

THOUGHT READING

SECOND SIGHT & "SPIRITUAL" MANIFESTATIONS

EXPLAINED

SHOWING HOW THE SUPPOSED PHENOMENA ARE PRODUCED
BY NATURAL MEANS

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PREFACE

THOUGH reading or thought transference was invented by Robert Houdin, the conjurer, in the forties of the last century, and was named by him *Seconde Vue* or Clairvoyance. The practice has been varied and improved by his successors; but his methods in the main have been followed.

It is probable that there are very few people living who have more than a general idea as to how the marvels of a psychic show are produced; and were it not that I have had a series of unique experiences in the matter I should hesitate to offer this exposition. It was so long ago as the year 1852 that I practised on a school-fellow the mysterious hypnotic influence, known at that time as "Electro biology"; and I have, in later days, shared the confidences of at least three of those curious personages who had performed before "several of the crowned heads of Europe," and left the crowned heads as much in the dark as to the real scheme of their operations as the ordinary citizen who pays his half-crown for an evening's amusement. It would have been an ungracious act during the lifetime of these men to withdraw the veil from the mystery of their performances; but now that they are dead no reason can be offered against the plainest possible exposition of their method of work. There is, indeed, much reason in favour of an explanation of clairvoyance, because knowledge of the process is still sufficiently obscure to provoke a belief in at least a supersensuous origin of the effects produced. Nothing can be more detrimental to morals than the prevalence of superstition; and there is scarcely a phenomenon in existence which operates so largely to the

encouragement of superstition as the supposed power of the clairvoyant and the spirit medium. It is always associated in the vulgar mind with the power of prophecy and divination. The many inquiries made as to the process of mesmeric exhibitors and clairvoyants proves how widespread is the curiosity on the subject. The absence of any commonplace explanation gives rise to the belief among weak people that there is something supernatural in the matter, and that, in fact, the supposed professor of the power of second sight is working under the influence of some occult force. Only recently I ventured to give a demonstration of second sight in which my clairvoyant added up figures placed upon a blackboard by the audience without a word being uttered beyond asking for the addition. Later in the evening a lady quite innocently inquired of the clairvoyant whether the exercise of the power of reading another's mind was very exhausting. There was no doubt in her mind about the genuineness of thought transference.

It should be stated that this exposition is a revised and enlarged edition of a book written and copyrighted by me in 1880 entitled *Heller's and Houdin's Second Sight explained*, by Washington Irving Bishop, whose name I used by arrangement.

ESHER, *February*, 1907.

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THOUGHT READING EXPLAINED

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE capacity of the human mind for wonder naturally predisposes the uninformed to superstition ; and for every unusual occurrence, for which no explanation is perceivable on the surface, they look to the supernatural as the only possible cause of that they do not understand. It accordingly happens that at intervals of some ten or fifteen years there appears before the public an exponent of the mysteries of psychology, and the whole gamut of the psychic vocabulary becomes familiar in every drawing-room. Ordinary spirit-rapping and the manifestations associated with the dark cabinet are a little out of date. They have been succeeded by the more mystifying demonstrations of the clairvoyant, which are variously accounted for by vague terms having little or no relation to the actual condition or fact they are intended to describe.

These various so-called mystical performances may be arranged under three heads—Clairvoyance or Second Sight, Thought Reading, and “Spiritual” Manifestations. It is the purpose of this book to show how each of the performances is carried out by ordinary means within the compass of any well-trained human being physically and mentally suited for the task, and that there is no mystery in

the matter, other than the surprise one feels at the extraordinary ingenuity of the means employed and the remarkable industry of those who employ them.

Clairvoyance has been defined to be an alleged power of seeing anything not actually present to the eyes or other senses of the clairvoyant. This alleged power has been exhibited in various ways, sometimes when the alleged clairvoyant has apparently been in a state of trance, and usually before an audience. In every case the clairvoyant is associated with another, who, being in a recognised normal state, acts as intermediary between the clairvoyant and the audience. It is always a condition of success that the intermediary or director of the performance must see the object or writing the clairvoyant is asked to name or describe, because the presumption is that the clairvoyant can have transmitted to her brain only those things that are passing in the mind of the intermediary. What actually occurs is that the necessary information to enable her to name and describe these articles is conveyed by the intermediary to the clairvoyant by ordinary speech, having an intelligible meaning to the audience and an altogether separate meaning to the clairvoyant. Every word, almost, that the intermediary utters to the audience conveys information to the clairvoyant, and the performance is excellent in proportion as the words are few. In some cases the words used are so very few that, in the absence of definite information and precise example, it is almost impossible to believe that the information is imparted in this manner. It is, however, a fact that any two persons can, with a simple code, perform simple experiments with very little preparation, and with much practice can go through very difficult and complex processes.

