

# TELEPATHIC HALLUCINATIONS :

The New View of Ghosts

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Illustrated



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SKETCH OF BRIDGE AT HUY, BELGIUM.



THE PERCIPIENT'S IMPRESSION.

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A TELEPATHIC EXPERIMENT.

*Telepathic Hallucinations*]

[See p. 65

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# Telepathic Hallucinations :

## THE NEW VIEW OF GHOSTS.



### CHAPTER I

#### SOME RECENT GHOST STORIES.

Do you believe in Ghosts? Most educated men nowadays, it may be anticipated, would answer, No. A majority, or at lowest, a substantial minority of educated Europeans, at any date within the last two hundred years, would probably have given a similar answer had the question been put to them. But by the greater number of the human race at the present day, and by learned and unlearned, civilised and uncivilised alike, at any previous period in the world's history, an answer would unhesitatingly have been returned in the affirmative. In fact the belief in ghosts has been so widespread that it may almost be claimed as universal. The very conception of a future life is intimately bound up with the belief; it has left its traces on all the religions in the world. The elaborate arrangements for embalming the dead amongst the Egyptians, the offerings to the dead which formed part of the funeral ceremonies in early civilisations, and are still found throughout a great part of the world at the present day, are obviously associated with the belief or at least the hope of the survival of a quasi-material soul—a soul having form and substance, appetites and desires. Amongst the Egyptians the soul which was weighed in the balance and found wanting was doomed to be devoured by the Eater of the Dead. The Homeric ghosts were thin squeaking shadows, anæmic extracts of the heroes whose names they once bore, thronging to

the smell of blood. We find the same idea in the once general terror of vampires, and in the part traditionally played by freshly shed blood in the ceremonials of black magic. Plato makes Socrates, in this no doubt reflecting the current belief of his day, speak of the soul of the sensual man as prowling in visible shape about tombs and sepulchres.\* Milton testifies to the same belief in his day.

"Such are those thick and gloomy shadows dank  
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres,  
Lingering and sitting by a new made grave  
As loath to leave the body that it loved."

The Scotch alchemist, Maxwell, adopts the same belief and essays a scientific explanation of the facts.† In mediæval art the soul is constantly represented as a mistlike semi-transparent figure in the shape of the body, which issues from the mouth of the dying man to hover over the corpse, until it is borne away to its appointed place. A similar conception of the soul as having bodily form runs through all poetical speculations on the after life, from Dante to Tennyson.

If we consider existing beliefs amongst the more primitive races we find the same conception. The Australian cuts off the right thumb of his dead enemy that he may be unable to throw a spear in the Spirit world; the Congo Negroes refrain from sweeping the house after death lest the dust should injure the ghost.‡ The souls of his departed friends visit the savage in dreams. His conception of a future life is mainly, perhaps wholly, based on these dream visitations. We, the inhabitants of educated Europe, have learnt under the guidance of science to look upon dreams as simply the creations of our own imaginations. We no longer, in the popular phrase, "believe in dreams." But both savage and civilised men from the earliest historical times down to the present have professed, and still profess occasionally,

\* *Phædo*, 81.

† *De Medicina Magnetica*.

‡ *Taylor Primitive Culture* (1873), vol. I., pp. 451, 454.

to see figures of their dead friends, not in dreams but in waking life, with their own eyes open. It is these daylight apparitions for which the name of "ghosts" is now commonly reserved, and in view of the important part played by them in religious belief, from the earliest times down even to the present day, the enquiry into their nature and significance must needs be of serious interest.

But before we ask *what* ghosts are we must endeavour to find an answer to the previous question—*whether* in fact there are ghosts. We must first ascertain the facts. To most persons no doubt a ghost is like a sea serpent—something which somebody hears that somebody else has seen, or thinks that he has seen, a long way off or a long time ago. We distrust the tales of the sea serpent, because they proceed for the most part from an uneducated and proverbially credulous class; because we rarely get them from the actual witness; because when the incident is told at first hand we generally find that it happened many years ago.\* But apart from the defects in the evidence, which may or may not be accidental, there is one special reason for distrusting these stories. The sea serpent is a familiar figure in folklore and mythology; he has come down to us from the childhood of the world. As Dragon, Kraken or Behemoth, he is indelibly painted on the imagination of the race. From old travellers we hear of him guarding his horrid den in untrodden recesses of the Alps; in old maps we may see him corkscrewing his scaly folds through the wastes of uncharted seas. We suspect, therefore, and are

\* The most instructive sea serpent story which I have come across was told by a well-known literary man in a letter to the *Times*, 6th June, 1893. The writer had received in 1851 a description of the monster from a lady who had watched it disporting itself in a small bay on the coast of Sutherlandshire. But the writer had something more to tell. He himself searched the rocks and found some of the serpent's scales, as big as scallop shells. For many years he preserved these unique relics; but, alas, when he wanted to exhibit them to Sir Richard Owen,

"They were gone as the dew of the morning,  
They were lost as the dream of the day!"

probably justified in suspecting an hereditary predisposition on the part of our ignorant sailor to interpret floating driftwood, a basking whale or a string of porpoises, into the likeness of the traditional monster. To justify belief in the sea serpent demands evidence of quality so unexceptionable as to over-ride the adverse presumption derived from this innate tendency.

Now all that can be urged, *a priori*, against the belief in the sea serpent can be urged against the belief in ghosts—and much more. There is, as we have seen, no belief which is more deeply rooted in the past life of the race; there is no belief which appeals more surely to the popular imagination. The 'new' journalist in search of a sensation finds nothing better suited to his purpose than a traditional ghost story brought up-to-date, and furnished with a local habitation. And ghost stories appeal further, as we have seen, to the inherited religious instincts. Many for whom the merely marvellous would count for little seek in these narratives confirmation of a belief in personal immortality.

If we are justified, then, in our suspicion of the sea serpent, we are doubly justified in the reluctant hearing which we yield to ghost stories. Man, as has been said by someone, is not naturally a veridical animal. It is not in fact an easy thing to tell the truth. It is the most difficult of all arts, and one of the latest acquirements of the most civilised races. There are in the first place defects and excesses in narration caused by self interest, or by the dramatic instinct, the love of telling a good story. But defects of this kind are generally recognised and proportionately easy to guard against. The real danger is more subtle. Not only our memory but our very acts of perception are shaped by our preconceptions and prejudices. To put it crudely, what we see and what we remember is not what actually happened, but what we think ought to have happened or what was likely to have happened. The retina supplies

us with an imperfect photograph—a crude sensation. But this imperfect photograph is not “perceived” until it has been telegraphed up to higher brain centres, and it is the business of these higher centres to touch up the photograph, to fill in the lacunæ, to select what seem the more salient and notable features, and to colour the whole with the emotion appropriate to the situation. It is likely that in most cases something is added to improve the picture. The result is no longer a photograph but a finished work of art, which contains at once more and less than the photograph—the original sensation. This process of selection and embellishment may be carried still further in the memory, until at last the finished picture may come to bear no essential resemblance to the original retinal photograph.

In matters of every day life the picture, no doubt, generally serves the purpose as well as the photograph—better in fact, for the brain artist, if he has done his duty, has selected only those features which are needed for retention, and blotted out the rest. But where the emotions and prejudices are deeply concerned, another principle of selection is introduced. The sedulous artist works to please his patron—our noble self—and he is apt to produce a picture intended less for instruction than for edification. This is something more than a parable. It is an honest, though of course extremely crude and inadequate, attempt to express in psychological terms our actual mental procedure. The whole process is of course an automatic one, and could be alternatively expressed in terms of stimuli and nerve reactions. But the essential features of the process are no doubt easier to grasp if expressed in the language which is to most of us more familiar.

Now in this question of ghost stories, it is hardly necessary to say again that there are potent influences ceaselessly operating to guide the process of brain selection—in other words to pervert testimony, or to warp it to predestined ends. We are



bound, therefore, to apply the most stringent tests to the tales of ghostly apparitions. To begin with, we shall require that every ghost story must be told at first hand. If the man who saw the ghost is dead, and has left no written record behind him, so much the worse—his ghost, for all evidential purposes, has perished with him. Nor can we in matters of this kind be content to rely upon a single memory. If a man tells us that he saw a ghost, we must have some evidence that he thought it of sufficient importance to mention it at the time to someone else. Again, whilst not rejecting the evidence of peasants and uneducated persons, we shall by preference seek for testimony amongst the educated classes, as having for the most part achieved greater proficiency in the difficult art of telling the truth. Again, in order to give the memory as little opportunity as may be for adding its finishing touches to the picture, we shall give the preference, *ceteris paribus*, to narratives committed to writing within a short period of the event related; and we shall value above all other testimony that of diaries and contemporary letters.

Such are the main principles which must guide us in our search for evidence of ghosts. Other principles will be made clearer as the discussion proceeds. But there is one other point which should be emphasised at the outset. The stories of sea serpents are comparatively speaking few in number. That of course constitutes a further serious defect in the case. In seeking evidence for any unusual phenomenon we must have regard to quantity as well as quality. Even a good witness may be mistaken, or there may be some unsuspected cause to give rise to a false belief. But the more witnesses of competence and good character are multiplied, the more improbable it becomes that they could all have been mistaken, or that the circumstances which may have deceived them will have escaped recognition. It is important, therefore, for the reader to bear in mind that the narratives cited in this book are only

samples, chosen from a much larger number, and that in making the choice I have necessarily been guided by the desire, not only to find good evidence, but also evidence which has not been staled by frequent repetition. Most of the stories printed in the book will, I trust, be new to the reader; and he can find some hundreds of others equally well attested in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research and other sources upon which I have drawn.

Here then are a few of what may be provisionally called "Ghost Stories." The first account comes from a lady who has had two or three similar experiences.

No. 1.—From Mrs. McAlpine.

Garscadden, Bearsden, Glasgow,  
12th April, 1892.

"On the 25th March, 1891, my husband and I were staying at Furness Abbey Hotel, Barrow-in-Furness, with a friend of ours, the late Mr. A. D. Bryce Douglas, of Seafield Tower, Ardrossan. He was managing director of the 'Naval Construction and Armaments Company,' and had resided at Furness Abbey Hotel for some eighteen months or more. He had invited us, along with a number of other friends, to the launch of the *Empress of China*. We breakfasted with Mr. Bryce Douglas on the day of the launch, the 25th, and afterwards saw the launch, had luncheon at the shipyard, and returned to the hotel. He appeared to be in his usual health and spirits (he was a powerfully-built man, and justly proud of his fine constitution). The following day (Thursday) he left with a party of gentlemen, to sail from Liverpool to Ardrossan, on the trial trip of the *Empress of Japan* (another large steamer which had been built at his yard).

"We remained on at the hotel for some days with our son Bob, aged 23, who was staying there, superintending work which Mr. McAlpine was carrying on at Barrow.

"On the Monday night, the 30th, I went upstairs after dinner. On my way down again I saw Mr. Bryce Douglas, standing in the doorway of his sitting-room. I saw him quite distinctly. He looked at me with a sad expression. He was wearing a cap which I had never seen him wear. I walked on and left him standing there. It was then about ten minutes to eight. I told my husband and Bob. We all felt alarmed, and we immediately sent the following telegram, 'How is Mr. Bryce Douglas?' to Miss Caldwell, his sister-in-law, who kept house for him at Seafield. It was too late for a reply that night. On Tuesday morning we received a wire from her; it ran thus: 'Mr.

Bryce Douglas dangerously ill.' That telegram was the first intimation of his illness which reached Barrow. As will be seen in the account of his illness and death in the *Barrow News*, he died on the following Sunday, and we afterwards ascertained from Miss Caldwell that he was unconscious on Monday evening, at the time I saw him."

Mr. Robert McAlpine, junr., writes as follows on April 4th, 1892.

"I distinctly remember that on the Monday night (30th March, 1891) my father and I were sitting at the drawing-room fire after dinner, and mother came in looking very pale and startled, and said she had been upstairs and had seen Mr. Bryce Douglas standing at the door of his sitting-room (he had used this sitting-room for nearly two years). Both my father and I felt anxious, and after some discussion we sent a telegram to Mr. Bryce Douglas's residence at Ardrossan, asking how he was, and the following morning had the reply, 'Keeping better, but not out of danger,' or words to that effect. I can assert positively that no one in Barrow knew of his illness until after the receipt of that telegram."

Mr. McAlpine, senior, corroborates the statement made by his wife and son; and Miss Caldwell writes that she clearly remembers the receipt of the telegram and her surprise at receiving it "as I did not think anyone knew he was so ill." The landlady also confirms the dispatch of the telegram.\*

This account, it will be seen, was written just a year after the event. But Mrs. McAlpine had sent a brief account to the same effect on the 7th May, 1891, six weeks after the event. In any case it is difficult, in view of the decisive corroboration afforded by the telegram, to suppose that the incidents have been seriously misrepresented by defect of memory. It may be true, as indeed appears from the newspaper account of the death, that Mr. Douglas had been observed by some of his friends to be unwell on the Wednesday before his departure from Barrow. But it seems clear that the McAlpines felt no overt anxiety on his behalf. An intimate friend of Mr. Douglas also residing in Barrow, Mr. Charlton, testifies that he was quite unaware of Mr. Douglas' illness until the Tuesday morning (31st March).

\* *Proceedings*, S.F.R. vol. x, p. 279-81.

On the "ghost" theory, it will be seen, the ghost was that of a living man, which appears to have left its unconscious body in order to warn a friend of the approaching end.

In the case next to be quoted the apparition is said to have been seen at the moment of death, and on the "ghost" theory we may suppose that the spirit chose the moment of its release from the body to pay its last farewell. But the account was not written down until nine years after the event, and though we may no doubt place some reliance upon it as regards the main incident, it would probably not be safe to build too much on the alleged exactness of the time coincidence. The case comes to us through the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research.

No. 2.—From Miss Gollin.

130 Lafayette Avenue,  
Brooklyn,

March 2nd, 1905.

"During the year 1896 I was employed in the office of a certain newspaper in this city. On Saturday, the 25th of January, 1896, at about 12-30 p.m., while attending to my work, all at once I felt conscious of a presence near me. In fact, it was just the same feeling one has when some one is intently looking at you, and you feel an inclination to turn to see who it is. This feeling was so strong that I turned almost involuntarily, and there at the back of my chair, but a little to one side, I saw the full figure of a young man with whom I was well acquainted—in fact, engaged to marry. (I wish to state here that this young man had never been in this office.) The figure was very distinct. In fact, it was all so plain that I felt the young woman sitting next to me must see it also, and though very much overcome and not understanding it at the time, I turned to her and asked, 'Did you see any one just now standing back of my chair?' She replied, 'No,' and, of course, wondered why I asked. I did not explain my reason to her at the time as, though she knew this person from hearsay, she had no acquaintance, and I felt she might think me foolish. However the incident is perfectly clear in her mind even to this day, and if necessary I can furnish her name and address. In fact, it is her husband who prevailed on me to make this communication to you.

"On the previous Sunday to this incident I had been at church with this young man, and he was, apparently, in very

good health, though previously he had been ailing somewhat, we thought from overstudy, as he was just completing a college course. That evening after our return from church he made an engagement to see me the middle of the week. Instead of seeing me, I received a letter from his sister saying he had a cold and might not come to see me until the end of the week, but that it was nothing serious. I wrote back, saying that as the weather was so bad he had probably better not try to come to see me until the Sunday following. (That week we had a great deal of wet weather.) I heard nothing further from any member of the family and fully expected to see him on Sunday. On reaching home on Saturday, January 25th, 1896, I found a telegram waiting for me, which read: "If you wish to see W. come at once." I did not reach home until about 2 p.m. I hurried to his home, and on arriving was told he had died about 12-30. It was a case of typhoid fever."

In a later letter Miss Gollin explains that the figure appeared "fully dressed in a black suit of clothes."

Mrs. Burrows, the friend referred to, corroborates as follows:—

179 Prospect Park W.,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.,  
29th March, 1905.

"I do not remember the exact date of the occurrence she mentions. I remember distinctly, however, that we were sitting together working in the office of the *Evening Post*, where we were both employed. Miss Gollin's chair was placed at right angles to mine, so that anyone approaching her chair would have been plainly visible to me. I remember her asking me if I had noticed a man standing back of her chair. As she said this she was in the act of looking behind her, as if expecting to find someone standing there, or as if she were conscious that someone had just been standing there. I saw nothing whatever myself, and am sure that no one in the flesh did approach her chair at that time. I told her I had seen no one, and thus the incident closed for the moment.

"I did not see her again for several days, when she told me that on arriving home she had found a telegram stating that her fiancé was dead. Later she learned the hour of his death corresponded exactly with that of the apparition which she had seen while at work."

In the next two cases the apparition, which was seen some hours after death, conforms more nearly to the orthodox conception of a "ghost"—a discarnate spirit. The first case was originally narrated

\* *Journal*, S.P.R. May, 1908.

verbally to the late F. W. H. Myers by Lady Gore Booth, who afterwards wrote to him the letter of which an extract is given below, and at a later date sent the two subjoined accounts from her daughter, who was aged fifteen at the time of the incident, and her son, then a schoolboy of ten.

No. 3.—From Miss Mabel Gore Booth.

Lissadell, Sligo,

February, 1891.

"On the 10th of April, 1889, at about half-past nine o'clock a.m., my youngest brother and I were going down a short flight of stairs leading to the kitchen, to fetch food for my chickens, as usual. We were about half way down, my brother a few steps in advance of me, when he suddenly said: 'Why, there's John Blaney, I didn't know he was in the house!' John Blaney was a boy who lived not far from us, and he had been employed in the house as hall-boy not long before. I said that I was sure it was not he (for I knew he had left some months previously on account of ill-health), and looked down into the passage, but saw no one. The passage was a long one, with a rather sharp turn in it, so we ran quickly down the last few steps, and looked round the corner, but nobody was there, and the only door he could have gone through was shut. As we went upstairs my brother said, 'How pale and ill John looked, and why did he stare so?' I asked what he was doing. My brother answered that he had his sleeves turned up, and was wearing a large green apron, such as the footmen always wear at their work. An hour or two afterwards I asked my maid how long John Blaney had been back in the house? She seemed much surprised, and said, 'Didn't you hear, miss, that he died this morning?' On inquiry we found he had died about two hours before my brother saw him. My mother did not wish that my brother should be told this, but he heard of it somehow, and at once declared that he must have seen his ghost."

MABEL OLIVE GORE BOOTH.

The actual percipient's independent account is as follows:—

March, 1891.

"We were going downstairs to get food for Mabel's fowl, when I saw John Blaney walking round the corner. I said to Mabel, 'That's John Blaney!' but she could not see him. When we came up afterwards we found he was dead. He seemed to me to look rather ill. He looked yellow; his eyes looked hollow, and he had a green apron on."

MORDAUNT GORE BOOTH.

We have received the following confirmation of the date of death:—

"I certify from the parish register of deaths that John Blaney (Dunfore) was interred on the 12th day of April, 1889, having died on the 10th day of April, 1889."

P. J. SHEMAGHS, C.C.

The Presbytery, Ballinal, Sligo.  
10th February, 1891.

Lady Gore Booth writes:—

May 31st, 1890.

"When my little boy came upstairs and told us he had seen John Blaney, we thought nothing of it till some hours after, when we heard that he was dead. Then for fear of frightening the children, I avoided any allusion to what he had told us, and asked everyone else to do the same. Probably by now he has forgotten all about it, but it certainly was very remarkable, especially as only one child saw him, and they were standing together. The place where he seems to have appeared was in the passage outside the pantry door, where John Blaney's work always took him. My boy is a very matter of fact sort of boy, and I never heard of his having any other hallucination."\*

G. GORB BOOTH.

It will be noted that this account depends for its evidential value, not on the memory of a child of twelve of events happening two years previously, but on the memory of the older persons who heard his account of what he had seen before they knew of the death to which the vision related.

The next case is of a more dramatic character. The account was procured for the Society for Psychical Research by Professor Alexander, of Rio de Janeiro. In the first half of November, 1904, there had been some popular disturbances in Rio de Janeiro, which culminated on the 14th of the month in a revolt of the Military School. The School marched out on the evening of that day, under the command of General Travassos, and had a slight skirmish with the police, in the course of which Ensign João Sylvestre Cavalcante, a young man in his twenty-seventh year, was shot through the head. A comrade struck a match and looked at the body

\* *Proceedings, S.P.R.*, vol. viii, pp. 173-4.

after it had fallen. "The poor lad lay in a muddy gutter, his horse dead on the pavement beside him." This was at a few minutes after 11 p.m. We now quote from the account drawn up by Professor Alexander from statements made to him by the Rieken family and signed by them.

No. 4.

"Now before his death Cavalcante had become engaged to a certain Fräulein Maria Luiza Rieken, the daughter of Herr Rieken, a thriving military tailor established in this city, and of Frau Louise Rieken. The family lives at No. 20a Rua Barata Ribeiro, Copacabana, and, as the *fiancé* of the daughter, Cavalcante, who lived close by, was of course a constant visitor at the house, and was accustomed to take his early coffee there before proceeding to the School. On the morning of the 14th he had returned at 9 o'clock to breakfast, which he shared with 'Mimi,' as the young lady was familiarly called. He was in good spirits, and although there was some peculiarity in his manner of taking leave, it is not likely that he had any presentiment of his approaching fate. Shortly before, indeed, he had made the hypothesis of his own death a subject for jest. He left Copacabana never to return there alive.

"No reports whatever respecting the adhesion of the School to the insurrectionary movement reached the family that day. About 11 p.m. by their house clock (which was, however, too slow) a sound of firing was heard from over the hill. But when, in spite of the advanced hour, Cavalcante did not return, Frau Rieken felt very anxious, and for some time after she had retired to bed this state of uneasiness kept her awake. The room occupied by her and her husband is in the upper part of the house, but as it is a small one and filled with large-sized furniture, the door is left wide open for the sake of ventilation. She had already heard the clock strike two; it was therefore between two and three o'clock in the morning when she suddenly saw Cavalcante standing at the entrance looking in upon her. He leant against the side of the door, his right hand raised and holding to the jamb and his left arm behind his back. He did not wear the regulation uniform in which he had been killed, but presented himself in the khaki undress he usually wore at home—on his head a felt hat with the brim turned down and a rose-coloured neckerchief round his neck. He seemed to be covered with mud and his face was overcast with sadness. '*Guarda Mimi,*' he said. ('Take care of Mimi.') Frau Rieken's first surprise was succeeded by a sense of the impropriety of his being in that part of the house at such an hour, and she was about to awake her husband. But on



looking again the doorway was a blank—Cavalcante had vanished—it was but a vision.

“Next morning, before any news had reached them, she told Herr Rieken and her daughter of her strange nocturnal experience. Neither of them was willing to believe that the vision had any significance. On walking down to the electric-car station at 8 o'clock, Herr Rieken was informed of the occurrence of the revolt and of Cavalcante's death by some young men who were there reading the papers. At first he gave absolutely no credit to the report, and was convinced of its truth only after it had been confirmed by two naval officers of his acquaintance. He proceeded at once to the Military School, whither the body had been transported. In preparing it for burial he cut away the uniform, which, although not the same as that seen in the vision, was indeed stained with the mud of the street.”

“Copacabana,

January 28th, 1905.

“We, the undersigned, herewith declare that everything happened exactly as it has been described by Mr. Alexander.

FRIEDRICH RIEKEN.

LOUISE RIEKEN.

MARIA LUIZA RIEKEN.”\*

The significance of this incident is no doubt to a certain extent diminished by the fact that Frau Rieken was anxious and thinking about the deceased. It will be noticed that the apparition was seen more than three hours after death, if, as is to be presumed, death followed immediately on the shot which passed through the head.

In the next case the apparition occurred several days after the death of the person represented. The account is extracted from a letter written to the late Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Harvey Goodwin, apparently in 1884.

No. 5.—From the Rev. G. M. Tandy, Vicar of West-Ward, near Wigton, Cumberland, formerly of Loweswater.

“When at Loweswater, I one day called upon a friend, who said, ‘You do not see many newspapers; take one of those lying there.’ I accordingly took up a newspaper, bound with a wrapper, put it into my pocket and walked home.

\* *Journal S.P.R.*, April, 1905.

"In the evening I was writing, and, wanting to refer to a book, went into another room where my books were. I placed the candle on a ledge of the bookcase, took down a book and found the passage I wanted, when, happening to look towards the window, which was opposite to the bookcase, I saw through the window the face of an old friend whom I had known well at Cambridge, but had not seen for ten years or more, Canon Robinson (of the Charity and School Commission). I was so sure I saw him that I went out to look for him, but could find no trace of him.

"I went back into the house and thought I would take a look at my newspaper. I tore off the wrapper, unfolded the paper, and the first piece of news that I saw was the death of Canon Robinson!"

Mr. Tandy further writes:—

"In reply to your note October 6th, I may state, with regard to the narrative I detailed to the Bishop of Carlisle, that I saw the face looking through the window, by the light of a single Ozokerit candle, placed on a ledge of the bookcase, which stood opposite the window; that I was standing, with the candle by my side, reading from a book to which I had occasion to refer, and raising my eyes as I read, I saw the face clearly and distinctly, ghastly pale, but with the features so marked and so distinct that I recognised it at once as the face of my most dear and intimate friend, the late Canon Robinson, who was with me at school and college, and whom I had not seen for many years past (ten or eleven at the very least). Almost immediately after, fully persuaded that my old friend had come to pay me a surprise visit, I rushed to the door, but seeing nothing I called aloud, searched the premises most carefully, and made inquiry as to whether any stranger had been seen near my house, but no one had been heard of or seen. When last I saw Canon Robinson he was apparently in good health, much more likely to out-live me than I him, and before I opened the newspaper announcing his death (which I did about an hour or so after seeing the face) I had not heard or read of his illness, or death, and there was nothing in the passage of the book I was reading to lead me to think of him.

