see them enter the room ; they were standing by the bedside when they first became visible to me, but I could see them as distinctly as I could any of the human occupants of the room. I recognized their faces as those of two girls who had been the closest friends of the girl who was dying. They had passed away a year before and were then about her own age.

“ Just before they appeared the dying girl exclaimed, ‘ It has grown suddenly dark ; I cannot see anything ! ’ But she recognized them immediately. A smile, beautiful to see, lit up her face. She stretched forth her hands and in joyous tones exclaimed, ‘ Oh, you have come to take me away ! I am glad, for I am very tired. ’

“ As she stretched forth her hands the two angels extended each a hand, one grasping the dying girl’s right hand, the other her left hand. Their faces were illumined by a smile more radiantly beautiful even than that of the face of the girl who was so soon to find the rest for which she longed. She did not speak again, but for nearly a minute her hands remained outstretched, grasped by the hands of the angels, and she continued to gaze at them with the glad light in her eyes and the smile on her face.

“ Her father, mother, and brother, who had been summoned that they might be present when the end came, began to weep bitterly, for they knew that she was leaving them. From my heart there went up a prayer that they might see what I saw, but they could not.

“ The angels seemed to relax their grasp of the girl’s hands, which then fell back on the bed. A sigh came from her lips, such as one might give who resigns himself gladly to a much-needed sleep, and in another moment she was what the world calls dead. But that sweet smile with which she had first recognized the angels was still stamped on her features.

“ The two angels remained by the bedside during the brief space that elapsed before the spirit form took shape above the body in which physical life had ceased. Then they rose and stood for a few moments one on each side of her, who was now like unto themselves ; and three angels went from the room where a short time before there had been only two.”

“ About a month after the death of Laura Stirman, which I have just related, another friend of mine died in the hospital, a Mr. Campbell, a man of 45. It was pneumonia that carried him off. He was a good and devout man and for him death held no terrors, for he was sure that it was but the transition to a happier, more exalted life than can be lived here. His only regret at dying was that he would leave behind him a dearly-loved wife ; but that regret was softened by the assurance that their parting would be only for a time, and that she would join him some day in that other world whither he was going.

“ She was sitting by his bed, and, believing as he believed, was awaiting the end with resignation. About an hour before he died he called her by name, and pointing upwards, said, ‘ Look, L——, there is B—— ! He is waiting for me. And now he smiles and holds out his hands to me. Can’t you see him ? ’ ‘ No, dear, I cannot see him,’ she replied, ‘ but I know that he is there because you see him.’ B—— was their only child who had been taken from them about a year before, when

between five and six years of age. I could plainly see the little angel with curly flaxen hair and blue eyes, and garbed in what I call the spirit robe. The face was just that of a winsome child, but etherealized and radiant as no earthly faces ever are.

“The father had been greatly weakened by the ravages of his disease, and the joyful emotion occasioned by seeing his angel child seemed to exhaust what little vitality he had left. He closed his eyes and sank into a placid sleep. He remained in that state for about an hour, the angel child meanwhile staying poised above the bed with an expression of glad expectancy on his radiant face. Occasionally he looked lovingly at his mother.

“The breathing of the dying man grew fainter and fainter until it ceased altogether. Then again I witnessed what had now become a familiar spectacle to me—the formation of the spirit body above the discarded earthly body. When it was complete the angel child grasped the hand of the now angel father, each gazed into the eyes of the other with an expression of the tenderest affection, and with faces aglow with joy and happiness they vanished.

“Later on in the day, the widow (Mrs. Campbell) said to me ‘I am very glad my dear husband saw B—— before he died; it was natural that B—— should come for him to take him to the angels, for they loved each other dearly. I shall now be able to think of them as always together and happy.

And when I receive my summons I know that they will both come for me.'

"After I had left the hospital and had taken up private nursing I was engaged to nurse an old lady (Mrs. Barton, aged 60), who was suffering from a painful internal disease. She was a widow and her only daughter lived with her. . . . The time came when the end was very near. The mother had been for some time unconscious, and the daughter was kneeling by the bedside, weeping, her face buried in her hands. Suddenly two angels became visible to me, standing on either side of the bed. The face of one was that of a man who, when he departed from this life, was apparently about 60 years of age. His beard and hair were iron-grey ; but there was stamped on his features that indescribable something indicative of exuberant vitality and vigour, which shines forth from all angel faces I have seen, whether in other respects they present the semblance of youth or old age. The face of the other angel was that of a woman, apparently some ten or fifteen years younger.

"The dying woman opened her eyes, and into them there came that look of glad recognition I have so often observed in those whose spirits are about to be released for ever from their earthly tenements. She stretched forth her two hands. One angel grasped one hand and the other angel the other hand, while their radiant faces were aglow with the joy of welcoming to the better world her whose earthly pilgrimage was finished.

“ ‘ Oh, Willie,’ she exclaimed, ‘ you have come to take me home at last, and I am glad, for my sufferings have been hard to bear and I am very tired.’ Then she added, ‘ And you too, Martha !’ With the joyous light still in her eyes her hands remained outstretched for perhaps half a minute. Then they seemed to slip from the grasp of the angels. All her sufferings were over.

“ The daughter had raised her head at the sound of her mother’s voice, and her tear-dimmed eyes seemed to reflect something of the glad surprise depicted on her mother’s face.

“ ‘ I can doubt no more after this,’ she said to me when her mother had breathed her last breath ; ‘ I know that mother saw father and her sister, Aunt Martha. I know that they came to take her to her rest in heaven.’

“ Eagerly she listened to me when I told her a little later how I had seen two angels depart with her angel mother. ‘ I believe it ! I believe it !’ she cried, ‘ but, oh, how I wish that I could have seen it too ! ’ ”

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