CHAPTER II

THE DEMONSTRATION

THE clairvoyant is usually a young lady, interesting in manner and dejected in appearance, as if distressed by some constant strain upon the nervous system. She also presents the appearance of passive submission, as if in fear of some all-powerful controlling influence; and, even when possessed of robust vigour, she assumes an air of exceeding timidity, and of having no will of her own. The clairvoyant is usually blindfolded. The blindfolding, it may be stated, is perfect; and in some cases she sits with her back to the audience with a shawl over her head, a precaution which is resorted to in order, as the conductor says, to make quite sure she does not see round the corner, but really for some other purpose, which will be shown hereafter. So seated, in complete darkness and isolation, the controller points to articles of dress worn by persons in the audience in rapid succession; and she tells what he touches with corresponding rapidity. In one form of this experiment her questioner simply asks in respect of the first article touched—"What is this?" and in respect of succeeding articles, "And this?" "And this?" "And this?"

The simplicity of the question and the repetition of the same phrase, or nearly the same phrase, for diverse articles is calculated to excite a conviction that the cause is occult.

It is impossible, says the spectator, that he can make a communication to the clairvoyant, because whether he touches a brooch, a pin, a watch-chain, or a black cap, he says no more than the simple question, "What is this?" "Or this?" "And this?" He rapidly follows this experiment by others more difficult and more confusing. Objects presented to the controller, or simply shown him by people in the audience, are, at his request, correctly described by the clairvoyant; and in some cases the audience is furnished with a description more detailed than even the possessors of the articles themselves could give of them. Strange coins with ancient dates, railway tickets with numbers, bank-notes with numbers and dates, curious instruments, mathematical and technical, outlandish charms, eccentric heirlooms, all are produced in rapid succession; and each and all are described with an accuracy and clearness by the blindfolded clairvoyant that is inexplicable and astounding. Then figures are written down by persons in the audience, and the clairvoyant, with unfailing accuracy, states what these figures are; and even if a question is asked by a person in the audience instead of by the conductor, the clairvoyant's answer will be correct. Only one condition is insisted on throughout the proceedings, and that is, that the controller of the clairvoyant should be made acquainted with the things shown or the figures written, on the principle that the sight of the clairvoyant is second sight, and that what her kindred spirit sees, she can see; that she, in fact, sees through the medium of the controlling personality instead of her own physical eye, and that she can do so by communion of spirit, the operation of which is superior to space and defies natural laws.

CHAPTER III

THE TEST OF FIGURES

THE code of second sight is divided into departments, of which the most important is that conveying information about figures. There are codes for words, for spelling letters, for articles taken from the pocket, for colours, for cards, for money, and, as circumstances require, for any special subject. There are also general codes intimating the beginning and the ending of a communication; and, as all of these codes are directed to the solution of the more difficult tests that may be submitted, it will be remarked with how few words some of the most startling exhibitions are realised.

The code of figures is devised upon the principle of assigning to each figure a letter or letters. The vowels are not used, and when a given figure has to be named a word is used beginning with the consonant designating the figure in question. This consonant may follow an initial vowel. This will at first sight appear to be rather complex, but when once the plan is understood it proves to be very simple to both the director of the exhibition and the clairvoyant, and can be used in such a way as to give rise to the belief on the part of the audience that the director of the entertainment scarcely opens his mouth.

Before giving the details of the several codes it is advisable to state that, in addition to the codes of subjects, there are a series of code words arranged giving warning, and

others announcing that the information is closed. They are usually commonplace words, mere phrases of courtesy that any conjurer would use when addressing his audience, and no one not in the secret would dream of attaching any special meaning to them. The following phrases may be taken as code words intimating to the clairvoyant that the definite communication is about to begin, and that the first consonant in the next word is the code letter for the figure she has to announce as being recorded in his brain :

“ Ladies and gentlemen.”

“ Now, sir.”

“ Now, let us see.”

“ Through the kindness of this gentleman.”