"The time at which I saw the face was between 10 and 11 o'clock p.m., the night dark, and while I was reading in a room where no shutter was closed or blind drawn.

"I may answer in reply to your question 'whether I have ever had any other vision or hallucination of any kind?' that though I never saw any apparition, I have heard mysterious noises which neither my friends nor I were able satisfactorily to account for."\*

It will be seen that the apparition was not seen until after the news of the death had been widely known through the notice in the papers. The significance of this circumstance will be considered later on.

In the narratives hitherto quoted the figure seen has been unhesitatingly recognised as representing someone well-known to the percipient. Our next case is of a different type. The "ghost" here was apparently unknown to the persons to whom it presented itself.

No. 6.—From the Misses Du Cane.

July 31st, 1891.

"On the night of November 1st, 1889, between 9-30 and 10 p.m., my three sisters and myself left our library, where we had spent the evening, and proceeded upstairs to our bedrooms. On reaching my room, which is on the second floor, I and a sister went to the mantelpiece in search of the matchbox, in order to light the gas. I must here explain that my bedroom opens into my mother's, and the door between the two rooms was open.

"There was no light beyond that which glimmered through the venetian blinds in each room. As I stood by the mantelpiece I was awe-struck by the sudden appearance of a figure gliding noiselessly towards me from the outer room. The appearance was that of a young man, of middle height, dressed in dark clothes, and wearing a peaked cap. His face was very pale, and his eyes downcast as though deep in thought. His mouth was shaded by a dark moustache. The face was slightly luminous, which enabled us to distinguish the features distinctly, although we were without a light of any kind at the time.

"The apparition glided onwards towards my sisters, who were standing inside the room, quite close to the outer door, and who had first caught sight of it, reflected in the mirror. When within a few inches from them it vanished as suddenly as it appeared. As the figure passed we distinctly felt a cold air which seemed to accompany it. We have never seen it again, and cannot account in any way for the phenomenon.

"One of my sisters did not see the apparition, as she was looking the other way at the moment, but felt a cold air; the other two, however, were *eye-witnesses* with myself to the fact.

Signed by { LOUISA F. DU CANE.  
F. A. DU CANE.  
M. DU CANE.  
C. A. DU CANE."

Answers to questions (asked by Dr. Kingston)  
respecting apparition.

August 4th, 1891.

"There was no light of any kind in passage outside the rooms.

"We had not been talking or thinking of ghosts during the evening, or reading anything exciting; neither were we the least nervous.

"None of us had ever before been startled by anything unexpected in the dark or twilight.

"It was not light enough to see each other's faces, as the only illumination there was came through the venetian blinds, which were drawn down.

"It was myself, Louisa Du Cane, who first saw the apparition.

"We three sisters who saw it exclaimed at the same moment, and found we had seen the same thing.

"My sister Mary did not see the figure, as she was looking the other way at the time, but felt distinctly, as did the rest of us, a sensation of cold when the figure passed us.

"We did not recognise the figure as anybody we had ever seen.

"We did not afterwards hear of any event that we could connect with the appearance."

LOUISA F. DU CANE.

Mrs. Henry Sidgwick called on the Misses Du Cane in December, 1891, and learnt some further particulars. She writes:

"I saw the room in daylight, but was told that at night it was to some extent lighted ('like moonlight') by the street lamp opposite. Miss L. Du Cane saw the face better than the natural light would have enabled her to do. Her sisters, I gathered, saw the figure clearly but not the face. The dress, so far as seen, might have been that of, say, a purser on board a merchant steamer. The figure did not suggest to them any person they had ever seen, and its dress and appearance had no associations for them. Its arms were held away from the body, so that they saw the light between—about as a man's arms would be if his hands were in his pockets. They did not see the hands. I think it is doubtful how much of detail each lady observed independently at the time, especially as they were a good deal startled and agitated, or how much the several impressions may have got defined and harmonised in recollection afterwards. The figure seems to have moved quietly towards them from the window."\*

\* *Journal*, S.P.R., March, 1892.

Mrs. Sidgwick was satisfied that the figure seen could not have been a man of flesh and blood.

Our next case conforms more nearly to the conception of a ghost popularised through the Christmas Magazines—the ghost of the haunted house.

In *Notes and Queries* for March 20th, 1880, over the initials H. C. C. (Mr. H. C. Coote) appeared the following account written by Miss J. A. A., the percipient. It will perhaps be hardly necessary to explain that in the case of a so-called “haunted house” the narrators for the most part feel bound to maintain their anonymity, because of the inconvenience, in some cases actual pecuniary loss, which would result if the house were recognised.

No. 7.—From Mr. H. C. Coote.

The following interesting communication has been handed to me by a young lady, who is as intelligent as she is charming. Her hereditary acumen precludes altogether the possibility of any self-deceit in regard to her own personal experiences as narrated by herself.

“What I am going to relate happened to myself while staying with some North-country cousins, last July, at their house in —shire. I had spent a few days there in the summer of the previous year, but without then hearing or seeing anything out of the common. On my second visit, arriving early in the afternoon, I went out boating with some of the family, spent a very jolly evening, and finally went to bed—a little tired, perhaps, with the day’s work, but not the least nervous. I slept soundly until between three and four, just when the day was beginning to break. I had been awake for a short time when suddenly the door of my bedroom opened and shut again rather quickly. I fancied it might be one of the servants, and called out, ‘Come in!’ After a short time the door opened again, but no one came in—at least, no one that I could see. Almost at the same time that the door opened for the second time, I was a little startled by the rustling of some curtains belonging to a hanging wardrobe, which stood by the side of the bed; the rustling continued, and I was seized with a most uncomfortable feeling, not exactly of fright, but a strange, unearthly sensation *that I was not alone*. I had had that feeling for some minutes, when I saw at the foot of the bed a child about seven or nine years old. The child seemed as if it were on the bed, and came gliding towards me as I lay. It was the figure of a little girl in her night-dress—a little girl with dark hair and

a very white face. I tried to speak to her, but could not. She came slowly on up to the top of the bed, and then I saw her face clearly. She seemed in great trouble; her hands were clasped and her eyes were turned up with a look of entreaty, an almost agonised look. Then slowly unclasping her hands, she touched me on the shoulder. The hand felt icy cold, and while I strove to speak she was gone. I felt more frightened after the child was gone than before, and began to be very anxious for the time when the servant would make her appearance. Whether I slept again or not I hardly know. But by the time the servant did come I had almost persuaded myself that the whole affair was nothing but a very vivid nightmare. However, when I came down to breakfast, there were many remarks made about my not looking well—it was observed that I was pale. In answer I told my cousins that I had had a most vivid nightmare, and remarked that if I was a believer in ghosts I should imagine I had seen one. Nothing more was said at the time upon this subject, except that my host, who was a doctor, observed that I had better not sleep in the room again, at any rate not alone.

“So the following night one of my cousins slept in the same room with me. Neither of us saw or heard anything out of the way during that night or the early morning. That being the case, I persuaded myself that what I had seen had been only imagination, and, much against everybody’s expressed wish, I insisted the next night in sleeping in the room again, and alone. Accordingly, having retired again to the same room, I was kneeling down at the bedside to say my prayers, when exactly the same dread as before came over me. The curtains of the wardrobe swayed about, and I had the same sensation as previously, that I was not alone. I felt too frightened to stir, when, luckily for me, one of my cousins came in for something she had left. On looking at me she exclaimed, ‘Have you seen anything?’ I said, ‘No,’ but told her how I felt, and without much persuasion being necessary, I left the room with her, and never returned to it. When my hostess learnt what had happened (as she did immediately) she told me I must not sleep in that room again, as the nightmare had made such an impression on me; I should imagine (she said) all sorts of things and make myself quite ill. I went to another room, and during the rest of my visit (a week), I was not troubled by any reappearance of the little girl.

“On leaving, my cousin, the eldest daughter of the doctor, went with me to the house of an uncle of mine in the same county. We stayed there for about a fortnight, and during that time the ‘little girl’ was alluded to only as my ‘nightmare.’

“In this I afterwards found there was a little reticence, for, just before leaving my uncle’s, my cousin said to me, ‘I must tell you something I have been longing to tell you ever since I

left home. But my father desired me not to tell you, as, not being very strong, you might be too frightened. Your nightmare was not a nightmare at all, but the apparition of a little girl.' She then went on to tell me that this 'little girl' had been seen three times before, by three different members of the family, but as this was some nine or ten years since, they had almost ceased to think anything about it until I related my experiences on the morning after the first night of my second visit."

To Mr. More Adey, of Wotton-under-Edge, at the time an Oxford undergraduate, and Member of the Oxford Phasmatological Society, we owe the account which follows of the former appearances of the ghost. The narrative, which was written by Mrs. H., the aunt of Miss J. A. A., and her two daughters, the cousins referred to, appears to have been sent to Mr. More Adey in the latter part of 1883. Dr. H., the actual percipient on the first occasion, had seen his wife's account and admits its correctness.

From Mrs. H.

"Some years ago, perhaps about twenty or more [later Mrs. H. fixes the date as between January, 1863, and 1865], we happened to be having one of our usual small gatherings for a musical evening, when the circumstance happened which I am going to relate. My husband had been detained visiting patients until rather late, returning home about 9 o'clock. He was running upstairs in his usual quick way, three or four steps at a time, to go to his dressing-room and dress for the evening, when, on turning the first flight of stairs, he was rather startled to see on the landing (a few steps higher) a little child who ran before him into my room. My little boy B., about two or three years of age, was at that time sleeping in a small child's bed at my bedside. Mr. H. followed and spoke, calling the boy by name, but he gave no answer. The gas was burning on the landing outside my room, but there was no light inside. He felt about and on the bed, but instead of finding the child standing or sitting on the bed, as he supposed, he found him comfortably tucked in and fast asleep. A cold creepy feeling came over him, for there had not possibly been time for anyone to get into the bed, which was just behind the door. He lighted a candle, searched the room, and also saw that the boy was unmistakably fast asleep. He expected to find one of the other children, as the figure appeared to be taller than that of the boy. When the company had gone my husband told me of the occurrence. I felt quite sure that the mystery could be solved, and that we should find it had been one of the children, though

he assured me there could be no one in the room, as he had made a thorough search.

"I still thought he might be mistaken, and fancied that it had been G. (who was a year or two older than B.), who had escaped out of the night nursery, which was near; that she had been listening to the music, when she heard someone coming, and had run into my room to hide; but on inquiring closely the next morning, I found she had never left her bed. We did not think much more about it, though there was still a feeling of mystery, and we never named it to anyone. Some years afterwards it was brought to our minds by two of my daughters having seen a child very early in the morning at the same time, but in different rooms. One of them only saw its face. Then, after a lapse of years, Miss A., while staying with us, saw the apparition mentioned in her ghost story. Whether the appearance has been a ghost or merely an optical delusion I cannot say, but each of those who have seen it had never heard the slightest allusion to anything of the kind before."

From Miss G. H.

"I was up early one winter's morning just as dawn was breaking, and there was barely light enough for me to see my way about the house; I was feeling tired and somewhat sleepy, but not in the slightest degree nervous.

"On passing the door of a room at the head of the staircase, in which my youngest sister slept, I perceived that it was open. Taking hold of the handle, I was about to shut it (the door opened inwards), when I was startled by the figure of a child, standing in a corner formed by a wardrobe which was placed against the wall about a foot and a-half from the doorway. Thinking it was my sister I exclaimed, 'Oh, M., you shouldn't startle me so!' and shut the door; but in the same instant, before I had time to quit my hold of the handle, I opened it again, feeling sure that it could not be my sister; and, sure enough, she was fast asleep in bed so far from the door that it would not have been possible for her to have crossed from the door to her bedside in the short space of time when I was closing the door. In the corner where the child had been there was nothing, and I felt that I must have seen a ghost, for I was suddenly seized with a feeling of horror which could not have been caused by anything imaginary. The child had a dark complexion, hair and eyes, and a thin oval face; it was not white as when seen by Miss A., but it gave me a mournful look as if full of trouble. Had it been a living child, I should have imagined it to be one who enjoyed none of the thoughtlessness and carelessness of childhood, but whose young life, on the contrary, was filled with premature cares. Its age might be about nine or ten; its dress I could not distinguish, as I only seemed to see its head and face; the expression struck me most; so



vividly did I see it that if I were able to draw I could, I believe, give an accurate representation of it, even now after about five years.

"On telling my eldest sister A. what I had seen she said, 'How very curious! I thought I saw something, too, this morning.'

"I must tell you that to reach her bedroom it was necessary to pass through mine; on the morning in question as she looked into my room she saw a figure standing by a small table. Being short-sighted she thought for a moment that it was I, though it appeared to be smaller; and suddenly seized with a nervous fear, *most* unusual with her, she called out, 'Oh! G., wait for me.' She turned for an instant to get something out of her room, and when she looked again there was nothing to be seen. The door from my room into the passage was shut. I was in another part of the house at the time, and we were the only two members of the family out of bed."

From Mrs. A. (formerly Miss H.)

"I believe it was between five and six in the morning my sister and self thought we would get up early to read. We had our bedrooms close together, with the door in the middle joining the rooms always open.

"My sister had just left her room about three minutes; when I looked towards her room, I saw a little figure in white standing near a table. I did not see its face, but I attribute that to my being so short-sighted. Also I was so suddenly overcome with nervousness that I ran from the room.

"During the morning I told my sister what I had seen; then she gave me her account."\*

It seems clear from her account that Miss J. A. A. at the time when she saw the ghost had not heard of any previous apparition in the house. Miss H. and her sister appear to have been equally ignorant, for apart from Mrs. H.'s express statement to that effect, it is not at all likely that she or Dr. H. would have told the children that a ghost had been seen in the house.

Mrs. H., writing in 1883, adds, as regards the identification of the figure:

"If the apparition should be a ghost, I have thought that it must be the spirit of a little girl who died in part of our house before it was added to it. When we first came to this house, about thirty years ago, it was divided into two, the smaller

\* *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. vi. pp. 270-74.

part being inhabited by a doctor. His wife died soon after we came, and a few years afterwards his little girl. I used to see her when she was ill, and I last saw her the day before she died. She had fine dark eyes, black hair, oval face, and a pale olive complexion. This description I find agrees exactly with those who have seen its face. None of them had ever heard me mention the child; indeed, I had quite forgotten about her until hearing of these ghost stories. I said it must be J. M., who died here. Soon after her death her father went abroad. As far as I remember the child was about eight or nine years of age."

The above are a few samples of the testimony which is held by some in the present day to warrant belief in "ghosts." In the next chapter an attempt will be made to analyse the evidence and interpret its significance.

## CHAPTER II

## GHOSTS AS HALLUCINATIONS

IN the preceding chapter we have given a few examples, selected from many hundreds of similar narratives communicated to the Society for Psychical Research within the last thirty years. From the mere quantity alone the case for the ghost would seem to be much better than the case for the sea serpent. But if we examine the quality of the evidence, we find its superiority still more marked. Here we have to do, not with credulous and irresponsible sailors, but with well-educated men and women; and men and women who feel their responsibility in the matter sufficiently to allow their names to appear in attestation of their reports. Their testimony is given soberly and deliberately; it is impossible to doubt at any rate the sincerity of the witnesses. They may have been mistaken; and in any particular case it is perhaps not difficult to suggest a plausible explanation, on normal lines, of the supposed apparition. Mr. Tandy may have mistaken some outside object—bird or tree branch—for the face of his friend looking in at the window; Mrs. McAlpine may have seen a fellow guest standing in the doorway of Mr. Bryce Douglas' sitting-room; Mr. Gore Booth may have caught a hasty glimpse of the new hallboy; Frau Rieken may simply have been dreaming, and so on. But when these or similar explanations have to be applied to hundreds of stories, they are seen to be a little thin. It becomes more reasonable to believe that something out of the way was really seen in many of these cases—a figure, but not a figure of flesh and blood.

Was this figure then a ghost? Are the dreams of men of old, the fancies of mediæval poetry and art, justified by the facts? Is there really in each of us a quasi-material form having all the limbs and due proportions of the body which can leave the body for a time during life, which must leave it permanently at death, and which can under favourable conditions make itself visible to mortal eyes? It may no doubt be said that there is nothing in our present knowledge of the constitution of the material world to forbid such an hypothesis. There may be, as one eminent physicist suggested in the last generation, intercalary vortex atoms; there may be interstitial ether; there may be space of four dimensions. We know too little to say absolutely that such an ethereal or psychical body could not exist. But it cannot be too clearly understood that there is no evidence of its existence. These apparitions have never yet been weighed or photographed, nor have they furnished any other proof of their kinship with matter.\*

But if it be admitted that in a universe which lies even yet for the most part in darkness or twilight, there may be room for ghosts as well as for ethereal vibrations, the ghost-theory, at any rate as applied to these apparitions, will still be found to present almost insuperable difficulties. Let us suppose that it was an ethereal or psychical counterpart of a human being which appeared to the several witnesses whose testimony was cited in the last chapter. The ghosts, it will have been observed, always appeared clothed. Have clothes also ethereal counterparts? Such was and is the belief of many early races of mankind, who leave clothes, food, and weapons in the graves of the dead, or burn them on

\* There have, of course, been numerous claims on the part of Spiritualists and other latterday occultists to photograph spirits, and also the nerve emanations or perisprit of the living body; also on occasion to weigh so-called spirits. But I am not acquainted with a single experiment of the kind which would justify any modification of the statement in the text.

the funeral pile, that their friends may have all they require in the spirit world. But are we prepared to accept this view? And again, these ghosts commonly appear, not in the clothes which they were wearing at death—for most deaths take place in bed—but in some others, as will be seen from an examination of the stories already cited. Are we to suppose the ethereal body going to its wardrobe to clothe its nakedness withal? or that, as in the case of Ensign Cavalcante's appearance to Frau Rieken, the ghost will actually take off the ethereal clothes it wore at death and replace them with others? It is scarcely necessary to pursue the subject. The difficulties and contradictions involved in adapting it to explain the clothes must prove fatal to the ghost-theory.

Whatever else they may be, it seems clear that these apparitions are not ghosts in the old-fashioned sense. And yet, unless we are to distrust human testimony altogether, they are *something*. It is only within the last three or four generations that science has been in a position to explain what in fact these apparitions are. It is now generally agreed that they are of the stuff which dreams are made of; they are, in fact, waking dreams, or in technical phraseology, sensory hallucinations. There are in the brain, it has been estimated, some three thousand million nerve cells. In these cells are registered all sensory impressions; everything that we see, hear, feel, makes some kind of impression in some of these brain cells, and when the particular cells are again set in action the original sensation is reproduced, but in a fainter degree—we remember what we saw, heard, or felt. The brain cells are variously and extensively connected with each other, so that when we are awake, the impressions made on one group of cells are continually touching off other associated groups; and our main stream of thought is accompanied by currents of further images. In waking life these random chains of side association pass almost unregarded. But in sleep, when there

is no continuous main stream of thought, any slight disturbance, within the body or without, may set going a chain of cells, each cell as it discharges itself touching off the next—like a battery of Leyden jars—and we have as a result a dream. The things seen in a dream are only memory images, or combinations of memory images; but they seem often as vivid as actual present sensations, because there is no present sensation to compare them with. Now a hallucination is also a combination of memory images, but from some causes as yet very imperfectly understood it takes on momentarily the strength of an actual sensation—is in fact an actual sensation. For psychologically there is no means of distinguishing between a memory image and a sensation image except by their relative strength. And if a man says he *sees*—even when there is nothing there to be seen—we must take his word for it. He is the only person who can possibly know. In other words, a typical hallucination is indistinguishable from a sense perception. To understand how this can be we must realise that in most, if not all, so-called acts of sense perception we perceive a great many details which may never have made an impression on the ear or eyes. This is especially noticeable when we are trying to see something in a dim light, or straining our ears to catch a faint sound. Everybody recognises that in such a case we misinterpret by adding mental images to sensory data, until in the result we may really see or hear something entirely different from the object which turns out to have been actually present—we may hear carriage wheels in the rustle of dead leaves on the drive, or a footstep in the creaking stair, or may see a threatening figure in an old tree outlined against the twilight sky. But even the normal processes of perception contain such memory images raised by association to the sensory level; or, as Taine has put it, “every perception is a true hallucination; as every hallucination is a false

perception." A sensory hallucination therefore is simply an abnormal result from a normal process; it is, so to speak, a malformed perception, or an hypertrophied memory image.

We find a good illustration of the latter class of hallucinations, the pure memory image, in a recent record by M. Ernest Naville of his personal experience. The distinguished writer, now in his ninety-third year, is visited by numerous visual hallucinations. Amongst these hallucinations was one of a crowd of women wearing those enormous starched white coifs (cornettes) so common in France. Searching for the origin of this vision, he finds it in an experience of his youth. Sixty-two years ago, in 1846, M. Naville was staying at the baths of Salins. In the church on Sunday was a large crowd of peasant women in huge coifs, who, tired with their week's work, fell asleep during the sermon. M. Naville still recalls the quaint sight presented by all these coifs violently agitated when the Cure interrupted his sermon to cry, "Hé!! Que de dormeuses, mon Dieu."\*

Some years back there was much discussion on the question whether hallucinations were always started from without, either by the misinterpretation of some actual sensation, or by some defect in the sensory organ, or whether they could ever be centrally initiated, from the brain itself. Such questions have now been practically settled by the study of hypnotism. For in hypnotism it is unquestionable that true sensory hallucinations can be engendered by the mere suggestion of the hypnotist. These post-hypnotic hallucinations, indeed, are some of the most valuable and interesting results from the study of the induced trance. I have seen an educated lady, a nursing Sister, on waking from the trance pick out one of several blank cards. In accordance with a suggestion given during the trance, she saw on the blank card a photograph of

\* *Archives de Psychologie*, Dec., 1908.

one of the persons present. The card was given to her; she thanked the donor, congratulated him on the excellent likeness, and put the sham photograph in her pocket. As I afterwards learnt from her, when she found the card in her pocket on her return home an hour or two later, it had returned to its original blankness. But the force of suggestion will go further than this. It is not difficult to make a good subject see the figure of a person not actually present. Professor Bernheim relates that he suggested to a soldier in the trance that on a certain day he, the soldier, should come to Bernheim's study, where he would meet the President of the French Republic, who would bestow a decoration. On the appointed day the soldier entered the study, saluted low, and returned thanks for the imaginary decoration. The late Edmund Gurney made a few successful experiments of the kind upon a particularly suggestible subject, Zillah, a maid-servant in the employment of Mrs. Ellis, then of 40 Keppel Street, Russell Square. In the third trial the suggestion was given to the girl when in the trance on the evening of July 13th, 1887, that she should see an apparition of Mr. Gurney on the following day at 3.0. p.m. Mrs. Ellis was not forewarned of the experiment. On the 14th July she wrote:

"As I suppose you gave Zillah a post-hypnotic hallucination, probably you will wish to hear of it. I will give you the story in her own words, as I jotted them down immediately afterwards—saying nothing to her, of course, of my doing so. She said: 'I was in the kitchen washing up, and had just looked at the clock, and was startled to see how late it was—five minutes to three—when I heard footsteps coming down the stairs—rather a quick, light step—and I thought it was Mr. Sleep' (the dentist whose rooms are in the house), 'but as I turned around, with a dish mop in one hand and a plate in the other, I saw someone with a hat on, who had to stoop as he came down the last step, and there was Mr. Gurney! He was dressed just as I saw him last night, black coat and grey trousers, his hat on, and a roll of paper, like manuscript, in his hand, and he said, 'Oh, good afternoon.' And then he



glanced all round the kitchen, and he glared at me with an awful look, as if he was going to murder me, and said, 'Warm afternoon, isn't it?' and then, 'Good afternoon' or 'Good day,' I'm not sure which, and turned and went up the stairs again, and after standing thunderstruck a minute, I ran to the foot of the stairs, and saw like a boot just disappearing on the top step.' She said, 'I think I must be going crazy. Why should I always see something at three o'clock each day after the séance? But I am not nearly so frightened as I was at seeing Mr. Smith.' She seemed particularly impressed by the *awful look* Mr Gurney gave her. I presume this was the hallucination you gave her."

AMELIA A. ELLIS.

Here, it will be seen, was a first-class ghost evoked in broad daylight by a mere suggestion given to the percipient some eighteen hours previously. But there is no need to multiply instances. Post-hypnotic hallucinations of this kind are amongst the accepted facts of science. And it has yet to be shown that these artificially produced hallucinations differ in any respect from the "ghosts" of which specimens are cited in the preceding chapter. In default of any such evidence, we are entitled to treat these ghosts as simply hallucinations; the creation in each case of the percipient's brain. That solution avoids the great clothes difficulty, and simplifies the problem in other ways. But it leaves the question unanswered:—If these apparitions are simply hallucinations—waking dreams—with no substantial reality behind them, how is it that they should so often make their appearance when the person whom they resemble is seriously ill or dying; or if, as sometimes happens, the figure is unrecognised, how does it come about that the same figure is often seen by others, either simultaneously, or at different times in the same house? Now if we accept the broad facts, that is, if we believe that not only in the five or six cases quoted in the last chapter, but in the hundreds of other equally well-attested cases published of recent years, there was an hallucinatory figure seen, and that the vision really came within a short time of a death or illness, or was really repeated within

the experience of some other person or persons—if we accept this statement of the case, there are obviously only two explanations. Either hallucinations of this kind are so common that we might reasonably expect to find such a number of coincidences, or there is some common cause for the coincidences. If we find two persons in the same neighbourhood reading a book by Miss Marie Corelli, we shall probably be justified in attributing the coincidence to chance, the mere caprice of Mudie's agent. But if we find the two persons reading Basil Valentine, his *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*, we can hardly suppose the coincidence to be accidental. The question which we have to determine is whether hallucinations are relatively as common as novels by Marie Corelli, or relatively as rare as mediæval works on Alchemy. That is a question of fact, and can only be answered by actual statistics.