“ Take time.”

“ Are you ready.”

“ We have now arranged.”

“ We have now everything in order.”

Here we have eight commonplace remarks, each one of which warns the clairvoyant that the first consonant of the next word uttered gives her a figure or letter relative to the subject in hand.

Suppose some one in the audience hands up a certificate bearing a number which it is desired the clairvoyant should read. Being blindfolded, she has to be informed of what is being done.

“ Ladies and gentlemen,” says the director, “ let some one in the audience take this certificate,” and he hands the paper down.

By this remark the clairvoyant knows that the number of the certificate has five figures, and her director says :

“ By the kindness of this gentleman we have the figures in the audience ,”

This tells the clairvoyant that the first figure is 8.

"Now, sir, I must first ask you to show the document to your neighbours," says the director, and the clairvoyant knows that the second figure is 3.

"Take time. See for yourselves," says the director, and the clairvoyant knows that the third figure is a cipher.

"Are you ready? Be careful." This to the clairvoyant, who learns that the fourth figure is a 9; and finally the director says:

"Now, sir, please," and the clairvoyant reads 83,099, to the amazement of everybody.

Throughout this example the director has spoken only once to the clairvoyant, and has then only warned her to be careful; and yet by his commonplace remarks to the audience he has given her the whole row of figures, as will be seen by the following code for figures:

Figure 1 is represented by t, because t has one stroke; and inasmuch as d is the companion letter of t, d also represents 1.

Figure 2 is represented by n, because n consists of two strokes.

Figure 3 is represented by m, because m has three strokes.

Figure 4 is represented by r, because r is the last letter of four.

Figure 5 is represented by l, because l is the Roman sign for 50.

Figure 6 is represented by h, for if you cut off the bottom from the figure 6 you have h.

Figure 7 is like a key, and therefore k is used to represent it; also hard g and hard c, its companion letters.

Figure 8 is represented by f, which it resembles, as also

by v, the companion letter of f, and w, the companion of v.

Figure 9 is represented by p, which it is like when the letter is reversed; and b, the companion labial of p, is also used to represent 9.

Figure 0 is represented by s and z.

The code is founded upon that used by the French conjurer, Robert Houdin, the originator of clairvoyance, who was famous about the middle of the last century, and never pretended to be anything else than a conjurer. He was followed by M. Gaudon, who exhibited in Paris in 1847, with his nephew as clairvoyant—a little boy, who, although acquainted only with colloquial French, was able to read and translate words written down by spectators in foreign languages. The code of Gaudon was afterwards published, “that all the world,” as he said, “could put themselves on guard against the charlatans” who have been willing to allow the public to suppose their performances a demonstration of occult and supernatural power.

In considering this example it must be remembered that the clairvoyant is blindfolded and is ostensibly a passive instrument in the hands of her director, whose mind she reads. The task would be easier if she saw what was going on in the audience, but it is seldom this is done, because the mystery seems to be greater when the clairvoyant is blindfolded, and when it is made quite clear that she can have no knowledge of the movements of her director.

Let us suppose, then, that the director is provided with a blackboard placed in full view of the audience, that the clairvoyant is seated blindfolded in the rear of it, and that numbers are written on pieces of paper and handed up to the director. He writes them down and the clairvoyant

immediately reads them off. Some of the spectators who are present go away with the impression that the director of the show says nothing during this exposition. If it were the case that the clairvoyant really received the knowledge telepathically it would be unnecessary for him to say anything. If she could read his mind it would be unnecessary for him even to ask her to speak. She would know he desired it; and when a professor of second sight achieves this task we may begin to subject his performance to scientific examination.

The director writes the figures down, or has them written down for him, or holds a document in his hand with figures upon it, which he looks at, and then in various ways he communicates those figures to the clairvoyant. He does so by means of remarks to the audience or brief directions to her. He has to select words intelligible to the audience, appropriate in the view of the audience, and yet capable of conveying to the clairvoyant the hidden communication. In the case of a foreigner the task is easier, and the words used may be fewer. Broken English need not be intelligible to an English audience, but the jumble of disjointed words is as informing to a clairvoyant as a grammatical sentence. At the same time the foreigner cannot indulge in the patter of the conjurer. The more rapidly the director speaks, the less he appears in the aggregate to say. It may be taken, however, as a leading principle that every word, every exclamation, every gesture of impatience used by the directing soul has its meaning for the clairvoyant.