But even if we find that hallucinations are of sufficiently rare occurrence to make the coincidence of a hallucination with a death or any other event extremely improbable, it may be urged that there is not sufficient ground for inferring a causal connection between the two events. The mere fact that most persons who have experienced these hallucinations believe in such a connection has not really much to say in the matter. For most persons have been used to thinking of these apparitions as ghosts, and we have seen that they are not ghosts. But we should not be deterred from seeking for a causal connection between the two events because it is not immediately obvious. Our ancestors saw no connection between imperfect drainage and typhoid fever; and the connection, in the last generation, between the rare visits of a steamer to St. Kilda and an epidemic of catarrh on the island was for long a matter of popular observation before it was accepted by medical science.

But the search for a cause may well be deferred until we have some reasonable grounds for thinking

that any cause is indicated other than the fallacy of human testimony. In a scientific enquiry the first step is to ascertain the facts. It so happens that, whilst the hallucinations of madness and disease have for long attracted the attention of medical men, no serious study had, until recently, been made of hallucinations occurring in normal life. Indeed, by most persons, medical men and others, until a generation ago, the occurrence of a hallucination would in itself have been held to indicate serious disturbance of health. But the study of Hypnotism, and the work of the Society for Psychical Research, presently to be described, have shown us that such is not the case. A hallucination is no doubt in the strictest sense a pathological event, but it is no more serious, if somewhat rarer, than a toothache or such a mild attack of cramp as most persons occasionally experience. It has indeed been aptly defined as a cramp of the mind. In 1887 the late Professor Sidgwick, at the instance of the Congress of Experimental Psychology, which met in Paris in that year, undertook to institute an enquiry into the nature and distribution of spontaneous hallucinations of the sane. He was assisted by a committee of the Society for Psychical Research and a large staff of voluntary workers, who were all carefully instructed in their duties. By these means the following question was put to 17,000 persons, mostly residents of the United Kingdom—"Have you ever, when believing yourself to be completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a living being or an inanimate object, or of hearing a voice, which impression, so far as you could discover, was not due to any external physical cause?"

The results showed that 655 out of 8,372 men, and 1,029 out of 8,628 women—9·9 per cent out of the whole number—had experienced a sensory hallucination at some time in their lives, many more than once. Of the total number of hallucinations about two-thirds affected the sense of sight. The table on

VISUAL HALLUCINATIONS DIVIDED ACCORDING TO DATES.

	Within the Last 10 Years										Totals	More than 10 years ago	Undated	Totals
	Number of Years Ago													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
Realistic human apparitions of living persons	35	19	15	13	15	13	17	12	8	10	157	166	29	352
"    "    "    of dead persons	12	10	7	1	7	6	6	2	8	3	62	85	16	163
"    "    "    unrecognised ...	17	16	12	17	17	13	11	10	5	8	126	140	49	315
Incompletely developed apparitions ...	13	8	7	1	9	5	1	3	3	10	60	74	9	143
Visions ...	1	—	2	3	—	—	—	1	1	—	8	10	3	21
Angels and religious apparitions or visions ...	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	5	3	12
Apparitions, grotesque, horrible, or monstrous	1	—	1	1	—	—	2	1	—	—	6	24	3	33
"    of animals ...	3	—	2	2	—	2	3	—	—	—	12	7	6	25
"    of definite inanimate objects ...	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	5	6	3	14
"    of lights ...	—	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	—	12	4	1	17
"    of indefinite objects ...	—	2	2	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	8	8	1	17
Totals ...	87	57	47	39	55	44	42	29	28	32	460	529	123	1112

GHOSTS AS HALLUCINATIONS

NOTE.—The dates in this Table are reckoned according to the interval between the experience and the time when the percipient answered the Census question.

page 33 gives an analysis of the nature of those visions and their distribution in time.\*

It will be observed that the great majority of the visual hallucinations take the form of realistic human figures; in fact, other forms are so few as to be almost negligible. The most important point, evidentially, to be deduced from the table is that these hallucinations, impressive though they no doubt were at the time, tend to be soon forgotten. The apparitions during the first year are more numerous than in any previous year.† There is a drop in the second year, and a still greater drop in the other years of the decade, but a distinct rise in the fifth and tenth year. This rise is, again, an indication that the figures are not wholly trustworthy—"five years ago" and "ten years ago" have no doubt been given as round numbers. Once more, the average age of the percipients was forty, and they were asked for accounts of all experiences since the age of ten. If all hallucinations were remembered the figures in the column "more than ten years ago" ought therefore to be double those in the previous column. In fact, they are only 15 per cent higher. After a careful consideration of all the circumstances, the Committee estimated that, to arrive at the actual total of visual hallucinations experienced by this group of 17,000 persons during the period in question, the numbers in the table should be multiplied by four.

We have now to consider whether hallucinations of this kind are sufficiently frequent to justify the assumption that their coincidence—say with a death, being a unique event in each man's experience—is due to chance alone.

If in the table we take only the recognised and realistic apparitions of the human figure, and subtract all doubtful cases, i.e., cases where it seems possible

\* About three-hundred cases in which details of the visions could only be obtained at second-hand are omitted from the table.

† A closer analysis of the figures revealed that the most recent quarter and month showed greater productiveness than the other quarters and months.

that the figure seen may have been that of a real man or woman, and all cases where the percipient had had more than one similar experience, we find that we have 322 cases to deal with. Multiplied by 4, these amount to 1,288, or in round numbers 1,300. But of the 322 we find 62\* are reported to have coincided with a death, i.e. to have occurred within twelve hours, on one side or other, of the death of the person represented. Now of the 62 death coincidences, 11 are reported as occurring in the previous ten years, and 51 before that date. The average age of the narrators of death coincidences is forty-six (that of our informants generally being only forty), so that, as experiences under ten years of age are excluded, there are twenty-six years included in the remoter period. If 11 experiences occur in 10 years, we should look for 29 at most in the remaining 26 years—we find 51! So far from being forgotten, the hallucinations coinciding with death appear to be remembered too well. It is clear that, as the experience recedes into the past, the closeness of the coincidence is apt to be magnified, or the narrative in some other way unconsciously improved. After making liberal allowance for this unconscious exaggeration, and for another disturbing cause—the possible influence of selection on the results†—the probable number of death coincidences is reduced by the Committee to 30.

\* Actually 65, but three of the cases are strongly suspected of having been "imported" into the census, i.e., the persons who collected the answers in these three cases knew of the vision beforehand, and it is believed that but for this knowledge they would not have questioned these particular persons. These cases are therefore excluded from the calculation.

† The non-coincidental hallucinations, which are much less interesting, would probably not be known beforehand to the collector; and even if they were, the collector would not be likely to go out of his way to collect such an account. Further, apparitions at the time of death are naturally more talked about, the collectors would probably know of some such amongst their acquaintance, and unless, in recording the answers, they systematically canvassed the whole of the neighbourhood accessible to them, it is almost certain that they would yield to the temptation to "bag" a death coincidence, even though it did not, properly speaking, come within their ground. See *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. x, pp. 210 and 243.

We have, then, 30 coincidences with death in 1,300 apparitions. But the death rate for the last completed decade (1881-1890) of the period under review was 19'15, i.e., the probability that any person taken at random would die within any given 24 hours was 19'15 in 365,000—about 1 in 19,000. If there is no causal connection between the hallucination and the death, we should find but 1 coincidence in 19,000—we actually find 1 in 43.

If we accept the Committee's estimates we must, it will be seen, dismiss the explanation of chance coincidence. But the Committee's estimates may be at fault in two ways. On the one hand they may not have allowed enough for forgetfulness in ordinary cases. It is scarcely conceivable, however, the margin being so wide, that any error in this direction would appreciably affect the results. If we multiplied the total of 322 by ten, or by a hundred, we should still find the non-coincidental hallucinations too few.

But, on the other hand, we have seen that the death coincidences have been improved and exaggerated, and it may be urged that this process of embellishment may have gone to far greater lengths than is allowed for in the estimate. To adopt that explanation of the results is no doubt to assume grave inaccuracies on the part not only of the original informants, but of their friends who have furnished corroborative testimony. And we have to assume these inaccuracies in connection with an event which of all others is most calculated to leave a permanent impress on the memory. Moreover, in some cases the reports of the apparitions are supported by entries in diaries, or contemporary letters. The assumption of wholesale inaccuracy in the reports is therefore a violent and improbable one. But since we have good reason for holding that some at least of the reports are inaccurate, we cannot summarily dismiss the objection. For the present writer, indeed, it has considerable weight; it seems difficult to place any limit on the untrustworthiness of human

testimony, especially in cases where the emotions are involved, or where there is occasion for edification. And if the hallucinations alleged to coincide with death were isolated phenomena standing altogether alone in human experience, we should probably quote a hasty utterance of the Hebrew Psalmist and pass on. But since, as will be shown in later chapters, they do not stand alone, but appear to fit into a larger scheme, the reader is asked for the present to hold his judgment in suspense, until he shall have the whole of the facts before him.



## CHAPTER III

## THE PEDIGREE OF TELEPATHY

So far, we have seen reason to believe that apparitions occasionally occur at the time of a death, that these apparitions are not ghosts but hallucinations, and that they occur so frequently as to render it, if not practically certain, at least a matter of high probability that they are in some way connected with the death.

Now a hallucination being a product of thought, a kind of waking dream, we have next to enquire how a dying, or perhaps a dead man, can affect another man's thought and make him dream a dream. On this point science has no explanation to offer. The facts already cited, and other kindred facts which will be considered in a later chapter, clearly indicate such a possibility, and the hypothetical process has been named Thought Transference or Telepathy (from Greek *tele*, at a distance, and *pathos*, feeling). But the name is not explanatory; it is, like Gravitation, a name for an observed or presumed process of which no clear conception has yet been formed. The theory of gravitation simply expresses the observed fact, that all bodies in the Universe exercise a certain pull upon each other, or rather act as if they exercised such a pull. Newton measured the pull, but did not explain it.

The theory of Telepathy simply collects into one generalisation a number of observations, tending to shew that under certain conditions not yet understood a human mind or brain can act upon another mind or brain by means of which we are as yet ignorant. Just as there are theories which essay to explain the action of gravitation in accordance with

what we know or guess of the physical construction of the Universe, so it has been suggested that the action of Telepathy may consist in the transfer of molecular disturbance from one brain to another by means of ethereal vibrations. We know, or perhaps it should rather be said, we infer, that there are molecular changes in brain cells corresponding to all acts of thinking or feeling; we know, too, that there are gaps in the scale of ethereal vibrations; and there is nothing to forbid the supposition that one or other of these gaps may hereafter be found to be filled by undulations competent to convey intelligence from one brain to another.\*

But beyond this there are no facts to go upon; the theory of Telepathy is as much in the air as the theory of gravitation itself, and it need scarcely be said, is immensely inferior to it in the breadth and security of its basis. Even with this qualification, to compare Telepathy, a humble postulant for scientific recognition, with the great generalisation which is the chief glory of modern science may seem almost an impertinence; but, in fact, the two theories are closely related, though Telepathy, it must be admitted, figures at present as a very poor relation. For the conception of an inexplicable force linking the stars together, and the conception of an inexplicable force linking men and women to each other are in their origin but different aspects of the same primitive idea. Both alike proceed from astrology; the Chaldean astronomers, gazing at the stars from their Babel-towers, conceived the idea of a subtle influence binding together all the heavenly bodies and directing their wanderings. It was but a short step to suppose that these same influences which radiated from star to star affected also the dwellers upon earth. The belief in these starry influences as affecting the affairs of men persisted through the Middle Ages and almost into modern times. Van

\* See Sir William Crookes's presidential address to the British Association, September, 1898.

Helmont, one of the most distinguished physicians and chemists of his day, whose life overlapped by a year or two that of Sir Isaac Newton, took the facts of astrology as beyond controversy. "Ye grant," he says in one of his polemical writings, "that material nature doth daily draw down Forces by its magnetism from the superior orbs, and much desire the favour of the celestial bodies, and that the Heavens do in exchange invisibly allure something from the inferior bodies, that there may be a free and mutual passage and a harmonious concord of the members with the whole Universe." \*

And some even of Van Helmont's successors found specific illustrations of this reciprocal influence between all things in the universe in the relation between physician and patient, between disease and health-giving drugs, and between witch and victim. As star could influence star across the void, so herbs and gems could heal disease at a distance. The wise physician could read the thoughts of his patient from afar, and the witch, a kind of malefic star, could project her baleful influence on her fellows. By like means spirits could read the thoughts of those who questioned them, and in this power to read thoughts the Mediæval Church found the surest test of the presence of a demon in the patient.

In a word, this belief in unseen mental influences is probably as old as the earliest civilisation of which we have any records. At the present day the belief in similar processes, whether of reading the thoughts of other men, or of obtaining information from direct communion with the natural world, or of inflicting disease or death by the mere act of will, is found in many uncivilized races. The person exercising the power usually passes into a kind of self-induced trance or delirium, apparently like that of the Pythian priestess, who chanted oracles to the ancient Greeks. Two or three instances may be cited from recent records.

\* *Works*, London, 1644, p. 762.

Mr. Robert Augear, writing in August, 1894, from Thursday Island, Torres Straits, relates a case told him by a native named Ganna, whom he regarded as thoroughly trustworthy. When working in the Fiji Islands one of Ganna's companions from a totally different part of the South Seas was taken ill with dysentery, and talked freely in delirium; "but it was not his voice that was speaking, it was in his belly he was talking." In this state he told Ganna many particulars about his people at home and of the death of some of his acquaintance, all of which news Ganna afterwards found to be true.\*

Dr. Isaac Heysinger, of Philadelphia, contributes a remarkable account of Esquimaux Anticoot (Angekok) which he had received from Robert Ferguson, of New Bedford, at one time a harpooner on a whaling ship. Ferguson spent the winter of 1878-9 on Marble Island, in the north of Hudson's Bay. On the 14th March, 1879, a party of Esquimaux left Marble Island to hunt on the floes for seals and walrus. As after some days' absence they had not returned, a native undertook to make Anticoot, and in a state of apparent trance professed to see the party, and to learn from them what had happened. In effect, his statements that they were all alive, that they had been carried away by the breaking up of the floe, that they had eaten their dogs and their shoes, that their cheeks were cracked by the frost, and that one of them whom he named would return first alone, were all verified a few days later.†

Again, Dr. Andrew Felkin relates that, when he was at Lago with Emin Pasha, a native M'logo or wizard professed one night to have travelled to Meschera-er-Rek, 550 miles down the river, and to have there seen two steamers, one of them bringing mails for the party, commanded by an Englishman,

\* Journal for the Society for Psychical Research, June, 1896, p. 274.

† Journal of the American S.P.R., January, 1909. Ferguson's statement was written in 1902.

a short man with a big beard (Lupton Bey). The wizard added that the Englishman would arrive in about thirty days; in fact he came thirty-two days later, and Dr. Felkin expresses himself wholly unable to explain whence the wizard could have derived his information.\*

Isolated narratives of this kind can hardly be accepted as evidence for the actual exercise amongst savage races of supernormal powers of acquiring information; but they are evidence of a wide-spread belief in such powers, and the existence of such a belief, and of facts which are interpreted as supporting it, has clearly some bearing on the question of the existence of similar powers amongst civilized races of the present day. It so happens that there is a large amount of evidence for the existence in modern times of a similar faculty of clear-seeing in a state of trance. There is, however, a notable difference in the conditions. In the earlier historical records, as amongst uncivilized races at the present day, the trance seems generally to be spontaneous or self-induced. In recent times, the faculty of clear-seeing or Clairvoyance has been observed chiefly in the induced Somnambulic trance, what is commonly known as the Hypnotic or Mesmeric state. The fact that the trance was generally induced by an educated observer offered, of course, excellent opportunities for the careful observation and record of the phenomena. Unfortunately, for reasons which we need not here stay to discuss, the earlier writers on Animal Magnetism and Mesmerism were for the most part in too great a hurry to take the necessary precautions for guarding against mistake or deception. The older evidence is therefore more notable for its quantity than its quality, and the faculty appears to be in itself of such rare occurrence as to

\* *From Khartoum to the Sources of the Nile*, Wide World Magazine, 1898, p. 361. Some further references to trance-divination amongst savage races will be found quoted in Mr. Lang's *Making of Religion* (1898) in the chapter headed "Opening the Gates of Distance," the Zulu name for what is commonly called Clairvoyance.

make us regret the more these lost opportunities. Instances of the faculty have, however, occasionally been observed under favourable conditions by recent students. The following case, recorded by Dr. Quackenbos, a well-known writer on Hypnotism who has made extensive use of hypnotic methods in his own practice, may be cited as evidence of the existence in our own day of the faculty of clear-seeing or Clairvoyance in the trance.

No. 8.—From Dr. Quackenbos.

[Anna Fortwanger, 23 years of age, a peasant girl of Southern Germany, ignorant of English, was brought in November, 1904, to the author's office in New York by her employer, who was at the time a member of the English S.P.R.]

The girl's master then and there threw her into a hypnotic sleep, the genuineness of which was tested by various methods. The girl was then directed to proceed ('in the Spirit,' that is) out of the room, to pass up two flights of stairs, to enter a large front room with an alcove in it, and to describe what she saw there. Neither the girl nor her employer had ever been in the house before.

The directions and the questions were all put in German by the hypnotiser, and the answers were of course also in that language.]

"I. What do you see?—'A round table with books on it.'

"(The table stood in front of the door, and would naturally attract immediate attention.)

"II. What else do you see?—'A large picture of a lady on the wall.'

"(My wife has an engraving of a Raphael Madonna over the mantel, and three other pictures.)

"Describe them.\*—'One is a picture of a horse.'

"(This answer I regarded as an error; but a subsequent inspection of the room disclosed on the mantel shelf, under the Madonna, a small photograph of one of my horses, sent to the house a day or two before, and placed there inadvertently by my wife.)

"III. What else do you see?—'Seven chairs.'

"(No member of the family was aware that there were so many chairs in the room.)

"IV. Is there anything else in the room you would like to speak of?—'Yes, a bed with a little darling.'

"Do you mean a doll?—'No, a real live darling.'

\* It is not expressly stated that the clairvoyant had mentioned the existence of other pictures; probably the conversation is not narrated *verbatim*.

"Describe her.—'She has light hair, and is pretty.'

"How old would you say she is?—'Eight years.'

"(The exact age of my little daughter Kathryn, who was asleep in the alcove.)

"Witness: John H. Thompson, Jr., Old Bridge, New Jersey.

"At a second seance the same fall there were present Mrs. Jordan L. Mott, Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Miss Evelina S. Hamilton, Mr. William S. Walsh, of the *New York Herald*, Mrs. Leslie Cotton, the portrait painter. A room on the second floor was selected for the experiment, which again was a *terra incognita* both to operator and subject. The questions were put:

"What do you see?—'A bed.'

"What is on the bed?—'A folded quilt.'

"What is on the quilt?—'A fox.'

"(I had placed a folded comforter on the bed as a support for a fox-skin with a stuffed head, which I fancied would engage Anna's subjective attention—and it did. She is quick to perceive animals.)

"What else do you see?—'A picture of a man and a picture of a woman.'

"Where?—'On the wall beside the bed.'

"(Pictures of George and Martha Washington, in colour, hung on that wall, above the headboard.)

"What else?—'A commode with round drawers.'

"(Quite an original description of an old mahogany bureau with drawers conspicuously convexed.)

"What else?—'A green flower.'

"(I had placed an araucaria on a stand near the centre of the room.)

"Any other pictures?—'Yes, many large ones.'

"(The walls were covered.)

"Do you see one over the mantel?—'Yes.'

"What do you see in it?—'A poodle hund.'

"(There is in the foreground of the painting a man returning from the hunt, with a gun on his shoulder and a spaniel trotting by his side. The animal appealed to Anna at once.)

"The same subject gave other proofs of clairvoyance or mind-reading."<sup>\*</sup>

Another wide world method of Divination is by means of crystal gazing. Traces of the practice are said to be found in ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia. It was certainly well-known in classical times, and persisted through the ages down as far as our own Dr. Dee in the seventeenth century.

\* *Hypnotic Therapeutics* by John Duncan Quackenbos, A. M., M. D., 1908.

The art of crystal gazing is perhaps as old as civilisation itself, and its range in space is as extensive as in time, for the practice is found at the present day amongst savage races in all quarters of the world. A practice thus almost universal must needs have some natural justification. In fact the physiological effect of the crystal, mirror, water, or other shining surface (for various substances have been used in this form of divination) is still rather obscure, but it unquestionably tends, in many persons, to produce a state of reverie, not infrequently passing over into actual trance, which is peculiarly favourable for the production of day dreams. The visions seen in the crystal are no doubt really seen "in the mind's eye," but are referred to the crystal because of the inevitable tendency to refer to the external world any percept having a sensory quality. The crystal visions are, in short, rudimentary or half developed hallucinations, and the use of a crystal is simply a convenient method for inducing the appropriate mental state.

Mr. Andrew Lang and the late F. W. H. Myers have persuaded many persons to revive this ancient art, and it is found that the power to see visions in a crystal is by no means rare. Most of these visions are, of course, like ordinary dreams, mere fragmentary memories, but it sometimes happens that a crystal reflects to the eyes of the seer not his own thoughts but the thoughts of another. Here is an instance in point quoted by Mr. Lang. Miss Angus (assumed name) is one of many ladies who have been persuaded by Mr. Lang to try the crystal. The following incident, which took place in March, 1897, was told by her to Mr. Lang in June of the same year. Later, she wrote the account of it as follows :

No. 9.—From Miss Angus.

"Shortly after I became the happy possessor of a crystal, I managed to convert several very decided sceptics ; one was a Mr.—— who was so determined to baffle me, he said he would think of a friend it would not be possible for me to describe. I



had only met Mr. — the day before and knew almost nothing about him or his personal friends. I took up the ball, which immediately became misty, and out of this mist, gradually, a crowd of people appeared, but too indistinctly for me to recognise anyone, until suddenly a man on horse-back came galloping along. I remember saying, 'I can't describe what he is like, but he is dressed in a very queer way, in something so bright that the sun shining on him quite dazzles me and I can't make him out.' As he came nearer I exclaimed 'Why, it's a soldier in shining armour, but it's not an officer, only a soldier.' Two friends who were in the room said Mr. —'s excitement was intense, and my attention was called from the ball by hearing him call out 'It's wonderful. It's perfectly true. I was thinking of a young boy, the son of a crofter, in whom I am deeply interested, and who is a trooper in the — in London, which would account for the crowd of people-round him in the street.'"

Mr. — writes under date 2nd December, 1897 :

"I fixed my mind upon a friend, a young trooper in the (regiment named), as I thought his would be a striking and peculiar personality owing to his uniform, and also that I felt sure that Miss Angus could not possibly know of his existence. I fixed my mind steadily on my friend and presently Miss Angus, who had already seen two cloudy visions of people, called out, 'Now I see a man on a horse most distinctly; he is dressed most queerly and glitters all over; why it's a soldier, a soldier in uniform, but it's not an officer.' My excitement on hearing this was so great that I ceased to concentrate my mind on the thought of my friend, and the vision faded away and could not afterwards be recalled."\*

We have record of a case in which the wife of a railway guard, when about to drink a glass of water one night, saw in the shining surface the picture of a railway accident, a picture which was actually present to her husband's eyes at about the same time.†

The recent records of crystal vision assuredly help to explain the esteem in which the crystal was held by old time diviners.

\* *The Making of Religion* by Andrew Lang, pp. 99-101.

† *Journal*, S.P.R., December, 1903. Many other records of apparently telepathic visions in the crystal will be found in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, in Mr. Lang's *Making of Religion* and other works, and in Miss Goodrich Freer's *Essays in Psychical Research*.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE EXPERIMENTAL BASIS

TELEPATHY is, of course, still on its trial, and it may be doubted whether the facts considered in the last chapter add more to the case for the claimant than they take away from it; for the argument *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, is a two-edged weapon. A universal belief may be firmly based upon accurate observation and sound inference from universal facts. On the other hand, as the natural history of humanity shews, a universal belief in the earliest stages of culture frequently derives much of its strength from an erroneous, or at least an imperfect, interpretation of natural phenomena; whilst at a later stage the existence of a belief is a most potent factor in the creation of its own evidence. In the particular field which we are now investigating the universal belief owes its creative potency to the fact that it works for the most part unconsciously. Much of the so-called evidence for divination in the past and for telepathy in the present is unquestionably worthless, and some of it presents all the appearance of a manufactured article. Deliberate fraud, whether of savage medicine man or of civilized medium, is no doubt frequently responsible for the results, but it would be a mistake to attribute all, or most, of the evidence to deliberate fraud. It is fatally easy, as has already been shewn, to misinterpret the data of the senses, and to embellish the picture preserved in the memory; and if we have a ready made mould handed down from a long line of ancestors and sanctioned by sacred usage, there is grave danger that the crude facts of sense will be poured into the mould and emerge duly

fashioned on the time honoured pattern. And it is easy to leave out any angular fact which won't be poured in.

On the whole, then, the suspicion and dislike of telepathy which still linger in scientific circles are natural and not altogether unreasonable. The hypothesis would be more likely to find a welcome if it came as a complete stranger; it is too well-known, if not always to the police, at least to the anthropologist. We cannot therefore rely on the testimony of the past. If we desire to prove the existence of mental suggestion, we must seek our evidence from living men and women, and that brings us to a further difficulty.

In the last chapter the theory of telepathy was likened to the theory of gravitation in that neither can be explained, that is, fitted into the general scheme of things. But if a man is inclined to doubt the truth of the theory of gravitation, he has only to weigh the moon, hang a plumb line before the steep face of Schiehallion, or spend a few hours in the nearest physical laboratory. The force of gravity, whatever it may be, acts at all times and in all things. Now what we have called telepathy appears to act most readily in moments of some emotional crisis, that is spontaneously; it can indeed be reproduced experimentally, but the persons who exhibit the faculty in any considerable degree are rare. Trained investigators who have the leisure to investigate are also rare; and the conjunction of the two must be an event rarer still. Notwithstanding these difficulties the experimental evidence would in most other subjects of inquiry be held amply sufficient to prove the thesis. That it is not at present held sufficient by scientific men generally, and that telepathy is, as already said, still on its trial, is due to the fact that we cannot explain its operation, cannot shew the general laws under which it works, cannot, in a word, fit it into the scheme of the Universe.

An illustration may be taken from the field of the

physical sciences. Stones have been falling from the sky since the beginning of time, but the stories of falling stones were, until recently, treated much as ghost stories are treated now, welcomed by vulgar, rejected, or at least not accepted, by scientific opinion. If falling stones are now universally credited, it is not because intelligent witnesses have seen them fall, nor even because we have actual specimens of them in our museums. If there was nothing more to be said on the matter, the mass of scientific men would probably still listen to reports of falling stones as they now listen to tales of ghosts and sea serpents. Science has no use for isolated facts. Falling stones are believed in because they are seen to fit in with what is known from other sources of the constitution of the Universe outside our planet. We know that there are countless small bodies, fragments of worlds destroyed, or dust of worlds unmade, which are flying through space round the sun, and that when any of these bodies come within the earth's attraction they are either burnt up as meteors and falling stars or reach the earth as aerolites. If further evidence is needed we find it in their chemical composition; for though no new element is found in siderolites and aerolites, these bodies are so like each other and so unlike any other stones in the earth's surface as to make their common nature certain and their extra-terrestrial origin plausible. Now we who have made successful experiments in telepathy are in the case of those persons a century ago who had seen stones fall from the sky. If it is retorted on us, as it was retorted on those earlier observers, that there are no stones in the sky, and therefore no stones can fall upon the earth, we can only reply, "We have seen what we have seen." We can indeed go on to point out that our falling stones appear to be akin to those meteors of the mind, Ghosts and Clairvoyant visions. But until we can arrange and catalogue our facts under the general laws of the microcosm man, as these other facts are arranged and catalogued

under the general laws of the larger cosmos, we can get no nearer to recognition. Our meteors and our aerolites belong, perhaps, to the same category, but to explain one by the other is to explain the dubious by the aid of the unknown. The present attitude of official science to our facts is therefore natural if not wholly justifiable. It may be claimed, indeed, that of late years the suspicion with which the subject was at one time almost universally regarded has considerably lessened, that greater hospitality by a much larger circle of intelligent men is shewn to the new views. But further, more prolonged, and more varied experiments are needed to the end that we may ultimately succeed in establishing the theory by shewing the laws under which the assumed new force operates, and its relations with other facts in physics and psychology.

Owing chiefly to the lack of good subjects readily available for the purpose, few prolonged records of successful experiments can be cited. The most important series conducted under expert guidance is that undertaken by Mrs. Sidgwick in the years 1889-1891, in conjunction with the late Professor Henry Sidgwick and Miss Alice Johnson. The percipients were several young clerks and shop assistants. They were hypnotised during the progress of the experiment, the operator being Mr. G. A. Smith. As the object was to obtain definite proof of the possibility of the transmission of ideas from one mind to another without the intervention of the senses, the experiments were made as simple as possible. For the main series counters belonging to a game called Lotto were employed, the counters being numbered consecutively from 10 to 90. The 81 counters would be placed in a bag and one would be drawn from the bag by one of the experimenters and handed to Mr. Smith, who would concentrate his attention upon it. After a short interval the percipient would give his impression aloud. In the earlier experiments, where Mr. Smith and the

percipient were in the same room, within a few feet of each other, the number of successful guesses made by some of the percipients was extraordinarily large. Thus in 617 trials with the young men P. and T. the exact number was given 113 times, the most probable number by chance being 8. This result could not, of course, have been due to chance. The conditions of the experiment were rigid, and it is certain that the percipient could not have gained any information by sight or touch. The one avenue of communication which ~~is~~ is impossible absolutely to close when the parties to the experiment are within a few feet of each other is, of course, hearing. The experimenters were thoroughly familiar with the ordinary possibilities of codes. They had previous experience in detecting tricks of the kind, and, even if those concerned would have been willing to lend themselves to trickery, it seems certain that no trickery could have been employed which would have escaped the vigilance of the investigators during the months over which the experiments extended. No suspicious sounds were audible to those who conducted the experiments; but it is well known that hypnotic subjects frequently exhibit amazing acuteness of hearing, and if Mr. Smith had unconsciously muttered the numbers it is conceivable that the hyperæsthetic organs of the subject might have caught sounds too faint to reach the ears of those who stood close to him. That no movements were observed in Mr. Smith's lips and throat would not negative this supposition, since it is possible, even with closed lips, to produce audible sounds.

But if the correct guesses were due to hearing, the incorrect guesses would presumably shew traces of imperfect hearing. If a digit were sub-consciously whispered, it would be liable to be mistaken for another of similar sound, *six* for *seven* because of the sibilant "s," *five* for *four* because of the initial "f," or for *nine* because of the long vowel, and so on. If the numbers were sub-consciously counted by the agent

the incorrect guesses would tend to fall with disproportionate frequency on the numbers next above or below in the series. In fact, a careful analysis of the incorrect guesses, made by Professor Sidgwick, reveals no such tendency. The incorrect guesses are distributed at haphazard over the whole series of numbers. This fact in itself is almost sufficient to disprove the hypothesis of auditory signals of any kind.\*

Nevertheless, to secure results free from all suspicion a further series of experiments was instituted, in which agent and percipient were placed in different rooms. Of the two previous percipients P. alone was successful when a closed door intervened between him and Mr. Smith. In 91 trials made under such conditions he gave the number correctly five times and the first digit alone eighteen

\* The only serious criticism of these earlier results is contained in an article by Messrs. Hansen and Lehmann, of Copenhagen, published some ten years ago (*Wundt's Phil. Studien*, vol. xi, pt. 4). The authors show that it is possible for information to be conveyed from one person to another by whispering with *closed lips*—a possibility of which the experimenters in 1889 were not aware. Messrs. Lehmann and Hansen made a series of experiments in the transference of numbers under these conditions, the one acting as "agent," the other as "percipient." As a substitute for the hyperæsthesia commonly found in hypnotised subjects, the Danish experimenters placed their heads in the foci of two concave spherical mirrors, the distance between the foci being two meters. Under these conditions they attained considerable success. They argued, further, that their failures showed such remarkable correspondence with the failures in the Sidgwick experiments as to suggest a common cause for the two sets of results. Professor Sidgwick (*Proceedings*, vol. xii, pp. 298-315) has examined very closely the arguments of the Danish investigators. The question of unconscious whispering, he points out, had been expressly considered, and the reasons for believing that it had not operated given in full. The attempt of the Danish investigators to show a correspondence between the results obtained by them and those obtained by the S.P.R. investigators breaks down. As a matter of fact the correspondences are not more numerous than those obtained by pure chance. Professor Lehmann himself has since admitted the force of Sidgwick's counter-argument, and agrees that his theory is not yet established (see his letter to Professor W. James, quoted in the *Journal*, S.P.R., 1899, p. 115). In any case it must be admitted that it would be extremely difficult to explain by a combination of unconscious whispering and hyperæsthesia of hearing the results quoted below, in which agent and percipient were in different rooms, with door or ceiling intervening. No one, so far as I am aware, has seriously attempted to controvert this later evidence.

times. Another percipient, Miss B., shewed still more remarkable faculty. In 252 trials Miss B. guessed the number correctly twenty-seven times, a result, of course, far beyond the possibilities of chance. In these trials Mr. Smith was sometimes in a room below the percipient, sometimes in a room above her, sometimes in the passage outside with Miss Johnson sitting between him and the closed door, the distance between him and Miss B. varying from 10 to 17 feet. When under the same conditions P. or T. joined Mr. Smith as agent a much higher proportion of successful guesses resulted, viz., nine out of 53 trials. With P. and T. alone acting as agents Miss B. guessed rightly three times in 28 trials.

It seems scarcely possible to attribute these results to hearing, with whatever degree of hyperæsthesia we may credit Miss B.; but it should be mentioned that a further series of 400 trials, in which Miss B. was separated from the agent by two closed doors instead of one, or was placed in a different building, yielded practically no success. In an experiment depending upon purely physical conditions we should, no doubt, be justified after such a failure in inferring that the results were directly affected by the distance or the intervening obstacles, and were therefore due to some mechanical cause which had escaped the attention of the observer. But in this investigation we have, of course, to deal with very delicate living machinery, and it seems not improbable that the obstacle in these later trials was not the second closed door, but Miss B.'s weariness, or the more tedious nature of the experiments themselves owing to the difficulty of communication between the experimenters, or Miss B.'s pre-conceived belief that under such stringent conditions she must fail. A self-suggestion of the kind, as is well known, may be all powerful with hypnotised persons.\* For since

\* There are many indications that the fatigue and ennui of the percipient are liable to exercise a prejudicial effect upon the results. Thus,



there are numerous later experiments in which ideas have apparently been conveyed telepathically a much greater distance, a distance in some cases measured by hundreds of miles, it seems incredible that the slight alteration in the physical conditions can really have had anything to do with the success. But the circumstance will serve to illustrate the difficulties attending experimental investigation in these obscure psychological by-paths.

With a view to studying more closely the nature and development of the impressions received by the percipients, Mrs. Sidgwick and Miss Alice Johnson devised a further series of experiments with the same percipients in the transference of mental pictures. The subject of the experiment was chosen by one of the experimenters and communicated in writing to Mr. Smith; the other experimenter, who was as a rule left in ignorance of the subject chosen, would sit near the percipient and question him. All remarks made, whether by Mr. Smith or the experimenter, were carefully recorded. In one case only, the subject being an eagle pursuing a sparrow, was complete success obtained when Mr. Smith was out of the room, but the intervention of a screen between agent and percipient does not seem materially to have affected the results. In any case, as will be seen, it would have been extremely difficult for the agent to have conveyed the idea to the percipient, especially as the percipient's impressions were all of a visual nature. The percipient was always hypnotised and was given a blank card on which he was told to see a picture; the blank card apparently acted the part of a crystal in assisting to externalise the impression.

as Mrs. Sidgwick points out, the later trials with P. and T. in 1899 with Mr. Smith in the same room and with no variation of the conditions were very unsuccessful (*Proceedings, S.P.R.*, vol. viii, p. 567). The later experiments with Madame B., referred to below, shewed a much smaller proportion of successes, though again there was no material alteration in the conditions. But it is not unlikely that fatigue and ennui on the part of the experimenter, especially when, as in the last named case, the experimenter was also the agent, may have had something to do with the result.

The first experiments were made with Miss B., and one of the earliest trials is interesting as shewing the emergence of a belated impression. At the outset of the experiment Mr. Smith sat behind a screen.

No. 4. Subject, *a Christy Minstrel with a banjo* (chosen by Mrs. Sidgwick who took the notes). Miss B. said: "There's something long, something round in that one—a little cage of some sort—something that looks like a cage; yet there's something like a handle. A can! oh, it's a can! It's quite clear now." We then gave her a fresh card, and Mr. Smith moved round from behind the screen and sat close to her, still without speaking.

No. 5. The same subject (continued). Miss B. said: "Something here dark—a hand." Mrs. Sidgwick: "Is it a woman's hand or a man's?" Miss B.: "A black hand." This seemed to be a partial success.

Mr. Smith then woke Miss B. up to ask her when she had to go, but finding that there was a little time to spare, rehypnotised her, and tried another subject.

No. 6. *A sailing boat on the sea*. Mr. Smith sat behind the screen. Presently Miss B. said: "A man—black.—He's got something in his hand—an instrument—sort of guitar thing." As we had not spoken about the Christy Minstrel and banjo, this tardy emergence of the idea when Mr. Smith was thinking of something else, and after awaking and rehypnotisation, was interesting.

An experiment with another subject, Whybrew, shows the gradual emergence of the picture, as in some crystal visions, from a confused shadow.

No. 77. Subject, *A man riding*. Mr. Smith downstairs with Miss Johnson; Whybrew, upstairs with Mrs. Sidgwick, said, after some remarks on the former pictures: "There's another one—I think it's like the other two—a puzzle [to see] if I can find the picture. I hope I'll be able to see it properly. A kind of square—square shadow—blowed if I can understand what it's meant for—I don't know what to make out of that. I don't know if that's meant to be the lower part of a pair of legs. Do you see a picture?" Mrs. Sidgwick: "I see something." Whybrew: "I see them two spots, but I don't know what to make of them. If they're legs, the body ought to come.—Don't seem to come any brighter, but there's those two things there, that look like a pair of legs." Here Mr. Smith was asked to come upstairs and talk to him. He told him the picture was coming up closer and that he had turned the gas on to make it

brighter. Whybrew: "There's them pair of legs there." Mr. Smith: "Yes" (doubtfully). Whybrew: "Why, there's another. I never see that other pair before. Why, it's a horse. I expect it's like them penny pictures that you fold over. That horse—that's plain enough; but what's that other thing?" Mr. Smith: "Yes, I told you there was something else." Whybrew: "Why I see what it is now—it's supposed to be a man there, I expect." Mr. Smith: "Yes." Whybrew: "Riding him. But that ain't so good as the boy and the ball." Mrs. Sidgwick: "How is the man dressed?" Whybrew: "Ordinary."

The next three experiments were with P. The gradual development or building up of the picture is very clearly shown in No. 17. In No. 18 it will be seen that P. gets the outward form, but not the idea which it was sought to convey.

No. 17. Subject, *A sandwich man with advertisement of a play*. P. said: "Something like letter A—stroke there, then there." Mrs. Sidgwick: "Well, perhaps it will become clearer." P.: "Something like a head on the top of it; a V upside down—two legs and then a head.—A man with two boards—looks like a man that goes about the streets with two boards. I can see a head at the top and the body and legs between the boards. I couldn't see what was written on the boards, because the edges were turned towards me." Mr. Smith told us afterwards that he had pictured to himself the man and one board facing him, thus not corresponding to the impression which P. had.

No. 18. Subject, *A choir boy*. P. said: "Edge of card's going a dark colour. Somebody dressed up in white, eh? Can see something all white; edge all black, and like a figure in the middle. There's his hands up" (making a gesture to show the attitude) "like a ghost or something—you couldn't mistake it for anything but a ghost. It's not getting any better, it's fading—no it's still there. It might frighten any one." He also made remarks about the difficulty of seeing a white figure on a white card (the blank card he was looking at was white), which Mr. Smith afterwards said corresponded with his own ideas.

The last case, also with P., shows the unexpected nature of the impression.

No. 100. Subject, *A spider in the middle of its web*. Mr. Smith and Miss Johnson downstairs at first; P. with Mrs. Sidgwick upstairs. Mr. Smith drew the subject. P. had no impression. Mr. Smith came upstairs and sat behind the screen and talked to him, avoiding hints. After some time P. said: "Now I can see something—funny shape—don't know

what it is either—not quite round—octagonal in some places—lines across it—more sides than eight—some broken. If I was to compare it with anything, it would be a spider's web; but it can't be that. There would never be a picture of a spider's web."

In all 108 experiments of this kind were made with five different percipients; of these 33 were wholly or partly successful.\*

Some later experiments made by some Dutch investigators are worth quoting in this connection, as again illustrating the purely visual nature, in some cases, of the percipient's impressions, and the difficulty of interpretation owing to the absence of any scale.

From the *Dreimonatlicher Bericht des Psychophysischen Laboratoriums zu Amsterdam*. Jahrgang I. No. 3. 1907.

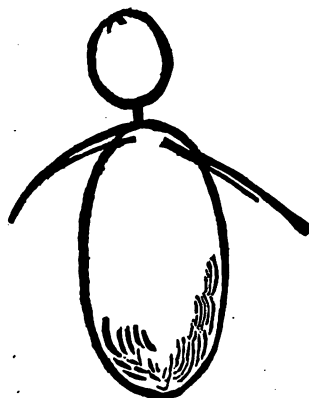
Herr F. M. Geels and Herr F. E. Visser acted alternately as agent and percipient; the experiments were conducted and the results recorded by Herr Jansen.

One of the successful experiments, which Herr Jansen records at length, was as follows:

"On the 8th of June of this year (1907), a very successful evening, on which not a single experiment failed, I gave Herr Geels, who was acting as agent, a card with the word *ape* written on it. It should be noted that this was the first occasion on which a card with the picture or the name of an animal or of any object had been given; we had hitherto confined ourselves exclusively to mathematical figures and numbers, so that there could not be the slightest expectation of the nature of the thing to be guessed. The result was as follows: After a short interval of darkness the percipient, Herr Visser, saw the figure of a large crab on the opposite wall: he said that the animal was moving its feet. After some time the picture disappeared, and there came in its place the picture of an ant: 'It is brown,' he said, 'and has long hairs, just like an ant.' (It is to be noted that, generally speaking, one would picture to oneself an ant as without hairs.) Once more the picture changed, and Herr Visser now fancied he was looking at the ant through a microscope, for it seemed enormous. At this moment time was up and the experiment ended. The result was interesting, if only because when a mathematical figure or cypher might have been expected, the picture of an animal appeared. When I asked Herr Visser to draw what he

\* *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. viii, pp. 554, seqq.

had seen; I got the accompanying figure, which in fact doesn't bear much resemblance to an ant. We see how little value must be attached to the name which the percipient gives to the picture presented to his mental vision. We were already disposed to count this experiment a success, on the ground that during the three months over which the experiments had hitherto extended, neither the name nor the picture of an animal had been set, or had occurred to the percipient, so that it seemed very improbable that the coincidence could be due to chance. But we were confirmed in our view, when we



learnt from Herr Geels, the agent, that embarrassed at the sight of the word 'ape,' and not knowing how to 'translate' it, since he had been accustomed to deal only with mathematical figures, which he could easily represent to himself, he resolved to picture to himself the big ape at the Zoological Gardens, as he had seen it standing upright against the bars of the cage. Now, if we suppose that the drawing here reproduced was made by a child,\* and if we remember that the percipient fancied that he saw his ant through a microscope and covered with long hairs, we must, I think, admit that there was a strong resemblance between the images present to the mind of agent and percipient respectively."

During the earlier part of the experiment the agent kept his hands on the back of the chair on which the percipient was seated. Later, he put his hands on the percipient's shoulders, and it was at this point that Herr Visser fancied he saw the ant through a microscope. It is difficult, as Herr Jansen says, to conceive how the idea of a large hairy animal could have been conveyed by unconscious muscular movements. Nor is it easy to see how any information could have been gained by the ears; since the Dutch words for crab (*kreeft*) and ant (*mier*) bear no resemblance to ape (*Aap*).

In the three other experiments made on the same evening the results were almost equally suggestive of imperfect *seeing* on the part of the percipient. In the second trial, the card chosen

\* In the earlier part of his paper Herr Jansen had argued that the percipient, in his endeavour to seize and interpret the image flashed on his mind from the agent, is in the position of a small child trying to draw or describe some new object,

was entirely covered with a dark-blue paper, which in a dim light showed simply as a dark colour. The percipient said that there didn't seem to be much white there—it was all dark—then he saw a large black circle, and a much smaller, thinner circle—then a steamboat—then he saw again the brown colour—he could not make out any figure—then it became somewhat lighter. At this point the time expired, and the experiment terminated.

In the third trial the design on the card consisted of twelve circles in three or four rows. The percipient—in this instance Herr Geels—said, "It is all circles crossing each other ('durcheinander,' 'door elkaar'), something like a melon."

In the fourth trial the design was a line twisted round on itself in all directions, which gave the impression of a picture of a very complicated knot. Herr Visser, the percipient, saw a figure like a capital V twining about in every direction, and constantly changing its place. In fact, as it appeared, the agent, when he looked at the figure, had specially concentrated his attention on the junctions of the lines, which in several places presented the form of a capital V.

It is noteworthy that in none of these four trials did the percipient see anything that was absolutely irrelevant or incorrect, except perhaps the steamboat in experience No. 2. But this was probably suggested by the dark colour which preceded it. In all four cases the description given by the percipient is, as Herr Jansen points out, just such as might have been given by a person who saw the actual picture under unfavourable conditions.

Experiments in telepathic communication at a distance are extremely tedious and perhaps require a higher degree of the faculty than is needed for trials at close quarters. A fair number of such cases have, however, been recorded by the Society for Psychical Research, but there is no single series at all comparable in importance to those conducted by Mrs. Sidgwick that have just been described. Perhaps the most notable are the experiments made by Professor Pierre Janet, of the Salpêtrière, and Dr. Gibert, a leading physician of Havre, in 1885-6. It happened that F. W. H. Myers was present with his brother, Dr. A. T. Myers, at some of the trials, and I subjoin their accounts, slightly abridged, of what they witnessed. The subject was Madame B. (Léonie) well-known for the studies of her in the hypnotic state published by Professor Janet, Pro-

fessor Richet, and others. The experiments took place at Havre. Mr. Myers's account is as follows :

[Madame B. was staying at the Pavillon, a house occupied by Dr. Gibert's sister, about two-thirds of a mile from Dr. Gibert's own house. After recording two cases (18 and 20) in which Madame B. was actually found sleeping on the arrival of the experimenters, but in which it seemed possible that the effect might have been caused by her catching sight of the experimenters on their way to the house, Mr. Myers continues.]

"(21) On the 22nd we all dined at M. Gibert's, and in the evening M. Gibert made another attempt to put her to sleep at a distance from his house in the Rue Séry—she being at the Pavillon, Rue de la Ferme,—and to bring her to his house by an effort of will.\* At 8.55 he retired to his study; and MM. Ochorowicz, Marillier, Janet, and A. T. Myers went to the Pavillon, and waited outside in the street, out of sight of the house. At 9.22 Dr. Myers observed Madame B. coming half-way out of the garden-gate, and again retreating. Those who saw her more closely observed that she was plainly in the somnambulant state, and was wandering about and muttering. At 9.25 she came out (with eyes persistently closed, so far as could be seen), walked quickly past MM. Janet and Marillier, without noticing them, and made for M. Gibert's house, though not by the usual or shortest route. (It appeared afterwards that the *bonne* had seen her go into the *salon* at 8.45, and issue thence asleep at 9.15; had not looked in between those times.†) She avoided lamp-posts, vehicles, etc., but crossed and recrossed the street repeatedly. No one went in front of her or spoke to her. After eight or ten minutes she grew much more uncertain in gait, and paused as though she would fall. Dr. Myers noted the moment in the Rue Faure; it was 9.35. At about 9.40 she grew bolder, and at 9.45 reached the street in front of M. Gibert's house. There she met him, but did not notice him, and walked into his house, where she rushed hurriedly from room to room on the ground-floor. M. Gibert had to take her hand before she recognised him. She then grew calm.

"M. Gibert said that from 8.55 to 9.20 he thought intently about her; from 9.20 to 9.35 he thought more feebly; at 9.35 he gave the experiment up, and began to play billiards; but in a few minutes began to will her again. It appeared that his visit to the billiard-room had coincided with her hesitation and stumbling in the street. But this coincidence may of course have been accidental."

\* It will be seen from the synopsis of experiments given below that the afternoon, and not the evening, was the time of day usually chosen.

† It was not unusual for her to sit in the *salon* in the evening, after the day's occupations were over.

THE EXPERIMENTAL BASIS

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No. of Experiment.	Date.	Operator	Hour when given	Remarks.	Success or Failure
1	1885 Oct. 8	Gibert	11.30 a.m.	She washes hands and wards off trance	?
2	" 9	do.	11.40 a.m.	Found entranced 11.45.	1
3	" 14	do.	4.15 p.m.	Found entranced 4.30: had been asleep about 15 minutes	1
4	1886 Feb. 22	Janet		She washes hands and wards off trance	?
5	" 25	do.	5 p.m.	Asleep at once	1
6	" 26	do.		Mere discomfort observed	0
7	Mar. 1	do.		do. do.	0
8	" 2	do.	3 p.m.	Found asleep at 4: has slept about an hour	1
9	" 4	do.		Will interrupted; trance coincident but incomplete	1
10	" 5	do.	5-5.10 p.m.	Found asleep a few minutes afterwards	1
11	" 6	Gibert	8 p.m.	Found asleep 8.3	1
12	" 10	do.		Success—no details	1
13	" 14	Janet	3 p.m.	Success—no details	1
14	" 16	Gibert	9 p.m.	Brings her to his house: she leaves her house a few minutes after 9	1
15	April 18	Janet		Found asleep in 10 minutes	1
16	" 19	Gibert	4 p.m.	Found asleep 4.15	1
17	" 20	do.	8 p.m.	Made to come to his house	1
18	" 21	do.	5.50 p.m.	Trance too tardy	?
19	" 21	do.	11.35 p.m.	Attempt at trance during sleep	?
20	" 22	do.	11 a.m.	Asleep 11.25; trance too tardy: count as failure	0
21	" 22	do.	9 p.m.	Comes to his house: leaves her house 9.15	1
22	" 23	Janet	4.30 p.m.	Found asleep 5.5, says she has slept since 4.30	1
23	" 24	do.	3 p.m.	Found asleep 3.30, says she has slept since 3.5	1
24	May 5	do.		Success—no details	1
25	" 6	do.		Success—no details	1



"(22) On the 23rd M. Janet lunched in our company, and retired to his own house at 4.30 (a time chosen by lot) to try and put her to sleep from there. At 5.5 we all entered the salon of the Pavillon, and found her asleep with shut eyes, but sewing vigorously (being in that stage in which movements once suggested are automatically continued). Passing into the talkative state, she said to M. Janet, 'C'est vous qui m'avez fait dormir à quatre heures et demi.' The impression as to the hour may have been a suggestion received from M. Janet's mind. We tried to make her believe that it was M. Gibert who had sent her to sleep, but she maintained that she had felt that it was M. Janet."