Having stated the code for the numerals, let us go through each in turn. Let us suppose that figures are handed up in silence to the director, that he transcribes

them on the blackboard, and the clairvoyant, being blindfolded at the back of the board, is asked to name the figures as each is transcribed.

If the figure 1 be suggested, the director may say :

“Tell us this figure.”

The figure 2 may next be placed on the board, and he will say :

“Now, if you please, this figure.”

It will be observed that in some cases the “if you please” is omitted. It is a superfluity, and length is to be avoided if the information can be fully given without it. In the case of the figure 3, the director might say :

“Make out this figure.”

For the figure 4 he might say :

“Read this figure.”

For 5 :

“Let us have this figure.”

For 6 :

“Here is another figure.”

For 7 :

“Can you see this figure?”

For 8 :

“Follow me as I write this figure.”

For 9 :

“Please state this figure.”

And if it be 0 :

“Say this figure.”

The constant repetition of the word “figure” would have one of two effects. Those disposed to see the occult in things they do not understand will assert that the director uses the same word every time. Frequently they add that he uses no other, and curiously enough they

believe that to have been the case. This is natural. Very few people are endowed with the capacity of perceiving and being able to report exactly what occurred in any given case. The effect produced on other minds watching for the unrepeated words would be that the words, although dissimilar with the exception of the repeated word, were commonplace, and not identical in dealing with the same figures. And it may be remarked here that one of the striking points of this process of conveying information is that, although in each instance a single figure was dealt with, yet the phrases used are diverse in phraseology and length. It is this disparity of the phrases which has often been a source of confusion to those who have watched clairvoyant exhibitions with the view of determining, if possible, how they were done. But the fact is that a performer who is expert will be able to confuse the audience by a considerable amount of talking, when, in fact, he has long before indicated what he desires to his assistant. Immediately afterwards, a succession of answers will be given with scarcely any words from the director. It sometimes happens that the director is presented with the very difficult case of a single figure coming in at an inopportune time, when the conversation he is carrying on does not thoroughly well fit in with the letter with which he desires to begin his sentence. That makes him hesitate, and here his adroitness may supply him with a phrase which will take him out of the difficulty, and at the same time seem to add to the extraordinary character of the exhibition. For instance, if the director finds a difficulty in communicating the information to the clairvoyant, he will turn to the person who has proposed the figure or number, and request that person himself to

ask the clairvoyant to give an answer, and he will have adopted this course because the words he desires to use will fit in more appropriately with remarks to one in the audience than they could do to the clairvoyant.

Having settled that the figures should be represented by letters, we next proceed to determine the method by which these letters shall be used so as to convey any figure or combination of figures from the director to the clairvoyant. It is customary for the director to request the audience, or some member of it, to write any figure or combination of figures upon the board. The audience may designate a set of three or four figures in the first instance, or a 1 or a string of ciphers. The result will be equally the same: the clairvoyant will recite them.

Let us suppose that a member of the audience has asked the director to write the figure 4 upon the board. Having written it in the face of the audience without saying a word, it will then become necessary for him, in the interests of the audience no less than his own, to request the clairvoyant to state what that figure is; because, the clairvoyant being blindfolded, and not knowing apparently what is going on, must of necessity be told that now is the time for her to read and so speak. It is in the request which the director makes to the clairvoyant at this point that he communicates to her the figure on the board, and the cleverness of the trick lies in the dexterity with which this can be done, as also in the many ways in which the communication can be made. In the case under consideration the director has the figure 4 upon the blackboard, and the audience is in expectation. The director simply says:

“Read, if you please, this figure.”

In that sentence he has told the clairvoyant, firstly, that

it is a single figure—he has done that in two ways—and he has also told her what the figure is. He has told her that it is one figure by using the word “figure” and not “number.” Obviously a figure is a number, but a number is not necessarily a single figure. Then he also uses the words “if you please,” a very commonplace expression—the natural phrase dictated by ordinary politeness in the presence of strangers, and exhibiting the courtesy of the director to his assistant. But that phrase, “if you please,” means that the clairvoyant is to direct her attention to the words preceding it for the information that is to be conveyed to her—*i.e.* “if you please” means, take into account the word “read,” and treat “if you please” as a full stop after the communication has been made to you. The clairvoyant knows that the word “read” gives her the figure, and then she says to herself, “What is the first consonant in the word ‘read’?” The answer, of course, is “r,” and as “r” represents 4 she replies without hesitation that 4 is written on the blackboard.