"(23) On April 24th the whole party chanced to meet at M. Janet's house at 3 p.m., and he then, at my suggestion, entered his study to will that Madame B. should sleep. We waited in his garden, and at 3.20 proceeded together to the Pavillon, which I entered first at 3.30, and found Madame B. profoundly sleeping over her sewing, having ceased to sew. Becoming talkative, she said to M. Janet, 'C'est vous qui m'avez commandé.' She said that she fell asleep at 3.5 p.m.

The table on page 61 gives a summary of all the trials made during the period.

In 25 trials there were, it will be seen, 18 complete and four doubtful or partial coincidences. It should be added that during the whole period of the experiments Madame B. only once fell asleep in the daytime, and twice became spontaneously entranced,—once on gazing intently at a picture by Dr. Gibert—so that there is no ground for attributing these remarkable results to chance. A further series of 35 trials made by Professor Janet with the same subject in the autumn of 1886 shewed a considerable though somewhat smaller proportion of coincidences.\*

The account given by F. W. H. Myers and his brother of what they witnessed at Havre less than a generation ago might seem to claim a place in the annals of witchcraft, or amongst ancient tales of magic; and it may seem, at first sight, unwarrantable to correlate the profound physiological effects produced in Madame B.'s organism with such apparently

\* See the article by F. W. H. Myers in *Proceedings, S.P.R.*, vol. iv, pp. 132-7; *Revue Philosophique*, August, 1886; and *Revue de l'Hypnotisme*, February, 1888.

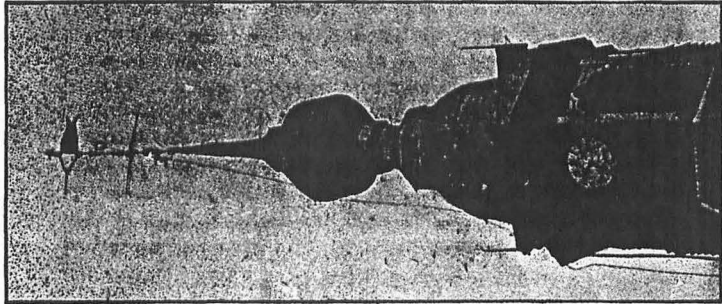
slight sensational disturbances as the telepathic production of visual images. But we should not be justified in measuring the intensity of the original stimulus by the intensity of the effect produced. A spark may fire a powder magazine; and Madame B.'s organism, like the powder magazine, was in a position of unstable equilibrium. M. Janet's early studies on psychological automatism are largely based on the phenomena found in her case. Experiments of this kind in mental suggestion at a distance are not likely to succeed with any but exceptional organisms; and, in fact, though we have other modern records of the kind, chiefly from French sources, the phenomenon is unquestionably rare.\*

Of recent experiments in telepathy at a distance the most valuable are those made by Miss Clarissa Miles and Miss Hermione Ramsden. They are too long to quote in full, but some selections from the latest series may be given as illustrations of the method.†

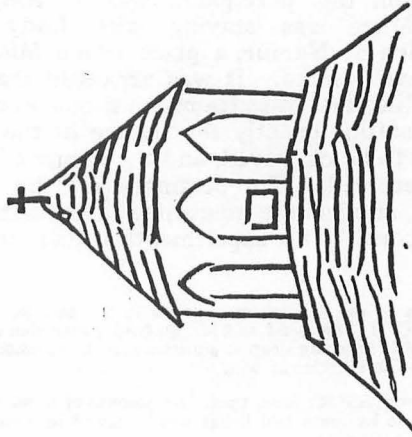
At the time of the first two experiments Miss Ramsden, the percipient, was at Kingussie, and Miss Miles was staying with Lady Guendolen Ramsden at Namur, a place which Miss Ramsden had never visited. It was arranged that each day Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden should exchange post-cards, stating exactly the nature of the impression sought to be conveyed, and the nature of the impression received. The postmark on the card is, of course, an absolute guarantee of the authenticity of the record. The experiments began on July 21st, 1907.

\* Some of the English mesmerists in the decade, 1840-50, notably the Rev. C. H. Townsend and Mr. Stafford Thompson, claimed to have succeeded in inducing sleep at a distance, or in summoning the patient to them by an exercise of will.

† *Journal*, S.P.R., June, 1908. An account of some previous experiments made by these two ladies will be found in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xxi, pp. 60 seqq.



PHOTOGRAPH OF TOWER.



EXPERIMENT I. MISS RAMSDEN'S SKETCH.

Miss Miles writes :—

EXPERIMENT I.

" Miss Ramsden on July 21st sent a sketch of a well which she had been thinking of on the 18th and 19th several times in connection with me. It will be seen that this has some resemblance to a photograph which I took from our hotel window, and part of which is here reproduced, showing a tower, which was the most conspicuous object from the hotel garden : when there, we could not look up in any direction without seeing the tower outlined against the sky ; but the weathercock and round ball beneath shown in the photograph would not be visible to us, for the garden being situated exactly at the foot of the tower, we were too much underneath it.

EXPERIMENT II.

" The following is my postcard, written on the first day that I attempted to transfer an idea to Miss Ramsden :

(a) Hotel d'Harscamp, Namur,  
July 20th [really 21st, i.e., Sunday].  
[Postmark, Namur, 22. VII. 07. 10.17.]

We went to Huy by train and spent the afternoon there. I wanted you to see the fine view of citadel. The hill beyond covered with trees, boats in foreground, and a fine bridge spanning the Meuse.  
C. M.

" (b) Miss Ramsden's next postcard, written from Ardverikie, Kingussie, has the postmark ' Kingussie, 12.45 p.m. Jy. 23. 07,' and has nothing on it except the sketch here reproduced. Miss Ramsden adds later :

This was seen as a hypnagogic illusion just before going to sleep [i.e., on Sunday]. I drew this on Monday [22nd] after the post had gone (8 a.m.). That is why it was not posted until the 23rd. I saw it in colour ; the distance was a lovely blue.  
H. R.

" (c) Lady Guendolen Ramsden, writing to her daughter later of this occasion, sends the following sketch :[*Frontis*.]

Lady Guendolen adds :

[On] the day we went to Huy, Clarisse sat under a tree on the bank of a garden overlooking the Meuse. She said, ' I'll draw the bridge ; M. may get an impression of the arches.' So you did—only yours were more like a viaduct. . . . This sketch is from memory, showing where Clarisse sat to draw. There was a large tree on whose roots she sat ; lots of boats everywhere. . . ."

In the first experiment no deliberate attempt had been made by Miss Miles to transfer any idea to Miss Ramsden. But the tower had formed a

prominent feature in the agent's consciousness for some days previously—she had gone to Namur on the 13th July—and if a sheet of paper is held so as to hide the spire and bulb of the tower, the resemblance between the photograph and Miss Ramsden's drawing will be seen to be so close that it is difficult to suppose it due to chance.

There were in all twenty experiments in the series, of which only three were complete failures. But in several other cases the percipient's impression appeared to correspond, not with the idea noted beforehand by the agent as present to her mind, but with some less prominent item in her recent experience. To form a fair judgment of the amount of correspondence involved, it is essential to study the full record. I will quote one more instance, which is interesting on other grounds, apart from its furnishing an admirable illustration of telepathy at a distance. In this experiment, the sixteenth in the series, Miss Ramsden was still at Kingussie, but Miss Miles was staying at Hoe Benham, a small village exactly half-way between London and Bristol, for the purpose of having lessons in painting. Miss Miles was in the habit of walking each morning from her lodging to the cottage and studio occupied by two artists, Mr. Pittman and Mr. Waud. This is Mr. Pittman's description of the events of November 2nd, 1907:—

“Hoe Benham, Newbury.

“On November 2nd, 1907, I was painting in the Studio with my friend Reginald Waud; the model was our servant dressed as a widow, and we were waiting for Miss Miles to join us. At 10 o'clock I knew the milkman had come by the dogs barking in the cottage at the top of the garden. So I said, 'I will take the milk in,' and went up to the cottage. After putting the jug in the pantry and shutting the cottage door, I looked up the road and saw Miss Miles coming down with her easel and paint-box. Following quite close behind her was a large white pig, with a long snout. I went down to the Studio and said to Waud, 'What do you think Miss Miles is bringing down with her this morning, instead of her Chow? A large pig.' We roared with laughter, and he said, 'Call out and tell her not to bring her friend in, and to be sure to shut the gate,

as we take a great pride in our garden.' The moment Miss Miles appeared I opened the window and shouted out, 'What have you done with your companion?' She was very surprised and said, 'My companion! what do you mean?' Then I told her what I had seen following her. She immediately said, 'If a pig were trotting behind me, I must have heard it. Besides, there is a very easy way of finding out, for I passed the milkman in the lane and he must have seen it, but I shall go and look for myself.' When she came back she said, 'There is no trace of a pig anywhere.' We made enquiries all over the village; no one had seen a stray pig. There is only one white one in the place, and this one, its owner assured us, could not possibly have got loose without his knowing it. At the present time there is a notice out forbidding owners to allow pigs to stray, under penalty of a fine, as there have been cases of swine fever. We enquired of the milkman next morning. He remembered passing Miss Miles, as he usually met her about the same time. He most emphatically said there was no pig to be seen anywhere on the road.

(Signed) OSMUND PITTMAN.  
REGINALD WAUD.  
CLARISSA MILES.  
LOUISA THORNE."

Miss Miles chose this pig for the subject of experiment with Miss Ramsden, and wrote on her postcard:

(a) "Laburnum Villa, Saturday, November 2nd.

[Postmark: Newbury, 6.30 p.m., No. 3, 07.]

"I wished you to see a stuffed pheasant or you may have seen the flying phantom pig. C. M."

(b) "November 2nd, 1907.

[Postmark: Kingussie, 10.30 a.m., No. 3, 07.]

"You were out of doors rather late, a cold raw evening near a railway station; there was a pig with a long snout, and some village children; it was getting dark. H. R."

The milkman and Mrs. Thorne, who questioned the children playing on the road, both add their testimony to the non-reality of the pig. Apart from the successful communication to Miss Miles's friend in Kingussie, the phantom pig is interesting as being a member of a whole menagerie of ghostly animals seen, mostly, however, in the twilight, in the same locality. The discussion of this subject must, however, be deferred for the present.

## CHAPTER V

## COINCIDENT DREAMS

IN the last chapter we have seen reason to think, as the result of carefully conducted experiments, that telepathy, the affection of one mind by another at a distance, is a fact. If the faculty really exists we should, of course, expect to find traces of it in ordinary life, and in effect in dreams we observe numerous coincidences that at first sight may seem abundantly to illustrate the hypothetical faculty. So numerous and so striking are these coincidences that in all ages men have credited the dreamer with the power of seeing the distant and even of foreseeing the future, albeit experience has forced them to the conclusion that this seeing generally takes place as in a glass darkly. Hence the need of skilled assistance in the interpretation of dreams, and the growth of professional diviners and soothsayers. The dreams which needed interpretation were mostly of a symbolic kind, and we have little use in scientific enquiry for dreams of this sort, since, in addition to the weaknesses inherent in dream evidence generally, they add one more element of their own, the caprice of the interpreter. But there are and probably always have been dreams, needing no interpreter, which bear an unmistakable resemblance to facts unknown to the dreamer. Such is the appearance in dream of a friend to take farewell at the moment of his death. Now whilst there is a very strong probability that a hallucination which coincides with a death is in some way connected with the death, because hallucinations themselves are comparatively rare events, would it scarcely be fair to say the same of a dream of death; and we should still less be justified in laying stress upon a dream which happened to coincide with some

more common or more readily foreseen event. Dreams are as the sand on the seashore for multitude, and amongst so many random shots some must hit the mark. Moreover, accounts of dreams can rarely be altogether trustworthy. Dream impressions, to begin with, are usually faint and vague. But if they are commonly less vivid than waking impressions, they are also less coherent; they are apt to acquire much of their form as well as their colour in the process of narration. At best, too, a dream, however vivid, is less likely to be accurately remembered than a waking experience, because it has no place in space or in time; it does not form part of a coherent fabric or a continuous sequence of memories. On all accounts, then, dream stories can add little support to the hypothesis of telepathy, though they may serve to illustrate it. A few cases may, however, be quoted which either from the exactness of the coincidence, the peculiar nature of the impression, or some other circumstance, may seem worthy of note. In the first three cases it will be seen that the dream coincided approximately with the death of the person represented, and that the impression made on the mind of the dreamer was sufficiently strong to induce him to make a written record of the fact or to tell a friend. Dreams of death and accident are in fact sufficiently numerous and well attested to add some support to the evidence for telepathy derived from other sources, though, of course, in any particular case we must recognize that the coincidence may be purely accidental.

No. 10.—The late Dr. Hodgson received on 19th July, 1897, the following letter, bearing the postmark, *New York, July 17th, 11-30 a.m.*, from a friend, Dr. Holbrook:—

“DEAR HODGSON,—Five minutes ago Mr. J. F. Morse, who has all his life had dreams which were more or less verified later, came to my room and said: ‘I believe my wife died last night, for I had a dream of a most remarkable nature which indicates it. I shall be able to let you know soon, for I shall get word at my office when I reach there. I will then send you



word.' His wife is in a country place in Delaware Co., Pa. She is ill, but he had no idea she would not live for months, as the enclosed letter of July 15 will show, but she was ill and would be likely to decline slowly and gradually.

"I will get this off or in the mail before I hear any more.

"Mr. Morse in his appearance looks like one who had just lost a dear friend and is in a state of great mental depression, with tears in his eyes.

M. L. HOLBROOK."

On the evening of the same day a telegram was received announcing that Mrs. Morse had died unexpectedly at 9.15 on the evening of Friday, July 16th.

No. 11.—The following incident is related by the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava in *My Canadian Journal*, written while Lord Dufferin was Governor-General of Canada. (Pp. 82-3 and 88.) The Governor-General's party had left Ottawa on June 10th, 1873, and were touring about at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. On the 30th they were at Mingan. Lord and Lady Dufferin, and a small party, had started off early, up the river, salmon fishing. After describing the morning's work, Lady Dufferin says:

"We were just going to begin fishing again, when an Indian canoe arrived bringing us very sad news. One of our footmen had gone out fishing, and was drowned. We returned immediately. We saw the place where the accident happened; on the rocks lay a piece of bread he had been eating. He had got up and stood at the edge of the water with his rod. The steward said, 'Can you swim?' 'No.' 'Then take care, for it is slippery and the water is very deep.' 'Never fear,' he said, and instantly slipped. He put up his hands to take off a mosquito-veil he had on, and disappeared. The steward dived after him, but he never rose at all. A boat was got, and presently the men saw the thick end of a fishing-rod sticking up. They took hold of it, and lifted the poor dead body up with it. He appeared to be upright in the water, the rod fast in his hand."

Under date of July 11th—when near Gaspe—Lady Dufferin writes:—

"You remember that I told you that a poor manservant of ours was drowned at the Mingan. As we knew nothing about his people, we were unable to communicate the news of his death to them, so D. [Lord Dufferin] ordered any letters that might arrive for him to be brought to himself. The first of these—which we have just received—was from a servant girl he was attached to at Ottawa, and was dated exactly seven days after

the date of the accident. In it she said: 'I have been in my new place a week, and I like it very much, but I had such a dreadful dream on the day of my arrival. I dreamt that you and Nowell were upset in a boat together, and that Nowell was saved, but you were drowned.' As the spot where the accident occurred is in an uninhabited region on the coast of Labrador, more than 500 miles distant from Ottawa, without either telegraphs or posts, it was impossible she should have had news of her lover's death when this letter was written."

Nowell, spoken of in the letter, was not the steward, but Lord Dufferin's valet. It is not recorded where Nowell was at the time of the accident.

No. 12.—The next case is more than sixty years old; but the evidence, it will be seen, is contemporaneous with the event. It is to be noted that, in this case, the dream, though it correctly indicated the date of the death, did not coincide with it. If we regard the dream as being possibly telepathic, this would seem to point to communication of the news from the uncle, who wrote the letter, rather than from the dying brother. This case was communicated in August, 1895, by the Rev. E. K. Elliott, Rector of Worthing, who was formerly in the Navy, and who made the entry in his diary as quoted when he was cruising in the Atlantic out of reach of post or telegraph. The diary was then in his possession.

*Extract from diary written out in Atlantic, January 14th, 1847.*

"Dreamt last night I received a letter from my uncle, H. E., dated January 3rd, in which news of my dear brother's death was given. It greatly struck me.

"My brother had been ill in Switzerland, but the last news I received on leaving England was that he was better.

"The 'January 3rd' was very black, as if intended to catch my eye.

"On my return to England I found, as I quite expected, a letter awaiting me saying my brother had died on the above date."

Worthing.

E. K. ELLIOTT.

There are numerous cases recorded in which dreams, sometimes of a very striking or bizarre nature, have occurred simultaneously to husband and

wife or to two other persons occupying the same room. In such a case, however, we are forced to remember that persons living in the same house and occupying the same bedroom probably share to a large extent their waking experiences, and that any common stimulus, such as an unusual sound, may be expected often to arouse similar chains of association. It is impossible therefore to find much evidence for telepathy in such dreams. In the following case, however, the dreamers were sleeping on different floors, and though there was no doubt a certain amount of anxiety the disease was of a chronic kind. It will be seen that the dream was written down within a few hours, so that there was not much time for the details to become enlarged in the memory. The narrator, who is an Associate of the Society for Psychical Research, is unwilling to have his name published. He writes on October 7th, 1900:—

No. 13.

"I woke abruptly in the small hours of this morning with a painful conviction upon me that my wife, who was that night sleeping in another part of the house, had burst a varicose vein in the calf of her leg, and that I could feel the swelled place, three inches long. I wondered whether I ought to get up and go down to her room on the first floor, and considered whether she would be able to come up to me; but I was only partly awake, though in acute distress. My mind had been suddenly roused, but my body was still under the lethargy of sleep. I argued with myself that there would be sure to be nothing in it, that I should only disturb her, and so shortly went off to sleep again.

"On going to her room this morning I said I had a horrid dream, which had woke me up, to the effect that she had burst a varicose vein, of which just now care has to be taken. 'Why,' she replied, 'I had just the same experience. I woke up at 2.15 feeling sure the calf of my leg was bleeding, and my hand seemed to feel it wet when I put it there. I turned on the light in alarm, noticing the time, and wondered if I should be able to get up to thee, or whether I should have to wake the house-keeper. Thou wast, in the dream out of which I woke, examining the place.'

"Though I did not note the hour, 2 o'clock is about the time I should have guessed it to be; and the impression on my mind was vivid and terrible, knowing how dangerous such an accident would be."

Mrs. — corroborates as follows:—

"I felt twinges of pain in my leg off and on in my sleep without being entirely roused till about 2.15 a.m. Then, or just before, I dreamt or had a vivid impression that a vein had burst, and that my husband, who was sleeping in another room up another flight of stairs, was there and called my attention to it. I thought it felt wet and trickling down the leg as if bleeding, passed my hand down and at first thought it seemed wet, but on gaining fuller consciousness found all right, and that it was not more painful than often when I got out and stood on it. Thought over the contingency of its actually bursting and whether I could so bandage it in that case as to make it safe to go up to my husband's room, and thought I could do so.

"Looking at my watch found it about 2.20."

The next narrative is typical of a large class of dreams in which a distant scene seems to be flashed upon the eyes of the percipient. Of course, unless the dream is actually written out in full before its correspondence with the event is known, we cannot feel confident that some of the features of the actual scene have not been unconsciously read back into the picture preserved in the memory, especially since, as already said, the memories of dream scenes are apt to be much fainter and more indefinite than the memories of things seen with the bodily eyes.

The following case was told at the time and written down some weeks later. We cannot pin our faith to the accuracy of all the details, but it is reasonably certain that Mrs. Robinson did have a dream of an accident to her son's trap, and did see in her dream that no serious harm was done, or perhaps it would be safer to say did feel no serious anxiety on account of the dream. An account of the incident, which took place on the 17th May, 1903, was first communicated to Dr. Hodgson, on the 28th May, by Mrs. Ward, a sister of the dreamer. Mrs. Robinson's own account is dated 7th June, 1903.

No. 14.

Bonnycot, Anchorage,

Kentucky, June 7th, 1903.

"In compliance with my sister's request and yours as well as with my own interest in psychic phenomenon, I shall write you of this last experience that came to me on the night of May 17th.

"My son and a friend had driven across the country to dine and spend the evening with friends. The rest of the household had retired for the night. I was awakened by the telephone and looked at the clock, finding it 11.30 p.m. I knew my son would soon be in, and thought of a window downstairs which I felt might not have been locked, and determined to remain awake and ask my son to make sure that it was secure. As I lay waiting and listening for him I suddenly saw their vehicle, a light break-cart, turn over, my son jump out, land on his feet, run to the struggling horse's head, his friend hold to the lines, and in a moment it was gone and I knew it was right and felt no disturbance.

"I met my son as he came in and spoke of the window. He said: 'We tripped over, mother.' I replied, 'Yes, I know it. I saw you,' and described what I saw as I have to you, which he said was just as it happened. He also said: 'I thought for a moment the horse would go up over the railroad tracks,' and then I remembered that the horse, as I saw him, was thrown up an embankment. I said: 'This happened about half-an-hour ago.' He looked at his watch, it was 12.15, and said, 'Yes.' I did not see them before they started out, as his friend called for him with his horse and vehicle, and I did not know in what style they went. . . ." HELEN AVERY ROBINSON.

Mrs. Robinson's son confirms the account as follows:—

June 23rd, 1903.

"On Sunday night, May 17th, I was driving with a friend from Glenview to Anchorage, Kentucky. We left Glenview at about eleven o'clock. We were in a break-cart, and my friend was driving a young and spirited horse. There was no moon, and we could see indistinctly by star-light. About twelve o'clock, when about two miles from home, we were driving along the edge of a wood with a deep railroad cut on our right. The top of this embankment had lately been levelled off and my friend mistook it for the road, which was just beside the embankment and, in the faint light, seemed to be about level with it. When I called his attention to his mistake he turned down into the road and overturned the cart. We were both thrown out. The horse was startled and began rearing. I ran around the cart after him and took him by the bridle, although my friend had not lost his hold on the reins. We righted the cart and got home without further accident. The family had been in bed for some time, but my mother had been roused at 11.30 by the telephone. As I came in she gave me the message. I told her that we had overturned the cart. She then told me that she had seen the accident at 12 o'clock and, without suggestion from me, described it accurately. She had seen me thrown out backward and knew how I had run around after the frightened horse to catch his bridle, which I did only after he had turned completely around." AVERY ROBINSON.

It would scarcely be worth the space to publish more dream stories. Hundreds of similar stories are to be found in the *Journal* and *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research; but, as already said, from the nature of the case dream coincidences, however interesting as illustrating the development of impressions received, whatever theory we may adopt, from without, can add but little to the evidence for telepathy.

I will conclude this brief survey by reference to one anomalous type of dream. It is on record that the bodies of drowned persons have occasionally been traced by means of a dream. The facts are unquestionable. In some cases it has been given in evidence at the coroner's inquest by the police or other persons who were conducting the search that, after labouring fruitlessly for hours or days, the drags were put into the water at a particular spot in consequence of a dream dreamt by one of the neighbours, and that the body was found in the spot indicated.\*

Obviously it would be difficult to account for such cases by telepathy, since the only possible agent has been dead for some days; and on the whole, if all the facts are before us, it seems that the most probable explanation is simply chance coincidence. In a country district the disappearance and the search would occupy the thoughts of all the neighbours, and would be likely to give rise to numerous dreams—but we do not hear of the unsuccessful searches. Probably dreams of the Derby winner, some of which are unquestionably authentic, are to be explained in the same way. Those who have put their money on a dream and lost are not likely to publish the matter abroad. And it is significant that these dreams of finding dead bodies relate almost exclusively to death by drowning in a river or lake. Children are sometimes lost on the moor or in the forest, but I can recall no well authenticated case of their recovery, living or

\* For examples, see the cases extracted from the newspapers in the *S.P.R. Journal* for July, 1895; November, 1902; October, 1903;

dead, through a dream. Obviously a chance dream in such a case is less likely to hit the mark, because the area to be explored is so much larger. There is, however, one well authenticated case in which the skeleton of a man dead, presumably murdered, some forty years previously was discovered through a repeated dream. In this case, however, the dreamer is now dead, and it seems possible, if we knew more of the circumstances, that an explanation on normal lines might suggest itself.\*

One case of the finding of a drowned body may, however, be quoted, partly because it will illustrate the facts, partly because a possible solution other than chance is indicated.

On Monday, October 31st, 1898, at 6 a.m., Bertha Huse left her home at Enfield, New Hampshire, and was seen to go down the street on to the Shaker's Bridge, a wooden structure on piles and cribs about 300 yards long, crossing a lake. She was seen on the bridge, but was never again seen alive. On her disappearance becoming known later in the day about 150 persons searched the woods on the shore of the lake. On Tuesday a diver came down and searched the water alongside the bridge up till Wednesday noon; the search by diving was then abandoned, but some gunpowder was sent for in the hope of bringing the body to the surface of the lake. On Thursday morning at 6 a.m. George Titus told some of his neighbours that his wife had had a dream the previous evening in which she saw the body in the water of the lake. On their advice he borrowed a buggy and drove his wife to Enfield. They told their story to Mr. Whitney, who was conducting the search, and accompanying him and the diver on to the bridge Mrs. Titus, after some moving about and hesitation, identified the exact spot indicated in her dream, said that the body was lying below fixed in the woodwork head downwards—she had in her dream, she said, seen the girl slip backwards—and that one foot was

\* See the account of the case in the Author's *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, pp. 254-6.

projecting. The diver demurred to being made a fool of, but Mr. Whitney requested him to go down once "in order to satisfy the villagers." He went down at the spot indicated, and 10 feet below the surface of the water he struck against the projecting foot. The body was found, as stated by the dreamer, lying head downwards in the woodwork. The water was so dark that the diver could see nothing, and it would have been absolutely impossible for anything to have been seen from above.

Dr. Harris Kennedy, a connection by marriage of Professor James, of Harvard, heard of the events at the time from his brother who happened to be staying in the neighbourhood. Dr. Kennedy went down himself within a few days, interviewed the chief witnesses, and procured their signed attestations. The diver, the most important witness, gave his evidence on November 21st in Boston at a meeting of a Medical Society. The accuracy of the description given by Mrs. Titus of the position in which the body would be found had deeply impressed him.

The main facts here are unquestionably authentic. The search had been given up as hopeless; it was renewed and the body found, solely in consequence of a dream. Unless the dreamer had actually seen the accident, or had been told by Bertha Huse that she intended to commit suicide, and the precise place and manner in which she proposed to effect her purpose, it seems impossible to account for the facts. If it was merely a chance coincidence, it was an extraordinarily lucky hit. We can hardly explain the facts as they stand by telepathy. If due to any supernormal cause it would seem that we must either invoke the agency of the dead girl's spirit, or assume on the part of Mrs. Titus a supernormal faculty of seeing. For this hypothetical faculty, which has been named Clairvoyance, there is practically no evidence which will bear critical examination. There is, however, one significant detail which I have omitted from the summary of the evidence because



it rests upon the testimony of one person only. George Titus, in telling the story to his neighbours on Thursday morning, appears to have mentioned only that his wife had had a dream or trance on the previous evening, at least that is all that they remember. But his own account, given to Dr. Kennedy a few days later and signed by him, begins as follows:—

*"Sunday, October 30th, 1898.*—Mrs. Titus said to her husband, 'George, something awful is going to happen. I cannot tell you now what it is, but may later on.'

*"Monday, October 31st.*—Just about 6.40 a.m., as Mr. Titus was leaving for the mill, his wife said, 'That has happened.' At noon (on the Monday) Mr. Titus told his wife that the Huse girl (a sister of the one drowned) had gone home, Mr. Titus remarking that perhaps her mother was ill, at least so some of the people at the mill thought. Mrs. Titus said, 'It is something worse, I can feel.'"

Now if Mr. Titus's memory is to be trusted—and it is difficult to believe that these details were unconsciously invented—neither chance coincidence nor clairvoyance will explain the facts; for it would appear that Mrs. Titus knew whilst the girl was still alive of her impending death, knew of the death at the exact moment of its occurrence, and knew two or three days later the exact place and manner of the occurrence. It is clear that, unless we are prepared to add prophecy to clairvoyance, the information can have come only from the girl herself. On the assumption that she confided her intention of committing suicide to her neighbour, and that Mrs. Titus for her part kept the secret, we must further assume that the girl had determined beforehand on the exact time, place and manner of her death, that the particular pier had been selected beforehand, that the falling backward from the bridge was deliberately calculated, and that she communicated all these trivial details also to Mrs. Titus. The telepathic explanation of the facts is at least more plausible; the girl's brooding misery may have vaguely communicated itself to Mrs. Titus; a definite image of the disaster may have been im-

pressed upon her mind by the mind of the unhappy girl at the time of death. We must further suppose that the sensory image so impressed remained latent in the mind of the recipient, and did not begin to emerge from the dream consciousness until some sixty hours later, the first dream or trance occurring at 7.30 p.m. on the Wednesday. This assumption presents some difficulty, for such a prolonged period of latency in the case of an impression of this character would no doubt be unusual; but there are other cases of deferred impression which may throw some light on the subject. A post-hypnotic suggestion may be timed to explode in hallucination after an interval of days, weeks, or even months. It must be admitted that the explanation of this case on telepathic lines presents some difficulty; but can anyone suggest a better explanation that will cover the facts without invoking agencies yet more remote from common experience?

It should be stated that we have a case in which the exact scene of a suicide was seen in a waking vision some days before the event. The seer was a stranger to the man who committed suicide. The murder of William Terriss, with many of the attendant circumstances, was foreseen in a dream vision on the night preceding the crime. The case is thoroughly well attested; the dreamer told her dream to several of her colleagues at noon, seven hours before the tragedy.\*

In both these cases it is natural to refer the vision to the mind of the unhappy man picturing to himself the scene of his fatal act. A similar explanation may possibly fit the historic case of Mr. Williams' dream of the assassination of Mr. Spencer Perceval in the lobby of the House of Commons in 1812; but it seems doubtful whether the evidence in this case is sufficiently clear to substantiate the story. A case of a frustrated attempt at suicide, apparently involving telepathic intimation, is set forth in the next chapter.

\* See a full account of the case in *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, pp. 353-6.

## CHAPTER VI.

## SPONTANEOUS TELEPATHY

**THERE** is a widespread belief, even amongst the better educated classes, or perhaps specially amongst the better educated classes, in the influence of mental action in ordinary life. We constantly meet persons who tell us that by gazing fixedly at the back of his head they can make a stranger sitting in front of them in church turn round; that by the exercise of silent will they can bring an acquaintance to their side from across a crowded room; that when they write to an intimate correspondent the letter crosses; that when they casually think of a distant friend they are liable to run against him in the next street—and so on. Unfortunately, a widespread belief of the kind is no evidence of the truth of telepathy, rather the reverse. For the belief, in most cases, can be sufficiently explained by, if it is not in all cases actually based on, the natural tendency to count the hits and ignore the misses. Obviously, when we are dealing with such trivial incidents the only possible proof of causation must be sought in a long series of carefully conducted trials, in which all the results, favourable and unfavourable alike, are exactly recorded. Few persons, it need scarcely be said, have the leisure or the patience for keeping such a record, nor is it easy, even when we have a diary of this kind before us, to feel confident that it is really an accurate record. Most persons require some training in scientific habits of thought before they can learn to be quite honest with themselves in such matters. Positive results are so much more interesting, and the desire to edify and to excite wonder is so deeply rooted in our human nature.

One or two diaries, however, of trivial apparently telepathic happenings, preserved among the records of the Society for Psychical Research, seem to call for some consideration. Mrs. S., a patient of Dr. Duke, of Rugby, kept such a diary for a full twelve months, from 22nd December, 1893, to 27th December, 1894. The number of hits recorded is out of all proportion to the number of misses.\* And though most of the incidents were in themselves trivial, there is evidence in some cases that they were recorded before the result was known; whilst in other cases we have the corroborative evidence of Dr. Duke himself, that he was aware of the receipt of telepathic messages and took action accordingly. Dr. Duke gives his personal testimony to the entire trustworthiness of Mrs. S. Mrs. S. herself assures us that the entries were always written on the date shewn, generally in the evening, unless a special note is put against the entry. Appended is an extract from this diary, giving a fortnight's consecutive entries near the beginning of the record, which will serve as a sample of the whole. It will be observed that intimation of a death is recorded in the diary before the news was received.

No. 15.

"January 21.—I willed very hard indeed that Dr. Z. should come here before 12 o'clock, just to prove if I could bring him. He came just before the time. My husband was at home, and I told him afterwards.

"January 24.—This morning I was thinking of Mrs. T. B., and said how I should like her to come in; I wanted to speak to her. This was at 11.30 a.m., and in the afternoon she came, and I told her I was thinking of her in the morning, and she said she made up her mind to come while she was cleaning her kitchen up in the morning, after 11 a.m.

"January 26.—I am again feeling Dr. Z. will call. He did, before E. had finished dusting the room. I knew he would.

\* Excluding some doubtful cases, I find in the diary 122 entries of presentiments or efforts of will relating to definite events, such as the arrival of medicine, a visit from the Dr., a call from a neighbour, the receipt of a letter, etc. Of these, 117 corresponded with the fact, and 26 of the 117 are recorded as having been written before the result was known. The record shews, therefore, only 5 failures.

To-night a rap came at the front door. I felt it was a poor woman named M., and I told Mr. S. it was, and I would not see her, and it was her. I had no reason for thinking of her, only I felt it.

"January 27.—I expect to hear my Aunt S. is much worse or has passed away. I am thinking so much about her all day.

"January 28.—The feeling about Aunt is not so strong to-day.

"January 29.—I shall hear from Mrs. Ph. to-day. I did. We had a letter saying Aunt passed away at quarter to six o'clock on Sunday, 27th.

"January 31.—I felt Dr. Z. would come this morning; but he did *not*.

"February 1.—Dr. Z. came. I knew he was coming quite well, and hurried B. to get my room done. He said he wanted to come yesterday, but was too busy, he could not bring it in.

"February 4.—I was again talking about the B.'s in C.-street, and they came in to see me."

Such incidents can, of course, only impress us by their number, and then only if we can be sure that the record is complete. When, however, the impression made upon the percipient is of a more unusual character, or the corresponding incident is of less frequent occurrence, we are entitled to surmise something more than chance coincidence. The following incident, though with one or two possible exceptions isolated in the percipient's experience, will no doubt impress the reader as affording *prima facie* stronger evidence for telepathic action. The narrative comes from correspondents in New Zealand who have requested that their real names may be withheld.

#### No. 16.

March 30th, 1904.

"Six years ago I was living with my father and a sister and brother on a farm, 5 miles from the nearest township and about 60 miles from Wellington. My friend, Miss Wilson, was living here in Wellington with her mother, and Miss Wilson and I kept up a regular correspondence. One morning I awoke very early and felt a strong desire to write a story. I sat up in bed and began at once. I finished it at about noon, and when my sister asked me to read it aloud to her, I said I could not, as the idea was so painful, and that I had put Mrs. Wilson as one of the characters and that she died of cancer. I felt very depressed. Of course, as far as any of us knew, Mrs. Wilson

was quite well and we had never associated this disease with her. Nevertheless I wished I had not written the story. This happened on a Sunday, and on the next day I received a long letter from Miss Wilson telling me that her mother had been operated on successfully on the preceding day (Sunday) at noon for cancer. She explained that she and her mother had known of the necessity for the operation for ten days before, and that she had written me a letter telling me of it as soon as she knew, but that her mother had persuaded her to destroy the letter, because of our living so far from the post and telegraph office, and because our mails were so irregular. Mrs Wilson was a thoughtful woman and knew that we would be very nervous, and had no means of communicating quickly with them. Miss Wilson therefore had written just as regularly as usual, but had given us no idea that anything was amiss. A fortnight later Mrs. Wilson died.

"Most of my intimate friends know of this incident, and up till quite recently I possessed the manuscript. My sister and my brother knew I had written it, before we had even heard Mrs. Wilson was ill."

To the whole of the narrative, another extract from which is given below, the following note is attached:

March 30th, 1904.

"We have read the paper written by my sister for the S. P. R. and wish to say that the occurrences took place in the order in which she has described them.

"M. BUTLER (sister of the narrator).

"M. WILSON."

"Miss Wilson," writing on the 29th of June, 1904, gives a full account of the circumstances attending her mother's illness. The operation took place on the morning of Sunday, July the 19th, 1897, and she wrote to "Miss Butler" as soon as the operation was over, having purposely withheld all news of the illness until then.

The evidence in this case, it will be seen, is nearly seven years old, but it is not a case in which it would seem probable that the memory can have played tricks with the facts. Miss Butler can hardly have imagined that she wrote a story which had never been written, and preserved it for some years, and it is scarcely likely that she should have written such a story as described after hearing of Mrs. Wilson's illness.-

It will be observed that the transferred impression in this case led to action, as in some of the cases recorded in Mrs. S.'s diary. More generally the impression is embodied simply as a vague emotion, or an idea, sometimes rising to the level of a quasi-hallucination. Such appears to have been the nature of the percipient's impression in the following case, a visual image probably comparable in distinctness with a crystal vision.

The case is recorded by M. Charles Richet, Professor of Physiology at the University of Paris. The percipient was again Madame B. (Léonie), whose acquaintance we made in a previous chapter.

No. 17.—From Professor Richet.

On Monday, July 2nd [1888], after having passed all the day in my laboratory, I hypnotised Léonie at 8 p.m., and while she tried to make out a diagram concealed in an envelope, I said to her quite suddenly—'What has happened to M. Langlois?' Léonie knows M. Langlois from having seen him two or three times, some time ago, in my physiological laboratory, when he acts as my assistant. 'He has burnt himself,' Léonie replied. 'Good,' I said, 'and where has he burnt himself?' 'On the left hand. It is not fire. I don't know its name. Why does he not take care when he pours it out?' 'Of what colour,' I asked, 'is the stuff which he pours out?' 'It is not red, it is brown; he has hurt himself very much—the skin puffed up directly.'

"Now, this description is admirably exact. At 4 p.m. that day M. Langlois had wished to pour some bromine into a bottle. He had done this clumsily, so that some of the bromine flowed on to his left hand, which held the funnel, and at once burnt him severely. Although he at once put his hand in water, wherever the bromine had touched it a blister was formed in a few seconds—a blister which one could not better describe than by saying, 'the skin puffed up.' I need not say that Léonie had not left my house, nor seen anyone from my laboratory. Of this I am *absolutely certain*, and I am certain that I had not mentioned the incident of the burn to anybody. Moreover, this was the first time for nearly a year that M. Langlois had handled bromine, and when Léonie saw him six months before at the laboratory he was engaged in experiments of quite another kind. Of course, I give here all the words I used, and only the words I used, when I interrogated Léonie."

"It is not red, it is brown," is a very fair description of the nondescript colour of bromine.

In the case of sight we can distinguish a long gradation of images, each exhibiting more and more of sensory quality, from the mere memory image, through the mind's eye vision and the crystal vision, up to the fully externalised hallucination which is liable to be mistaken for a real message from the world outside. In the case of the lower senses no such distinction can be made. We cannot say whether an illusory perception of pain partakes more or less of the nature of a hallucination. In the following case, for instance, we have the percipient's word for it that an imaginary pain was so keenly felt as to make him search for a real cause and to find none in his own proper organism. But we cannot of course say, and he cannot tell us, whether the imaginary pain was as severe as a real one would have been. The account was written by a trained observer, Mr. E. E. Robinson, assistant to Sir Oliver Lodge.

No. 18.—From Mr. E. E. Robinson.

Fernlea, Willow Avenue, Edgbaston,  
16th December, 1905.

"On Sunday morning, December 10th, 1905, I was in bed, thinking of nothing in particular. Mrs. R. was dressing. I experienced an aching pain in my thumb—the kind of pain that would be produced by a hole made by something running in. The pain was so distinct and the sensation of having a hole in the thumb so real that I held up my thumb to look for it. I found there was no such hole, and the moment I realised this the pain went. Almost at the same instant Mrs. R. said to me 'I have a great difficulty in dressing, my thumb is so painful.' Two days before she had hurt her thumb by running a nail into it. She mentioned the fact to me at the time; as she did not mention it again, the circumstance had been completely forgotten by me. I certainly had no idea of it at the time mentioned above. E. E. ROBINSON."\*

I will conclude this chapter by citing a case of a more enigmatic character. Unfortunately neither names, dates nor locality can be given. But the facts are as well attested as under the peculiar circumstances can be reasonably demanded. The

\* *Journal, S.P.R.*, May, 1907.



narrative is copied from a long account written by the percipient, the late Dr. X., in his diary, "a little over a month after the occurrence," in order to preserve the record with a view to possible publication.

Dr. Hyslop, sometime Professor of Philosophy in the University of Columbia, New York, and now editor of the publications of the American Society for Psychical Research, has seen the original record in the diary. He tells us further that Mrs. X. has attested the facts so far as they came within her knowledge, and we learn from her that the other person concerned, who is still living, admits the accuracy of the record and is willing that it should be published, but has not unnaturally stipulated for the withholding of all names and other particulars which might lead to identification. The incident took place, as Dr. Hyslop tells us, within the last fifteen years. Briefly, the facts as recorded in Dr. X.'s account are as follows:—\*

On Thursday evening, 29th August, Dr. X., rector of — church, was preparing to write his Sunday sermon when Mr. A., his senior warden, was announced. Some desultory conversation ensued, until at length the visitor led the conversation towards the theme of suicide, quoting the arguments of certain writers in defence of the act and asking the Doctor's opinion. Dr. X. "was about to reply in hot indignation to their shallow arguments," when he was interrupted by an urgent summons to a sick bed. He promised his visitor, however, to preach a sermon on the subject on the following Sunday, and asked him to attend. Mr. A. hesitated a good deal and finally said, "I wish I might—but—but I'm not sure that I'll be there." Mr. A.'s manner impressed the Doctor, but apparently did not excite any definite suspicion of his intention.

It was not until Saturday evening that Dr. X. again found himself at liberty to sit down to his

\* *Journal, American S.P.R., October, 1908.*

sermon, and then a strange restlessness came upon him. Though he knew that the sermon must be written before Sunday morning, he was utterly unable to control his thoughts, and found himself constantly wandering to the window to look out at the thick sea fog. Not an unusual experience with many of us when something has to be written; but we have Dr. X.'s express statement that he, at any rate, had never felt anything of the kind before. After some hour or so he found himself, with his sermon still inchoate, standing on the porch and looking out on the beach. "It was a misty, heavy night, and the dense, grey fog gave a desolate and gloomy aspect to all around. There was an oppressive silence in the air, an ominous silence that filled my whole soul with a prescient sense of impending horror. I strained my ears for some sound to relieve the dreadful impression . . . . I felt a mad impulse to leap the railing on which my hand was resting and rush to the beach . . . . I became strongly agitated, my head became bathed in a cold sweat, I shook all over as though seized with an ague.

"Suddenly . . . I was startled by a low mournful cry which seemed to come out of the fog enveloping the lowland. My blood curdled, so weird and awful did it sound in the ominous and mysterious stillness. Again and again it pierced my ears, pierced my very soul; at the same instant the gloom seemed to give way to a narrow streak of intense white light, through which I peered startled and wild eyed, until the path leading to the beach and then the beach itself became as distinct as at noonday. Then suddenly at the end of the narrow streak, at the very water's edge, a man. In an instant I recognised him; it was my senior warden. He was standing facing me, his head upraised as though trying to pierce the dense fog above him; his hands hung at his side, the left clenched hard, the right holding a glittering something. I knew what that something was, and what the look on his face meant."

Dr. X. then tells us that he jumped over the railing, rushed through the fog and mire, hatless and in slippers, groped his way through the darkness, and finally came upon Mr. A. just in time to snatch the pistol from him. Mrs. X., naturally alarmed, had followed her husband, and the two together brought back Mr. A. to the Rectory. Dr. X. explains that Mr. A. had uttered no cry, that his wife had heard no cry and seen no light, and he therefore concludes: "While I stood at the window it was his soul I heard calling to me in that dreadful moment, his great wish to put his argument to the final test of my reasoning, that had lighted up the dense fog and compelled me against my very will to go to him."

The incident can be variously interpreted. By some, no doubt, it will be dismissed as a mere coincidence, subconsciously improved in the telling for the purposes of edification. In favour of this view it may be pointed out that Dr. X. had undoubtedly some ground for anxiety and even suspicion on Mr. A.'s account, though this feeling was not, according to his own recollection, explicit in his consciousness at the time. Moreover, the account is perhaps too dramatic and too highly coloured to inspire complete confidence. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe, in face of the corroborative testimony, that the main facts have been perverted. Dr. X. himself, it will have been observed, explains the episode as a call from soul to soul—what we have named telepathy. To Dr. Hyslop, who has an inclination—which in a mind of less philosophic temper we might be tempted to call a prejudice—against the theory of telepathy, the explanation seems premature and difficult to reconcile with the light and the cry, both of which were apparently subjective. In fact, however, the light and the cry need present no difficulty on the telepathic hypothesis. Dr. X., on his own showing, was in a state of extreme emotional tension on the Saturday evening, itself the result, on the hypothesis, of the emotion communicated to him

from Mr. A., and the occurrence of subjective sensations (hallucinations) in such a state is by no means unusual. A state of simple strained expectation will cause many people to hear sounds in the silence, or to see lights in the dark, as spirit-Mediums have found to their profit. Of course, a subjective light would not enable a man to see a real figure. The vision of Mr. A. grasping the pistol—if we can assume that Dr. X.'s memory can be relied upon, and that his recollection of the vision has not simply incorporated part of his subsequent experience—must be regarded as part of the hallucination. It is to be regretted that the circumstances preclude all possibility of further enquiry into this interesting case.

## CHAPTER VII

## EXPERIMENTAL GHOSTS

IN our first chapter we gave a few well attested examples of what, in common speech, are called Ghosts. In subsequent chapters we analysed the popular conception of a ghost as a semi-material entity having substance and extension in space, and shewed the inherent difficulties of the conception. Reasons were adduced for regarding so called ghosts as simply hallucinations—images created by the seer's imagination, dreams of the daylight. But it was shewn further that these dream figures were reported so constantly that, on any reasonable estimate of the trustworthiness of human testimony, it was impossible to avoid the inference that they were in some cases connected with the person whom they appeared to represent. This conclusion in the case of one particular type of apparitions, those appearing about the time of a death, was supported by definite statistics. Seeking for an explanation of this connection—since it is no longer open to us to explain it by the supposition that the "ghost" left the body at the moment of death and revealed himself to his friends—we found it in another time-honoured belief, the belief in mental action at a distance. We traced back this belief to the early Chaldean astrologers; we found it persisting in almost every race of mankind and almost in all ages of the world. Out of a large mass of evidence for its operation at the present day we have cited a few examples, experimental and spontaneous. The time has now come when we must put our theory to the final test. If ghosts are really hallucinations, and if some ghosts, e.g. those which coincide with death or illness, are due to a

mental shock or impact transmitted we know not how from the sick man to the seer, we ought to find in the realm of nature other examples of hallucinations, not necessarily of human form, apparently produced by the same hypothetical agency; and further, since, as has already been shown, we can on occasion produce partially developed hallucinations experimentally by means of mental suggestion, and fully externalised hallucinations of human figures by means of verbal suggestion, we may reasonably hope to succeed in producing such fully developed hallucinations of a human figure by means of mental suggestion alone. In the present chapter, a few examples will be given under each of these heads.

In the first case to be quoted we have to deal with the ghost of a letter. The percipient was a boy of about ten years of age. The account was written by his mother on the day after the incident.

No. 19.—From Mrs. Venn.

3, St. Peter's Terrace,  
Cambridge,

January 9th, 1895.

"January 8th, I came down to breakfast; A. was sitting at the table, Dr. Venn was not in the room. Something engaged my attention at the end of the room, and standing with my back to the table I said: 'Are there any letters for me, A.?' (The letters are usually on or by my plate.)

"A. 'Yes, one; there is one.'

"[Mrs. Venn] 'See who it's from; do you know?'

"A. 'It has the Deal postmark; it is from Frances (Venn)—for you or me.'

"Turning round I saw no letter, and said: 'I see no letter, A. What are you talking about? Have you hidden it?'

"A. 'Unless my eyes deceive me, there is a letter, as I said.'

"Going up to the table to look, I found none, and said: 'There is none. You shouldn't invent things; you shouldn't say things just as if they were true, when they're not!' (No doubt a valuable observation.)

"A. 'Well, I didn't. There was one, or, at any rate, my eyes seemed to see one just as I told you, with the Deal postmark and Frances' writing; but I don't know if it was to you or me. I couldn't read the writing from here. I know there's none now.' Subject dropped purposely.

"This was at 9 o'clock. Returning at 10 o'clock into the hall, the second post having just come, the servant had just put one letter on the hall table; it was to A. from Frances and bore the Deal postmark, as A. had said. She had been at *Frant* and we did not know she had returned home and were not expecting to hear from her. Another cousin wrote generally. There was nothing of any note in the letter. It was given to A. at the end of his lessons with the remark—'Here is the letter, you see, after all.'

'Yes,' he said, indifferently, not a bit interested, his mind full of something else, 'I often do see things like that, you know I do.'

"A. was with his tutor when the second post came, and the letter was taken in by the servant and laid on the hall table before me—there was no possibility of his having hid it; and he wouldn't have cared to do it in any case. We never take any notice to him of his saying anything of the sort.

"S. C. VENN."

Dr. Venn, F.R.S., who was told of the incident before the letter was given to A., adds his confirmation.

In the next narrative we meet with the ghost of a dog. Many persons are inclined to believe that dogs have ghosts as well as men and women. Perhaps they are right. But in this case the dog was as imaginary as the ghost itself.

No. 20.—From M. Isidore de Solla.

5 Harrington Square, N. W.

February 5th, 1896.

"As promised, I now send an account of my little thought transference experience. 'Twas thus—I sat opposite my eldest daughter who was reading a book by the fireside. Presently I exclaimed, 'Good gracious!' My daughter saying, 'What is it?' I replied, 'I could have sworn I saw a dog enter the room.' I described the dog minutely. My daughter, in great surprise, told me that she had at that moment read a description of just such a dog. I do not know the title of the book. We kept no dog at the time nor had we conversed about one."

In a later letter Mr. de Solla adds:

March 8th, 1896.

"The incident *re* Thought Transference between my daughter and myself took place on a Sunday evening about a year ago. My daughter would be willing to give an account of the matter. She does not remember my giving a detailed description of the dog, but simply that I exclaimed, 'I just saw such a big dog

rush into the room.' My daughter tells me that immediately before my explanation she had read the following words from a book (Lewis Arundel), 'As he spoke, he uttered a low, peculiar whistle; in obedience to his signal a magnificent Livonian Wolfhound . . . . sprang into the room.'