It is stated above that the phrase “if you please” is in the nature of a full stop, or an intimation that the communication is at an end. This phrase and others are common to all subjects. The word “So” answers the same purpose, and others can be fixed on for conveying this information. Any casual remark will suffice, provided it is arranged beforehand. Another subsidiary sign needed in dealing with figures is that by which the clairvoyant is informed as to the number of figures she has to read when the number consists of more than one figure. From the variety of phrases which are commonly used by conjurers, and also by persons in ordinary conversation, it is easy to serve this purpose. The phrases “Good!” and “Very

Good!" are simple and commonplace, and in no degree likely to excite suspicion. It is by the use of such phrases that the clairvoyant is informed of the number of figures she has to read. The phrase drops innocently from the director's lips, and it appears to the audience to be an expression of pleasant satisfaction at his own caligraphy, or as an indication of pleasure at being provided by a member of the audience with the numbers. But in these simple words the clairvoyant is provided with a knowledge of the number of figures she has to read. After that, words fall from the director by way of comment addressed to the audience which give the clairvoyant information as to the precise figures. It must be always understood that the first consonant of the first word represents the first figure, the first consonant of the second word the second figure, and so on, until the phrase "if you please," or some other code phrase, comes in as a full stop, so as to give the clairvoyant a double check upon the number of figures she is to read.

It has already been noted that the word "figure" is used when only one figure is to be read. Whenever there are two figures the word "number" is given, and the inquiry is never prefaced by anything, because it is agreed that "number" unassociated by any other sign shall mean two figures and two only. Therefore, if the number 13 is put upon the board, the director will say, "Tell me, if you please, what number I have written here?" If 28, he will say, "Now, what is this number?" If 37, "My kind friend has given me a number. Can you tell it me?" It will be observed that this last remark is long, complicated, and possibly halting. It is not defective on that account, but is rather fitted to confuse any one in the audience who imagines that he detects the process of communication ;

because whereas a couple of words will in one instance give the information, twenty may be used in another instance, and convey no more.

In the case of three figures the director may repeat the word "Good" when recording them on the blackboard, or when he receives them on a piece of paper, and the word will be uttered without any appearance of communication to the clairvoyant, simply in response to the kindness of the auditor, and, in fact, the phrase may be said to stand for "Thank you." The word "Good" having been used, the clairvoyant will then be requested to read the figures written. Let us suppose the number to be 210. In that case the director will say, "Now, tell us, if you please, what this number is?" It will be observed that not only has he informed the clairvoyant by the use of the word "Good" that she is to look for three figures, but he has used three words, and then added the full stop "if you please" in terminating the sentence. And it is on the three words preceding "if you please" that the clairvoyant is to find the number. She sees immediately 2 is represented by the "n" in "now," 1 by "t" in "tell," and 0 by "s" in "us." It may be remarked here that the use of the vowel before the consonant designating the number is not only admissible, but desirable. It takes away the necessity of always beginning the words with consonants, and vowels representing no figures will always be regarded as nil; so that after practice they in no sense interfere with the process any more than their omission in shorthand confuses the shorthand writer.

If the number should consist of four figures the director will use the phrase "Very good"; if five figures he will

say "Very good, sir," or "Very good, madam"; and if there are six he might say "Good again." These preliminary phrases may be used alone, or they may be in alternate sets. They are easily arranged. What the director and his clairvoyant have to be careful about is that they quite understand what the sign is to be, and that is the reason for constant practice.

It sometimes happens that a particularly clever auditor thinks he will confuse the clairvoyant by writing down a string of identical figures—as, for instance, half a dozen 3's in a row or five 0's. The system, however, is equal to the occasion. If there should happen to be three 4's put in a row the director will immediately remark, "Good!" The clairvoyant is thus informed that three figures have been written on the board. He will then utter the simple word "Read," followed by "if you please," and the clairvoyant knows that the figure she has to name is 4: but, having been told previously that there are three figures on the board, and having had the designation of only one figure, followed by "if you please," the rule tells her that the whole of the figures are the same, and thus a most difficult problem is solved by the utterance of two simple words.

A more difficult example would be three 4's, preceded by two other figures, such as 9 and 6, making up five in all. On this being presented the director would say, "Very good, sir," and as the difficulty of making up a sentence with three words, each commencing with the same letter, might be rather more than could be overcome without more opportunity of thinking than would be afforded on the platform, the director would resort to the expedient of taking the figures in detail, and he would

communicate the first figure in the act of telling the audience that he would do so. As, for instance, he would say, "Probably the clairvoyant would prefer to read these figures singly, as there are several of them." Then he would say, "Please," which would indicate 9; "Here is another," which would give 6; "Read this one," which would give 4; "Really, this is rather slow," would give another 4; and "Read," or "Ready," would give the last 4.

We have seen, therefore, that not only can we turn figures into words, but we can strengthen the code by the following :

For one figure we use the word	"Figure."
„ two figures	„ "Number."
„ three „	„ "Good."
„ four „	„ "Very good."
„ five „	„ "Very good, sir."
„ six „	„ "Good again."

It will be observed that the whole of these words are almost identical. They are interjections thrown out in response to some act by the audience, such as handing up a set of figures or an odd coin. They nearly all contain the word "Good," and it may be remarked that they can be used throughout the demonstration because, while in a code dealing with figures they mean one thing, when dealing with another subject, as will be shown hereafter, they mean something totally different.

To illustrate the process of conveying the designation of figures, let us go through a series, such as might be possibly put by members of an audience at a public performance. Suppose the number 6,000 is proposed, the director would say, "Very good," indicating that there

are four figures, and then, "Here is something, sir." The next figures might be 10, which the director will designate by saying, "Tell us, if you please, this number?" Then some one, thinking to confuse, might designate 1, and the director will say, "Tell us this figure?" It will be observed that this second phrase is almost identical with that designating 10, and one might be excused for declaring that they are identical. Then, a person might come in with five 0's in a row, which would be thought eminently calculated to confuse. The director would, however, say, "Very good, sir," and then he would utter the monosyllable, "Say" or "See," and the answer would be given.

When the figures placed upon the blackboard exceed six, it is necessary to proceed upon some more general plan. The cases in which the figures exceed six will be few, but it is essential, in the construction of a code, that it shall be particularly elastic, and fit to deal with all contingencies. Consequently, when more than six figures are recorded, it is necessary to communicate the number by a preliminary sentence—as, for instance, if seven figures are recorded, the conjurer would say, "Can you tell me how many figures are placed upon the board?" and the clairvoyant would answer "seven," because "c" represents 7; if eight, "Will you name the number of figures upon the board?" If nine, "Pray tell me how many figures there are here?" In each sentence the initial letter of the sentence designates the number of figures. To heighten the effect the clairvoyant might say, "Well, I will count them"; and the director, pointing in silence his wand to the first figure, the clairvoyant would say, "One;" moving it to the second she would say,

“Two”; and so they would go on through the number; and it would appear as if, by the silent pointing, the clairvoyant not only saw the figures, but also the action of her director in indicating what she was next to mention. Having thus stated the number of figures, he would proceed to give them in detail by asking for each in its turn. Let us suppose that the figures written were 1,427,842, he would say, “Tell me the first figure”; “Read the second”; “Now the third”; “Can you see the fourth?” “Will you tell us the fifth?” “Right”; “Now the last.”

In cases where fractions are added the difficulty will be slightly increased, but the code can be easily extended to these. The designation of fractions is an affair of considerable delicacy, and it is desirable to give some agreed-upon indication that fractions are in the case. Either a snap of the fingers or a stamp of the foot might be the preliminary to the designation, accompanied by the word “Quick.” The word “Quick,” with a stamp, could in fact be clairvoyant language for “fractions to come.” If, for instance, 24 were placed upon the board, the conjurer would say, “Now, read,” and then he would pause and give a stamp and say “Quick.” This would mean “fractions to come.” Then he would say, “Tell, now.” “T” means 1, and “n” means 2, so that the fraction is one-half. If it were one-quarter he would use only one word—namely, “this”; and if it were three-quarters he would use a word commencing with “m,” indicating three, the quarters being understood. It will be seen that the whole thing, as previously stated, consists in the prior arrangement, and, of course, it must be associated with constant practice and the greatest watchfulness.

The signals may be purely arbitrary in their character. So long as the arbitrary indication has been agreed on between the parties, it may be as foreign to the subject in hand as if they were to arrange to call a horse by the title of a book, or designate a camel by a term in algebra. To illustrate the dealing with numbers more particularly, the following shows a series of numbers which any audience may ask to be placed on the board, with the explanations in immediate succession.