"It is not a common experience of mine to imagine I see anything anywhere which is not tangibly present, and I am very sceptical about other folk's reports about such things."\*

The vision in this case lasted for a moment only, but Mr. de Solla seems to have had no doubt at the time of the reality of the experience. As illustrating the dreamlike nature of hallucinations we may compare with the last account a case in which the vision was repeated, lasting on each occasion for some appreciable time, but inspiring apparently no conviction of reality. Though the narrator tells us that he awoke to see the vision, and though his account of the matter is to some extent confirmed by the fact that the apparition seemed actually to occupy a definite position with relation to the furniture, it is clear that the consciousness was still in a dreamlike condition. The original account appeared in the *English Mechanic and World of Science*, of 7th October, 1887.

No. 21.—From Mr. W. H. Shrubsole.

"I had a son—a lad of sixteen—at sea, in the capacity of an apprentice on board a British barque. One night, while in bed, I suddenly awoke, and saw with great distinctness an apparition of the upper half of my son stretched out on his back on a flat surface by the bedside. He appeared as if in his usual working dress, and I saw his features without the slightest obscurity. He was apparently writhing in pain, and yet unable to do more than move his head a little. Although I seemed to see him close to me, I yet felt that I was powerless to help, and this sense of inability caused me extreme mental distress. After a while the vision faded, and a period elapsed that I cannot correctly estimate. Then I again saw his form, prone as before, and with the features still indicating great pain; but this time it was at the opposite end of the room.

[In a letter dated 25th April, 1894, Mr. Shrubsole explains that there were two wardrobes in different parts of the room, and that the figure on its successive appearances seemed to occupy a shelf first in one of these wardrobes, then in the other.]

\* *Journal*, S.P.R., April, 1896.



"The consciousness of inability to relieve still possessed me, till the vision faded and I fell asleep. On awaking in the morning I had a clear recollection of the painful vision, and for weeks I could not shake off the impression that my son had sustained some serious injury. At last, to my great relief, a letter from him came to hand. In it was narrated rather briefly how he had fallen to the deck in consequence of the breaking of a rotten rope on which he was hauling, and that in consequence he was totally helpless for more than a week. I had not recorded the exact date of the vision, but as nearly as I could make out at the time of reading the letter, the date corresponded with that of the accident. On his return home, I eagerly asked my boy for the particulars of the occurrence, taking care not to put leading questions, and to keep him ignorant of my experience till he had told me all. I learned that he was stunned by the concussion, and that the first thing he was conscious of was that some persons were lifting him up. Finding him helpless, they laid him down again on the deck. The captain presently came and asked him if any bones were broken, to which he could only indistinctly reply. Then the captain told some one to draw him to one side of the deck, and said that he would come all right in a few hours. The poor lad remained there without attention until some sympathetic member of the crew carefully lifted him from where he was lying and carried him to his bunk in the deckhouse, where he lay for eight days. Making further enquiry, and taking the chronological difference into account, I found that the accident happened at an hour when I am usually in bed. Having thus stated the facts, I direct attention particularly to the coincidence (1st) in time of the accident and of my consciousness of it; (2nd) that my son lay for some time in two different places, and that the apparition was thus seen by me, and (3rd) that he felt most pain in his head and upper part of back, and this was evident to me at the time."

Sheerness-on-Sea.

W. H. SHRUBSOLE.

The conduct of the Captain on this and other occasions led to legal proceedings, and from an affidavit made by the son on May 23rd, 1889, we find that the incident took place on March 7th, 1887. The exact time relation between the accident and the vision cannot now be determined. The two did not apparently coincide, as stated by Mr. Shrubsole (he had reckoned the difference in longitude the wrong way), but it seems clear that the vision came before Mr. Shrubsole knew of the accident by normal means.\*

\* *Journal*, S.P.R., June, 1895.

We must now turn to the experimental production of telepathic hallucinations. The earliest case with which we are acquainted is recorded in a book published in 1822, *Der Magnetismus und die allgemeine Weltsprache*. Herr Wesermann, the author, was government assessor and chief inspector of roads at Düsseldorf. His book was written at a time when Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism was making a great sensation in Germany. Having collected numerous instances of community of sensation, clairvoyance and similar wonders, Wesermann determined to experiment for himself in impressing his thoughts on his neighbours. His first five experiments were so extraordinarily successful as to be worth quoting in full. In four cases, it will be seen, the impression emerged in a dream. In the fifth it resulted in a waking hallucination which was shared by two persons.

No. 22.

*First Experiment at a distance of five miles.*

"I endeavoured to acquaint my friend the Hofkammerrath of G— (whom I had not seen, and to whom I had not written for thirteen years) with the fact of my intended visit by presenting my form to him in his sleep through the force of my will. When I unexpectedly went to him on the following evening he evinced his astonishment at having seen me in a dream on the preceding night."

*Second Experiment at a distance of three miles.*

"Madame W., in her sleep, was to hear a conversation between me and two other persons relating to a certain secret, and when I visited her on the third day she told me all that had been said and showed her astonishment at the remarkable dream."

*Third Experiment at a distance of one mile.*

"An aged person in G— was to see in a dream the funeral procession of my deceased friend S. ; and when I visited her on the next day her first words were that she had in her sleep seen a funeral procession, and on enquiring had learnt that I was the corpse. Here then was a slight error."

*Fourth Experiment at a distance of one-eighth of a mile.*

"Herr Doctor B. desired a trial to convince him, whereupon I represented to him a nocturnal street brawl. He saw it in his dream to his great astonishment."

*Fifth Experiment at a distance of nine miles.*

"A lady, who had been dead five years, was to appear to Lieutenant —n in a dream at 10.30 p.m. and incite him to good deeds. At half-past ten, contrary to expectation, Herr —n had not gone to bed, but was discussing the French campaign with his friend Lieutenant S— in the ante-room. Suddenly the door of the room opened, the lady entered dressed in white, with a black kerchief and uncovered head, greeted S— with her hand three times in a friendly manner; then turned to —n, nodded to him, and returned again through the doorway.

"As this story, related to me by Lieutenant —n, seemed to be too remarkable from a psychological point of view for the truth of it not to be duly established, I wrote to Lieutenant S—, who was living six miles away, and asked him to give me his account of it. He sent me the following reply:—

" . . . . On the 13th of March, 1817, Herr —n came to pay me a visit at my lodgings about a league from A—. He stayed the night with me. After supper, and when we were both undressed, I was sitting on my bed and Herr —n was standing by the door of the next room on the point also of going to bed. This was about half-past ten. We were speaking partly about indifferent subjects and partly about the events of the French campaign. Suddenly the door out of the kitchen opened without a sound, and a lady entered, very pale, taller than Herr —n, about five feet four inches in height, strong and broad of figure, dressed in white, but with a large black kerchief which reached to below the waist. She entered with bare head, greeted me with the hand three times in complimentary fashion, turned round to the left towards Herr —n, and waved her hand to him three times; after which the figure quietly, and again without any creaking of the door, went out. We followed at once in order to discover whether there were any deception, but found nothing. The strangest thing was this, that our night-watch of two men whom I had shortly before found on the watch were now asleep, though at my first call they were on the alert, and that the door of the room which always opens with a good deal of noise did not make the slightest sound when opened by the figure. S."

D—n, January 11th, 1818.

The hallucinatory nature of the phantasm in this case is clear. It is only by accident, indeed, that the apparition came in the percipient's waking hours, instead of in dream as Wesermann intended; and the figure was not even Wesermann's own, but one shaped in his imagination. Wesermann appears to have made further experiments, some of which, as might have been anticipated, were unsuccessful, but

unfortunately no details of his later trials have been published.\*

In the course of the last twenty-five years several successful experiments of the kind have been tried, the percipients, of course, being in every case kept in ignorance of the experiment.†

One case of the kind may be quoted in which the agent achieved a result which he did not foresee. The account was procured for the American branch of the S.P.R. by Dr. Holbrook, who is acquainted with the persons concerned and had heard of the incident some years before it was written down.

No. 23.—From Mr. B. F. Sinclair.

Lakewood,

June 12th, 1894.

"On the 5th of July, 1887, I left my home in Lakewood to go to New York to spend a few days. My wife was not feeling well when I left, and after I had started I looked back and saw her standing in the door looking disconsolate and sad at my leaving. The picture haunted me all day, and at night, before I went to bed, I thought I would try to find out if possible her condition. I had undressed, and was sitting on the edge of the bed, when I covered my face with my hands and willed myself in Lakewood at home to see if I could see her. After a little, I seemed to be standing in her room before the bed, and saw her lying there looking much better. I felt satisfied she was better, and so spent the week more comfortably regarding her condition. On Saturday I went home. When she saw me she remarked, 'I don't know whether I am glad to see you or not, for I thought something had happened to you. I saw you standing in front of the bed the night (about 8.30 or before 9.0) you left, as plain as could be, and I have been worrying myself about you ever since. I sent to the office and to the depôt daily to get some message from you.' After explaining my effort to find out her condition, everything became plain to her. She had seen me when I was trying to see her and find out her condition. I thought at the time I was going to see her and make her see me.

B. F. SINCLAIR."

\* See the letter in Nasse's *Zeitschrift für psychische Arzte*, vol iii, p. 758.

† See the cases quoted in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i, pp. 93, 104, 109; also the Author's *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, pp. 226-246, and *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, pp. 112-119.

**Mrs. Sinclair writes :—**

“I remember this experience well. I saw him as plain as if he had been there in person. I did not see him in his night clothes, but in a suit that hung in the closet at home. It made me very anxious, for I felt that some accident or other had befallen him. I was on the rack all the time till Saturday, and if he had not come home then, I should have sent to him to find out if anything was wrong.

**H. M. SINCLAIR.”**

Mr. George Sinclair, the son, writes that he remembers the incident well, and that his mother was almost crazy until his father returned on the Saturday evening.\*

Space will not permit of the citation of further cases of phantasms of the living. In the next chapter we must consider what conclusions (if any) may be drawn tentatively from the reported cases of phantasms of the dead.

\* *Journal, S.P.R.*, June 1895.

## CHAPTER VIII

## GHOSTS OF THE DEAD

So far we have endeavoured to show that the life-like apparitions, occasionally seen during the illness or at the moment of death of the persons whom they represent, are not ghosts but hallucinations. But though hallucinations, we have seen reason to believe that in some cases they may be really connected with the person whom they represent; that they are waking dreams in some fashion inspired by his thought. But if apparitions of the living may be inspired by the thoughts of the living, may not apparitions of the dead be inspired by the thoughts of the dead? We know no reason why they should not be. Obviously in regions where the wisest of us must confess his complete ignorance, no one can be justified in asserting that such a thing as the action of the dead on the mind of the living is impossible—or even improbable. It is simply a question of facts. Do the facts as so far ascertained indicate such a possibility, or do they not? That is the question which we must consider in the present chapter.

In the first place we must note that evidence of the kind required is likely from the nature of the case to be much less abundant and much less conclusive than the evidence for phantasms of the living. For in these days of telegraphy we know of the death of anyone near to us so soon after the event that there is little opportunity for the establishment of the hypothetical connection from the dead themselves, since, obviously, we cannot lay stress upon dreams or hallucinations occurring after the death was known to the percipient. Such

dreams and phantasms must be dismissed, as being indistinguishable from purely subjective experiences; unless, indeed, they purport to convey information beyond the percipient's knowledge, or furnish other proof indicating an origin outside his own mind.

In the first chapter we cited several cases where the figure was seen after the death of the person whom it represented. In two of the cases—the figure of John Blaney seen by Mr. Mordaunt Gore Booth, and the figure of Senor Cavalcante seen by Frau Rieken—the interval was one of two or three hours only. In such a case we should not be justified in assuming that the telepathic impulse came from the mind of the dead. We know that crystal visions constantly reproduce impressions made upon the percipient's mind hours or even days before, which do not emerge in the upper consciousness until the reverie induced by gazing at the crystal furnishes them with the opportunity.\* Recent experiments in hypnotism—the most fruitful source of our knowledge of the phenomena of the subconscious life—have taught us that impressions may remain thus latent for days or weeks, and ultimately emerge in a hallucination or be shaped into a purposive action. It is not unreasonable, then, to assume—and we should hardly be justified in any other assumption—that the slight interval in these two cases between the death and the hallucination may have been due to impressions received from the dying person lying latent until the conditions were favourable for their emergence into the surface consciousness. A hallucination may be described generally in Myers' words as a message sent from the subconscious strata to the upper consciousness, and all such messages must wait until the wires are clear, and the operator at the other end disengaged.

But there are a few well authenticated cases in which the first news of the death of a friend has

\* See, for instance, the Article on Crystal Vision by X, (Miss Goodrich Freer), *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. v., p. 486.

been conveyed to the percipient by a hallucination, or what is for the present purpose the same thing, a dream, occurring many days after the event. Such is Case No. 5, quoted in the first chapter, where Mr. Tandy saw the apparition of Canon Robinson. A case similar in many respects to Mr. Tandy's may be quoted here. It has the advantage of being authenticated by contemporary entries in a diary which Mr. F. W. H. Myers was allowed to inspect.

No. 24. From Mr. Cameron Grant. Mr. Grant was at the time in the interior of Brazil. On the 25th December, 1885, his diary has the following entry:—

"There was something on my mind all day and yesterday—a sense of a death or loss of some one dear to me. I spoke to E.C. [Mr. Catlin, the Manager] about it: and I don't know how it is, but as I wrote the above, . . . . [a member of Lord Z.'s family] has been constantly in my thoughts."

The next writing in the diary relating to the subject occurs on the 26th January. 1886:—

"Impression about 1 o'clock, and dreaming and reasoning therefrom on death."

On the following day, the 27th of January, there is an entry as follows:—

"Very tired, but did not sleep a wink all night. I am sure that something has happened to [a member of Lord Z.'s family]. I heard every hour strike, and kept thinking of [all the members of the family] but *not* of the dear old gentleman [*i.e.*, imagining *them* in sorrow, but not Lord Z. himself]. I got up and wanted to draw him. His features seemed before me. I had before shown Mr. Catlin a face in the *Graphic* that was like him, also that of a dead man. I had the greatest difficulty not to draw his portrait with his head forward and sunk on his breast, as if he had been sitting in a room with a window on his right hand and an old man-servant;—and then his head just went forward, and he fell asleep. Weeks ago I thought of him—some time about Christmas; and ever since I have been feeling [pity, etc., for members of family]."

Now on the 24th December, 1885, as it afterwards appeared, Lord Z. died; and on the 28th January, the day following the last entry, Mr. Grant received a Scotch newspaper from which he learnt the fact



of the death. It afterwards appeared, from his conversations with Lady Z. and other members of the family, that his impression, which in his original account is described at some length and was definite enough for him to draw it, accurately corresponded with the scene of the death itself. But this is not the point in the case to which attention is here directed. The significant point is that two impressions, as attested by the diary, were received by Mr. Grant, one on the day of the death, the other a month later, just before receipt of the newspaper.\*

We have other accounts of a dream or other indication of a death occurring at a considerable interval after the event, but immediately before receipt of the news. Thus Mrs. Haly one morning saw the shadowy figure of a nephew in her room, and received news of his death in Australia by the morning's post. Miss Kitching dreamt on the 23rd August, 1888, of the death of her brother in Algeria, and received news of the death a few hours later. The death had taken place on the 20th. Mr. George King, on December 2nd, 1874, dreamt of his brother being wrecked. On the following morning the newspapers contained an account of the foundering of his brother's ship, which had taken place on November 29th. There are other cases of the kind, and they are sufficiently numerous to suggest a connection between the dream and the newspaper, letter or telegram which immediately follows it. Such a connection is scarcely to be reconciled with the assumption that the dream warning proceeded from the mind of a dead man. But it can be explained if we assume that knowledge of the death had reached others in the vicinity of the dreamer a few hours before, and that their thought inspired his dream. We know unfortunately too little of the circumstances to work out this theory in detail. But it is fair to assume that Mrs Haly's nephew had

\* See the fuller account in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. viii., pp. 212-3. The remarks within brackets are interpolated by Mr. Myers.

other friends in England, and that news of the death may have reached them the previous evening by the same mail; in Mr. King's case, the foundering of the ship would have been known at least in the printing office and by the owners of the vessel. Mr. Grant and Lord Z. may have had common friends in Brazil, who may have learnt of the death from the newspapers a day or two before Mr. Grant. In Miss Kitching's case news of the death was conveyed by a telegram which had been intentionally held over in New York. The source of the dream in this case may perhaps be sought in the mind of the person who despatched the telegram.

The nature of the impression made upon Mr. Grant's mind would again point to some such source. His thoughts are filled, not with the death of Lord Z., but with the sorrow of the surviving members of the family. There are other narratives in which again we should naturally look for the origin of the telepathic impulse in the mind of the survivors. No. 12, where Mr. Elliott saw in a dream a letter announcing the date of the death, is a case in point. So is the case in which the death of a baby is represented; or, as in one narrative published by the S.P.R., the death and details of the funeral arrangements.\*

An interesting dream published in *Phantasms of the Living* may be cited in this connection. About March, 1857, Mrs. Menneer, in England, dreamt that she saw her brother standing headless at the foot of her bed, with his head on a coffin by his side. The dream was at once told, but its exact date, was, unfortunately, not recorded. It afterwards appeared that the brother, Mr. Wellington, at about the date of the dream had been killed and decapitated by the Chinese at Sarawak. It is difficult to account for this dream on the hypothesis of telepathy from the dying man. It does indeed at first sight suggest the agency of the dead. But it was afterwards ascertained that Mr. Wellington's head was given up to

\* See the Author's *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, pp. 213-4.

his friends on the following day; and it is to their minds that we naturally look for the source of this realistic dream vision.\*

In short, while there are many cases which directly indicate that the source of a dream of death must be sought rather in the mind of the surviving friends than in that of the dead man himself, it is clear that the possibility can rarely be excluded. The dreams of finding drowned persons, and especially the dream of W. Moir already referred to, are so far almost the only examples which do not readily lend themselves to this interpretation, and these cases are clearly too few and too obscure to warrant us at present in basing any hypothesis upon them.

Nor again can the action of the dead be safely inferred from a simultaneous impression of the dead man's presence received by two or more persons independently. Let us take a case in which four persons, independently, within a period of about twelve hours had impressions relating to a dead person.

No. 25.—The case was originally communicated to the Society for Psychical Research by a member, Mr. M. A young lady of his acquaintance, L.F., had died in November, 1905, at the age of about eighteen.

Not long after her death, while travelling and dozing with his eyes shut in a railway carriage, Mr. M. saw her face in a sort of mind's-eye vision. It appeared perfectly distinct and life-like, and seemed to smile and look at him. The sight startled him into complete wakefulness, and the vision impressed him a good deal, because it seemed to him quite unique in his experience. . . . He mentioned this incident to Mrs. F., L.'s mother, but he believed that the rest of the family did not know of it. On March 19th, 1906, he and Mrs. F. were at the station, seeing her sister, Miss P., off for Scotland, and remembering his own experience, he hoped that a similar one

\* See *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i, p. 365. *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. viii, p. 208, and the *Times*, 29th April, 1857.

might occur to her on the journey. This wish was, of course, only expressed mentally; he said nothing about it either to Miss P. or to Mrs. F., and did not hear till some time later from Mrs. F. that it had been fulfilled. The sequel will be found in the following narratives.

From Mrs. F.

28th April, 1906.

"On Sunday evening, March 25th, about 8.30, I was sitting alone. I saw my daughter's photograph (who passed away in November). I felt her presence but *did not* see anything."

Mrs. F., writing on April 20th, adds that on the Monday [March 26th] Mr. M. told her of a dream relating to L. which he had had on the previous night; and that on the Tuesday she received letters from her sister Miss P. and her daughter Mrs. A. recounting similar experiences. The original letters have unfortunately been destroyed; but both ladies have written later accounts.

From Mr. M.

1st April, 1906.

"About a week or ten days ago [Mem. April 23/06.—I have every reason to believe that the night of my dream referred to was that of Sunday, March 25/06] I dreamt that I was in a sort of cellar with other people, Mrs. F. being near me on my right. At my right front was somewhat like the corner of a brick wall. There were bricks in the structure of the cellar. This wall ran directly into the background, but on the right there was space communicating with where I was. I seemed to be at a spiritualist séance. A form appeared in front of me—I was facing to the background—but slightly to my right. As it became definite I said, 'Why, it's L.!' She replied in a joyous lively way, 'Of course it is.' She seemed absolutely natural, and the picture of health. The complexion was of the pink of health. I made an exclamation and my voice partly woke me up, and I knew that I was in bed. Then I made some remark asking her to show herself to her mother."

From Mrs. A.

April 18th, 1906.

"I was lying on the sofa resting on Sunday afternoon, March 25th, when I seemed to see L. come into the room. She put her head between the curtains with such a roguish smile on her face, and then came striding in and sat down on a chair with her hands on her knees in quite her old natural

way. I was quite wide awake, which made it seem all the more forcible, and really I felt her presence so much that I sat up to speak to her. Immediately afterwards I went to my bedroom and she was with me. Often when I am alone she seems to be with me."

From Miss P., written on May 13th, 1906.\*

"On March 19th I was travelling to Scotland. I was alone in the carriage some time between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. I closed my eyes for some time. While doing so L. appeared to me. She wore her navy blue and looked just as she used to do. She laughed, looked bright, and disappeared. A week later, on March 26th, between one and two in the morning, I saw her again. She was in grey with scarlet. She just looked at me in her old way. I was awake but lying on my bed. I did not know [Mrs. A.] and Mr. M. had also visions of her."

It is difficult to ascribe the occurrence of these four almost simultaneous visions to pure coincidence. But on the other hand, it clearly would not be safe to argue the influence of the dead girl. Miss P.'s vision on the 19th of March may have been inspired by Mr. M.'s wish, and the four visions or dreams of March 25th-26th, may have had a common source in the minds of the survivors. It would seem in fact that in no case of the kind can we hope in the present state of our knowledge to find definite proof of the influence of the dead. The possibility of telepathy from the living blocks the way, and must continue to do so until we are in a position to say that telepathy could not have acted in the given circumstances. We cannot escape from our own shadows.

A substantial advance would have been made, however, in the direction of obtaining the desired proof, if we could find that phantasms of the dead reveal things probably unknown to any living person. There are a few cases where it is difficult to suppose that the facts communicated by the dream or daylight phantasm can have been within living

\* Miss P. had written of her dream to her sister, Mrs. F., immediately after it occurred, but, as said, the letter was destroyed. On the 5th April she wrote a briefer but entirely concordant account. See the full account of the case in *Journal*, S.P.R., October, 1906.

knowledge. The discovery of the bodies of drowned persons has been already discussed. A few other cases will be found in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research.\* But most of the recorded cases are remote in date, or uncorroborated, or suffer from some other evidential defect. The well authenticated examples of this type are very few, and even in these some other possible explanation of the facts is generally indicated.

There is, however, one particular type of phantasm of the dead which is supported by several well attested examples, in which the appearance of the vision seems to be determined by the influence of the locality. The following narrative will serve to illustrate the type.

No. 26.—From Mrs. Verrall. 1906.†

Mrs. Verrall was on a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Z. On the Sunday morning she received in church the impression of a figure which lasted during the greater part of the service. On coming out of church she described what she had seen, and Mr. Z. immediately took down the following notes of her description.

"Mrs. Verrall came to us at A. for a short visit on Friday (date given) in the present year. It was her first visit to this place. On the following Sunday morning, immediately after we returned from church, she gave to Mrs. Z., Dr. Verrall, and myself the description given below of a phantom figure which she had seen while in church. The following notes of her description were taken down by me immediately, and no suggestion as to the identity of the phantom was made by any of us until the description was completed."

*Description of phantom figure seen by Mrs. Verrall.*

"Soon after entering the church felt a strong impression that something was going to happen. First appearance of visionary figure was shortly after the service began. The figure

\* Especially vol. vi, pp. 13-65, 314-357; vol. viii, pp. 170 and 252. See also Mr. Myers' *Human Personality*, and the Author's *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, pp. 213-244.

† Dates as well as names are, by request of Mr. Z., suppressed in this account. Mrs. Verrall's narrative was written within a few days of the incident. But Mr. Z.'s notes, it will be seen, were written within an hour or two of the vision.

was that of a tall, aristocratic-looking man—not a soldier or clergyman—seen three-quarter face, from the left. It was standing near the vestry door, looking down the church. Had a feeling that it was appropriate that he should be where he was; he seemed to be associated with the locality, not with any person.

“The shoulders seemed not to be quite wide enough for the height. Face longish, with nothing very distinctive about it: nose longish, skin of face darkish and sallow. Age 40 to 45. Face suggested that of Mr. Q., but was better looking. Wore moustache, beard, and whiskers. Moustache not large; whiskers short; beard not long, nor very thick, but squarish, and following lines of face. Colour of beard, brown. Hair brown, smooth on head, but standing loose round face: might be thick, curly hair, cut rather short.

“Figure wore black frock-coat, with long skirts, grey trousers, grey tie, of silk material, hanging full and loose, plainly visible below short beard. The general appearance was that of a well-groomed man. A pince-nez of gold, with curved spring, hung by a cord on right side of body.

“Right arm hung loose, ungloved. Left arm was bent at elbow across breast, and held stiffly: the hand was gloved, and held in a line with the arm. The impression of this hand and arm was the strongest received.

“Had an impression of something red in connexion with him,—something small. This was not visualised, nor located on the person. The form of the thing was not recognised. Felt that it might be an order which the man was not then wearing.

“Here Mrs. Verrall's description ends.

“Before giving this description, Mrs. Verrall asked whether C. D., a person (now deceased) known to her by name as intimately connected with the place, held his left arm in any peculiar fashion. I replied that he did not: and she then went on to relate what she had seen. After hearing her description of the figure, I suggested that it might be E. D., a brother of C. D., and also deceased, and whom I have never seen alive. I made the suggestion because the description recalled, in several particulars, the head and face of an engraved portrait of E. D. which I had seen in this neighbourhood. I may add that Mrs. Verrall had had no opportunity of seeing this or any other portrait of E. D. I have none.

“On the following day I took Mrs. Verrall to see the engraved portraits of C. D. and E. D. She at once confidently recognised in E. D. the face which she had seen. The portrait was brought into my house, and Mrs. Z., Dr. Verrall and myself all agreed that the description of the figure seen might well have been the description of the portrait. Dr. Verrall and

myself, who know Mr. Q., saw that it was natural that the face seen by Mrs. Verrall should remind her of Mr. Q.

"Within the next few days I found from inquiries made by Mrs. Z. and myself from three persons interviewed at different times, and who had often seen E. D. during his lifetime, that it was his habit to carry his left arm bent at the elbow across the breast. I also discovered that he was a tall, thick-set man, and that he limped with the left leg, having (as it was believed) broken it twice. I believe that it is common with people who limp with one leg to carry the corresponding arm across the body in a position similar to that seen in the phantom figure."\*

E. D., Mr. Z. adds, was a Member of Parliament who died about twenty years ago. Mr. Z.'s account is confirmed by Mrs. Z. and Dr. Verrall.

There are, as said, several cases of this type. Thus Mr. John E. Husband, sleeping in a hotel in Madeira, saw an apparition of a young man in flannels, and subsequently recognised his phantom visitor in a photograph of a young man who had died in the room a few months previously.† Mrs. O'Donnell when staying in some lodgings in Hove saw an apparition which was identified from her description as resembling that of a former lodger who had committed suicide in the house the previous winter.‡ Again, a lady taking an afternoon nap in her bedroom on the day of her arrival at the Convent of St. Quay, Pontrioux, awoke to see the figure of a venerable priest kneeling at her bedside. On telling her story she learnt that no man was on the premises, but from her description the figure was recognised as that of the Bishop of St. Brioux, who had been in the habit of staying in this particular room when he visited the convent. The funeral of the Bishop was taking place about sixteen miles off on the same afternoon.§

\* *Journal*, S.P.R., July, 1906.

† *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. v, p. 416.

‡ *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural*, p. 249.

§ *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. v, p. 466. For other cases of the type see Mr. Myers' list (*ibid*) p. 473; and for some recent instances see Miss Atkinson's case (*Journal*, S.P.R., April, 1894), Lady Bedingfield's narrative of a figure seen at Costessey Park (*Journal*, May, 1899), and Miss Bedford's case (*Journal*, July, 1905).



Unquestionably these cases lend at first sight some support to the popular conception of a ghost, as an entity having visible form and spatial relations. But the aptness of the explanation evaporates on reflection. We have still, if we adopt the ghost theory, to meet the great clothes difficulty; and though there may no doubt seem to be some fitness in a bishop visiting for the last time a spot he had loved when on earth, or in a suicide haunting the scene of his unhappy life, it is not so easy to understand why a blameless member of parliament should pose to a stranger in the family church. It is not indeed easy on any theory to explain the connection of the phantasm with a particular locality. But it may be suggested that these visions were possibly reflections from the minds of those who had known the dead. The sorrowing nuns of St. Quay might well picture in their thoughts their bishop as still present in the room which they associated with him in his lifetime. The friends of the unhappy suicide might still be brooding over the last scenes. Those who had known the member of parliament might occasionally call up the vision of his figure in a familiar place and attitude. And the presence of a sensitive percipient in the midst of the scene pictured in their imagination might somehow facilitate a telepathic transference. I am far from suggesting that this essay towards an explanation is satisfactory. In fact it is easier to hint a psychological explanation than to attempt to conceive one in terms of neural processes and cell-discharges.

But the reports are there; it is difficult summarily to dismiss them as the mere random products of illusion and unconscious misrepresentation; and they in turn help to illustrate, and will ultimately perhaps serve to explain a closely allied type—the ghost of the so-called haunted house. For there is at any rate this much ground for the belief in haunted houses, that there are indubitably cases in which phantasmal figures have been repeatedly seen in

the same house by successive observers, some of whom have apparently been in complete ignorance of the previous appearances of the ghost. The Society for Psychological Research has received very many reports of haunted houses. In a few cases, where opportunity served, the Society or some of its leading members have rented for a short period a house in which former occupants had reported the occurrence of inexplicable sights and sounds. A brief summary of three of these cases will serve to show what a real ghost is like. For obvious reasons the actual situations of the houses are suppressed.

No. 27.

The house in this case is a modern one, built close upon the high road in the village of W—, about 40 miles from London. We have the evidence at first hand of three curates who successively occupied the house; and at second hand of the landlady who received the first two curates as lodgers, and of several servants and others employed by the Rev. Mr. V., who occupied the house with his wife.

The Rev. H. A. S., writing in July, 1885, tells us that he occupied lodgings in this house for about twelve months, from midsummer, 1871, till August, 1872. He was much puzzled and disturbed by sounds of footsteps up and down the stairs at night; but saw nothing unusual.

The Rev. E. G. P. lodged in the house from December, 1872, till 1875. He gave us an account of his experiences in 1885. He was much disturbed by loud and inexplicable noises at night—"footsteps, loud explosions, sounds like the falling of trays, stampings, rustlings, sounds of heavy furniture being moved," also sighs and groans. Once he heard a sound in the corner of his bedroom "like the clashing of cymbals"; and once he followed invisible footsteps down the stairs into the dining-room, "and adjured it in the name of God. There was no answer, and in a moment or two, with more

terror than I had ever felt before, I returned upstairs."

Dr. P. himself never saw anything of a ghostly nature, but he tells us that an old friend of his was staying in the house with him in May, 1874, on the night when Dr. P. was disturbed by unusual noises and followed the phantom footsteps downstairs. The old gentleman was much agitated at the time, and just before his death in December, 1875, he told Dr. P. that he had on that night seen the figure of a tall man in a grey woollen dressing-gown standing at the foot of his bed.

Mrs. H., the landlady, told Mrs. Henry Sidgwick in 1885 that she had constantly heard inexplicable noises in the house. On one occasion only, in July, 1878, had she seen the ghost. It was about 8 p.m. She had been giving her husband—an invalid—his supper upstairs; the servant had gone out to fetch some stout for her own supper; in going out of the room Mrs. H. saw a tall figure standing against the door opposite. It was a tall figure dressed in white—like a surplice. She did not see the hands. It was an old gentleman with a bald head, fine forehead, and beautiful blue eyes. They looked straight into each other's faces—she caught its eyes—she looked down for a moment, and the figure had vanished. Mrs. H. used occasionally to hear three heavy sighs in the house, and once a whisper came at the foot of her bed, "Three more stages and then death."

The Rev. J. F. V. gave us his account also in 1885. He and Mrs. V. took the house in September, 1882, and left in September, 1884, because Mrs. V.'s health was seriously affected by the uncanny sights and sounds. Mr. V. had heard from Dr. P. of the latter's experiences in the house, and had been inclined to laugh at them. Mr. V. himself saw nothing of a ghostly nature in the house. But he heard many terrifying sounds, as of the clashing of fire-irons close at hand, footsteps, loud crashes, a ringing

noise as of metal at the head of the bedstead, and "an agonised, indescribable, horror-stricken moan." But he relates many apparitions seen by others during his tenancy.

Mrs. V. awake in bed one night saw a man's head and part of his body in a white dress, coming in through the half-open door. She awakened Mr. V., who saw that the door was shut and did not investigate.

Sarah S., a servant, on going up at 9 p.m. to light her mistress' bedroom fire, saw a man in white come out of the dressing-room, and, brushing past her, disappear into a cupboard on the landing.

About 9.30, morning, the same witness saw come out of the dining-room and pass into the drawing-room, shutting the door behind it, the figure of a tall woman in black, wearing a dress made like a sacque, with her hair upon the top of her head. She told the cook and Mrs. V., and fruitless search was made.

Lizzie P., the cook, on April 9th, 1884, "was on her way to the lower back-kitchen when suddenly a figure rose up in the doorway before her. The figure was of a woman in a long black dress, a face very white, eyes shining red, like a ferret's." It seemed to stand and look at her, but vanished at her terrified cry. The only exit from the back-kitchen was bolted. The cook and her fellow-servant were panic-stricken.

Clara M., about 4 p.m. on May 3rd, 1884, heard footsteps descending the stairs, and saw through the open door a shadow as of a person outside. No living person could be traced.

Annie C., in August, 1884, about 9.30 p.m., was with Lizzie P. in the spare bedroom. "Annie had just been to the cupboard to take out the bath. On going to the bed to turn it down she faced the cupboard and saw a man in white standing against the black clothes which were hanging there, facing her

and looking very cross." Lizzie P. saw nothing, and the figure vanished when Annie cried out.

Mr. V. records his conviction that the house is "under the influence of diabolical agency, or of departed spirits who have not found rest."

The Society for Psychical Research took the house on agreement from Lady Day to Michaelmas, 1885. The house was actually occupied during ten or eleven weeks of this period, for a few days or weeks at a time. About fifty persons slept in the house. Nothing unusual was recorded except that on one night steps were heard descending the stairs, and on investigation the back-door was found standing open—probably a practical joke by some villager.

Mrs. Henry Sidgwick and Professor Macalister, who resided in the house for short periods, have each pointed out that the house was an extremely noisy one; and that since it faced the road outside sounds could be heard very distinctly in some of the rooms. A mysterious stain in an upper room, upon which Dr. P. laid much stress, was ascertained by Professor Macalister to consist of paint.\*

#### No. 28.

The haunted house in the next case, situated in a country village, was in the occupation of Miss S. and her mother from the summer of 1884 until the summer of 1888. The case is remarkable for the number and variety of the phenomena and the number of the witnesses. We have accounts at first hand from Miss S., the chief narrator; Mrs. S.; a trustworthy servant, Emilie Thorne; her sister, Polly Trays; another servant, Mrs. Serpell; and three visitors, Miss Auchmuty and Miss Blencowe, of Cheltenham, and Miss Humble, of St. Heliers, Jersey. All the accounts, except where otherwise stated, were written between November, 1887, and March, 1888. It should be

\* *Journal*, S.P.R., February, 1886.

added that from the careful enquiry made it appears that two of the witnesses, Miss S. herself and Mrs. Serpell, had previously seen a "ghost" or hallucination, in each case on one occasion only. Miss Humble had also on one occasion seen a figure, out of doors, for which she could not account; but this may have been a real figure.

Miss S. writes:—"The first thing that struck us as peculiar about our house was hearing footsteps in empty rooms. On January 8th, 1885, we had been in the house about six months. My mother and I were in the dining-room; there was one maid in the house, and no one else. I was lying half asleep on the sofa. I heard some one walking up and down in the room overhead, which was then a spare bedroom (now the drawing-room). I was too sleepy at first to think it strange, though my mother more than once tried to call my attention to it. At last she roused me, and said some one was in the house." A thorough search of the house was made, the gardener was called in to assist and search the roof. No trace of any intruder was found. After this date, footsteps were frequently heard at all hours by various inmates of the house. Doors were heard and sometimes seen to open and close without apparent cause. Mrs. S. heard a child laugh and clap its hands behind her chair. Loud bangs were heard, and sounds of blows struck with iron, a gruff voice speaking inarticulately, whisperings, etc., etc. A figure was first seen by Miss S. "One afternoon, about half past four, I saw a fair haired girl standing by the top of the stairs. It was dark. I did not notice her face, but supposed it to be the maid; she was dressed in a greyish or mauve dress." Miss S. was surprised at the colour, as the family were in mourning; investigated at once and found that it was not the maid. Miss S. did not mention what she had seen, but later, in October, 1886, being alone in the house with her friend Miss Blencowe, the latter, during Miss S'. temporary

absence from the room, saw "the figure of a young girl, dressed in a lilac print dress, about 5ft. 3in. in height, standing on the top of the front stairs." Miss Blencowe told Miss S. on her return, and then learnt of the previous apparition. Miss S. saw the same figure again, this time in a room full of people, none of whom shared her experience.

On the morning of December 10th, 1887, Emilie Thorne, hearing her name three times repeated, went up the back stairs and found that no one had called her. She then saw, standing at the top of the front stairs, a figure dressed in light clothes, which she mistook for her mistress. When she found out her mistake she was much frightened. Emilie Thorne saw a similar figure on several other occasions.

On the 29th of December, 1887, Mrs. S. says, "I was coming down the attic stairs . . . a girl with fair hair in a lilac dress passed me; she looked right into my face; she was very pale, and had something the matter with one of her eyes."

Miss Humble writes that one night, when staying in the house, she awoke from sleep shortly before midnight, and saw by the firelight the figure of a woman standing close to her, the face turned away; hair half falling down her back, "dressed in a sort of loose Garibaldi body, and ordinary gathered skirt of a greyish tint."

At the end of December, 1887, Mrs. S. says that when lying awake in bed she saw a woman with brown hair hanging down her back, "she had on a slate-coloured silk dress and a red kind of opera cloak."

Miss S. saw the figure of a woman, "with dark hair and wearing a red (what I believed to be) dressing-jacket," bending over her in bed. She thought it to be her mother and kissed her, turning round for the purpose.

Emilie Thorne writes:—"I was standing in the garden one Sunday afternoon, and looking up at the

attic window. I saw a man, a dark swarthy looking man, with long black whiskers; his coat was buttoned up tight, and he was dressed like a merchant sailor. I have often seen that man in the same place."

Mary Trays (sister of the last witness), writes that she saw in the garden, in daylight, a figure "like a man with a long dark beard." Also one evening from the window she "saw a white figure walk up and down (in the front garden), and I was frightened."

Miss Humble writes that another night she woke up suddenly, and saw "not a woman but, at the corner of the fireplace furthest from me, a very evil looking man, dressed in what might be a white working suit. The eyes were dark and fixed upon me, and I own I was frightened, this experience was so horrible."

Mrs. Serpell writes that in February, 1886, she woke with a start, "and standing quite close to me was—well, I don't know what it was—but the most horrible, devilish face. I could see nothing but the face and hands, which kept working as if they were trying to get at me and something kept them back." She made the sign of the Cross, said her prayers, and the figure vanished—"but the look of baffled rage I shall never forget."

Lastly, Miss S. tells us that Winnie Thorne (aged 12) used frequently at night to see in the garden the figure of a man, "dark face and whiskers cut high round neck." She would run down in her night-dress to tell her sister. Emilie looked but could not see the figure, which still continued visible to her sister.

For the sake of brevity I have omitted from this summary the accounts of the instant searches and other corroborative evidence tending to show that the various figures were not figures of flesh and blood. But it seems practically certain that, with one or two possible exceptions—e.g., the white figure seen by Mary Trays in the garden—the figures seen were hallucinations, or possibly in some cases



dreams. In August and September the house was taken by a member of the Society, and several persons went to stay there for the purpose of observation. Nothing inexplicable was heard or seen by any member of the party. But Mrs. H. Sidgwick, who stayed for some time, found the house both noisy and rickety; sounds and movements were readily transmitted from one part to another; and some of the sounds testified to by Miss S. and others were more or less successfully imitated.

It should be added that there was no record of the house being "haunted" before 1885, and that no legend is attached to it.

No. 29.

Miss L. Morris, writing June, 1888, relates that she went in October, 1882, to live with an aunt in a small terrace house in the south of England. On the first night of their tenancy, and for many nights in succession, they were disturbed and considerably frightened by the sound of heavy footsteps and other loud noises. About 5 p.m. one afternoon in November, 1882, when it was still light, Miss Morris, going into the back drawing-room to fetch some music, saw standing by the closed door the figure of a woman robed in the deepest black from head to foot, her face sad and pale. Miss Morris uttered a cry and the figure vanished. She told no one what she had seen.

In the winter of 1885 she again saw the figure of a woman in black walk slowly down the hall in front of her and disappear.

Throughout their occupancy of the house, which ceased in December, 1886, Miss Morris was continually disturbed by bangs, knockings on the doors, and other loud noises. For a period of some weeks the front door bell was rung so constantly that they had to remove it from the wire. Miss Morris had had no other hallucinations.

The house remained empty until November, 1887, when it was taken by Mrs. G., widow of an officer in

the Army, and her two daughters, aged about nine and ten.

Mrs. G. was disturbed about a fortnight after their entering by sobs, moans, and the sound of a voice saying, "Oh! do forgive me." Later came the tramping of feet and loud noises like the movement of furniture. Loud knocks were also heard on bedroom doors. One morning Mrs. G. heard her elder daughter, "Edith," give a loud scream, and learnt from her that she had seen a dreadful white face peeping round the door. Both children were much frightened by this incident, and by the strange noises which they, as well as Mrs. G., heard at night. Later Edith said she had seen a little woman pass by her, and that she often heard the sound of "pitter-patter." Again, on February 6th, 1888, the younger child, "Florence," said that on passing a room she saw a man standing by the window staring fixedly. He had blue eyes, dark brown hair, and freckles. (The note in the diary of this incident runs, "[Florence] saw an apparition in brown at 7.30 a.m.") The children frequently saw lights in their bedroom, and Florence once saw a white skirt hanging down from the ceiling. On March 25th, on going up to bed, they both saw a figure in white. On another occasion Florence saw a figure crawling on the floor, as if it would spring on her.

Mrs. G., when washing her hands one morning, at about 10 a.m., saw two human faces at her elbow, which vanished instantly. She also heard a voice, which she thought was her child's, cry, "Darling." The children, who were in another part of the house, had not spoken.

Finally, on May 8th, as the children were nervous and unwell, Mrs. G. left the house, a servant remaining behind, with her mother and sister to keep her company. But the noises which they heard at night so frightened them that they also had to leave abruptly.

[The above account by Mrs. G. was written in

June, 1888, but most of the incidents were recorded at the time in a diary, which I was allowed to inspect.]

Anne H., the servant, corroborated Mrs. G.'s statement as to the figures seen by the children and the noises heard, especially after Mrs. G.'s departure. Anne one night in her bedroom saw a strange shadow, which went right along the window and passed on to the wall opposite.

I received from the two children, in July, 1888, a viva voce account of their experiences, which agreed with that given by Mrs. G.

Mrs. G.'s experiences became matter of common talk in the town, and a few days after her removal from the house three gentlemen paid visits to it on two different occasions. Two of these, Mr. W. O. D., barrister, and the Rev. G. O. wrote, in July, 1888, that on May 23rd they heard in the empty house bell-ringing and an unaccountable crash. Mr. O. also saw indistinctly a column of misty vapour. On May 28th, about 9.30 p.m., as they stood in the hall, Mr. O. saw a form glide from the back room to the front. Mr. D. saw only part of the dress of this "supernatural being." After Mr. O. had said prayers for exorcism and rest for the soul, the party left.

It should be added that it has been ascertained that in March, 1879, a woman hanged herself in the house. Rumours of this incident appear to have reached Mrs. G., though not until after the commencement of the disturbances.

An associate of the Society for Psychical Research occupied the house with his wife for about thirteen months, and about forty visitors slept in the house during the tenancy. Nothing abnormal was seen during the whole period, and only on a few occasions were unaccountable noises heard.

One other case may be briefly referred to in which the phenomena, in themselves by no means striking, have been exhaustively recorded by Miss

Goodrich Freer, in collaboration with the late Lord Bute.\*

The house, a shooting lodge in Scotland, appears to have earned the reputation of being haunted from some tenants who occupied it in 1896. The disturbances consisted of sounds, loud thumps, footsteps, heavy knockings, occasional groans and shrieks. One witness, Father H., told the late Lord Bute that when staying in the house he had seen, "between waking and sleeping," the image of a Crucifix somewhere on the wall.

The house was taken in February, 1897, by Colonel Taylor on behalf of the late Lord Bute (both members of the S.P.R.), and was occupied for over three months (February 2nd to May 14th) by Miss Freer, several members of the S.P.R., and some other persons. Miss Freer kept a daily journal of all the inexplicable happenings. From this it appears that noises of various kinds were frequently heard by several members of the party. They are described as loud clangs, knockings, footsteps, bangs, percussive or explosive noises, metallic sounds, voices in conversation, monotonous reading, sounds of heavy bodies falling, groans, footsteps of an old man shuffling in slippers, etc. Miss Freer heard the noises first, and throughout the period heard them most frequently. Miss Freer also on several occasions, always after nightfall, saw in a copse near the house, on the further side of a small burn, one or two figures in nun's dress. One other lady and one man, the Rev. M. Q., after they had heard what Miss Freer had seen, and when in her company, also saw the Nuns under similar circumstances. Several persons who could see nothing heard the Nun and her companion conversing; the sound coming to them through the sound of the murmuring burn, which ran between them and the ghostly figures. Also Mr. Q. saw the vision of a Crucifix.

\* *The Alleged Haunting of B— House*, Second Edition, 1900.

It is worth while having an exact contemporary record of a haunted house from a trained observer, in order that we may see upon how very slight a foundation some of these stories rest. There can be little doubt that the noises heard at B— House were based upon real sounds, distorted no doubt and exaggerated by the imagination. There are many possible sources for the noises heard. The house stands in a well-known seismic area; some of the noises may have been due to slight earth tremors, or to the gradual "settling" of the house consequent upon former tremors. Then there was a system of hot water pipes, which was in use during part of this tenancy; and some at least of the bedrooms were furnished with fixed basins, which had pipes communicating with the open air. Unfortunately neither Miss Freer nor any of her party appear to have realised the importance of making accurate observations and, where possible, experiments to determine how far the noises could be traced to normal causes.

The first point which will strike the critical reader in all these accounts is the great variety in the figures seen. The popular conception of a ghost is of a figure appearing in a definite shape and with a definite purpose. But the popular conception is by no means borne out by the majority of the well-attested first hand records. The three cases cited may be taken as typical in this respect. In the first narrative at least two figures are described—a tall man dressed in white or grey and a woman in black. In the second narrative we have at least four figures—a girl in a lilac print dress, a woman in grey with a red cloak, a dark man with whiskers dressed like a merchant sailor, and an evil-looking man dressed in white clothes like a workman. There are also heard a child's laugh and footsteps. Equally various are the things seen in the third house. Miss Morris saw only a woman in black. But Mrs. G. and her children saw several other figures and parts of figures.

But there is another point worthy of notice. The ghostly visions were in each case preceded by inexplicable noises, interpreted in some cases as footsteps. In the last account especially stress is laid by the narrators on the alarm excited by these unexplained sounds. But it is clear in the other two cases that the noises caused, if not actual alarm, at least uneasiness and anxiety. In this respect also the three stories may be accepted as typical. In most authentic ghost stories, it may be said, the appearance of the ghostly figure is preceded by mysterious noises. Sometimes, as in the case of B— House, the haunting may be said to consist exclusively of mysterious sounds. In cases 27 and 28 it has been shown that the house was found by a careful observer to be exceptionally noisy. This is not so clearly established in case 29, though it should be mentioned that in this case there was a railway embankment not far off. There seems good reason for thinking that at any rate in the first two cases the mysterious sounds which first excited and alarmed the occupants were misinterpretations or imaginative exaggerations of real sounds. We have then the following sequence of events. First: loud and mysterious sounds probably due to normal causes. Second: a state of uneasiness and apprehension, amounting in some cases to actual panic, in the occupants. Third: the appearance of manifold ghostly figures, sometimes of a terrifying character. The sequence is repeated again and again in the best authenticated narratives, those in which the incidents are recorded near the date of their happening, and it seems permissible to suggest that the sequence is a causal one—that real sounds, exaggerated and misinterpreted, induced in nervous persons a state of uneasy expectancy, and that this nervous state in its turn gave rise to hallucinations. We find a somewhat similar state of nervous expectancy with concomitant hallucinations at some Spiritualist séances. But the subject, it must be admitted, requires further

investigation. At any rate we have here a possible explanation of at least nine tenths of what pass for ghost stories.

But the explanation, itself only tentative, does not cover all the admitted facts. In case No. 7, cited in Chapter I, it seems clear that Miss J. A. A., at the time when she saw the figure of a child, had not heard that a similar figure had been seen in the house by others. In the second of the cases here quoted (No. 28), Miss Blencowe, who apparently had heard no details of Miss S.'s experience, saw a similar figure standing in the same spot. The same feature occurs in a few other cases—the appearance of a figure frequently bearing a resemblance to a figure previously seen, to a person who had been kept in ignorance of the previous apparitions. It is true that people may in the course of years forget what they have been told. But apart from the improbability of forgetting such an exciting incident as a real ghost seen by a friend, there is the further consideration that in many cases the original percipient would be unlikely to let her story be widely circulated, for fear of alarming the other inmates, especially servants. On the whole it seems reasonable to suppose that the accounts given may be in the main correct; and that a similar type of hallucination may, without any verbal suggestion, recur in the same locality. Again, as in the case of the apparitions previously discussed—the Bishop of St. Brioux, the M.P., and so on—we are driven back upon the hypothesis of mental suggestion. But it need scarcely be pointed out that the vague purposeless nature of the phantasm lends no support to the view that the suggestion emanates from the mind of the dead. The figure seen is as lifeless and unreal, for the most part, as a magic-lantern picture. It is dreamlike, anyway, and commonsense points to its source in the dreams of the living whom we know, rather than in the imagined dreams of the unknown dead.

It will be seen that the facts when closely investi-

gated lend little support to the popular conception of a ghost. The spirit of the sensual man, still hovering near the scene of his earthly joys, the repentant monk, the murderer still doomed in nightly penance to re-enact his crime, the soul in the torture of purgatory who comes for comfort and absolution—all these are, it would seem, but figments of popular superstition. The real ghost, as we have learnt to know him, is but a painted shadow, without life or meaning or purpose—the baseless fabric of a dream.

But the investigation of these curious phenomena is by no means complete; and though they should prove to be wholly born of earth, these ghosts of the living and of the dead assuredly illustrate in a striking manner the mysterious workings of the human mind, and the unsuspected influence of soul on soul. They are meteors which throw strange gleams of light upon the structure of the Cosmos of which they form a hitherto neglected part. Once more we see the justification of the scientific maxim, to study residual phenomena.

**THE END.**



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