184.—“ Good ! This will receive my friend's best attention.”

“ Good ” indicates that there are three figures :

t	w	r
1	8	4

564.—“ Good ! Let her read that.”

“ Good ” indicates that there are three figures :

l	h	r
5	6	4

000.—“ Good ! Say.”

“ Good ” indicates that there are three figures :

s
0

1,000.—“ Very good ! It is surely some wag who has proposed this number.”

“ Very good ” indicates that there are four figures :

t	s	s	s
1	0	0	0

1,642.—“ Very good ! Try how rapidly, now, you can read this number ? ”

“ Very good ” indicates that there are four figures :

t	h	r	n
1	6	4	2

2,484.—“Very good! In reality, few really difficult tasks are submitted.” (This to the audience.)

“Very good” indicates that there are four figures :

n	r	f	r
2	4	8	4

0,000.—“Very good! So!”

“Very good” indicates that there are four figures :

s
0

12,345.—“Very good, sir. The number, mademoiselle ; or let us have it figure by figure.”

“Very good, sir” indicates that there are five figures :

t	n	m	r	l
1	2	3	4	5

38,496.—“Very good, sir. Mark well! Read, please, here. The figures are not too clear.”

“Very good, sir” indicates that there are five figures :

m	w	r	p	h
3	8	4	9	6

264,378.—“Good again. Now, here are my kind friends giving us some terrible posers.”

“Good again” indicates that there are six figures :

n	h	r	m	k	f
2	6	4	3	7	8

1,237,890.—“Can you tell me how many figures I have written ?”

C : 7 ; answer, 7.

“Tell me the first ?” t : 1 ; answer, 1.

“Next ?” n : 2 ; answer, 2.

“Make out the third.” m : 3 ; answer, 3.

“Good !” g : 7 ; answer, 7.

“Will you tell us the next ?” w : 8 ; answer, 8.

“Oblige us with the next.” b : 9 ; answer, 9.

“So !” s : 0 ; answer, 0.

999,999,999.—“Oblige, if you please, by telling us how many figures are written here ?”

B : 9 ; answer, 9.

“Precisely.” p : 9 ; answer, nine 9’s.

One word only having been mentioned, the inference is that there are nine 9’s.

6 $\frac{1}{4}$.—“Here, if you please, a number. Quick ! (accompanied with a stamp of the foot). Try !”

H indicates 6

A stamp and “Quick !” ,, fractions to come.

T ,, $\frac{1}{4}$

Therefore, 6 $\frac{1}{4}$.

15 $\frac{1}{2}$.—“Try. Louder, if you please.” (A stamp.)
“Quick, the number.”

T indicates 1

L ,, 5

“If you please” . . . ,, the end of figures.

A stamp and “Quick !” ,, fractions to come.

T ,, 1

N ,, 2

Therefore, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$.

27 $\frac{2}{3}$.—“Now, gently, if you please.” (A stamp.)
“Quick. Make ready.”

N indicates 2

G ,, 7

“If you please” . . . ,, the end of figures.

A stamp and “Quick !” ,, fractions to come.

M ,, 3

R ,, 4

Therefore, 27 $\frac{2}{3}$.

80 $\frac{5}{8}$.—" Well, sir, if you please " (addressed to the gentleman who hands it up). (A stamp.) "Quick ! All's well."

W	indicates	8
S	„	0
"If you please"	„ the end of figures.	
A stamp and "Quick !"	„ fractions to come.	
L	„	5
W	„	8

Therefore, 80 $\frac{5}{8}$.

It should be noted that fractions do not often occur, and they will not recur in succession as here set down. If they did the sign of a stamp would be unwise, and an alternative would be used.

It is possible a person in the audience may suggest to the director that he should pretend to write a figure on the board and yet not do so, and see whether the clairvoyant was able to detect that nothing had been written on the board. The system is equal to this test also. The director would exclaim, quite naturally, "Excellent," and then, "What figure have I written on the board ?" There being no figure represented by "X," the word "Excellent" serves for a sign that there is nothing to read. The clairvoyant will heighten the effect of this experiment by assuming a little natural hesitation, and saying, "I cannot see anything—my mind is a perfect blank," or some such phrase as that. The effect would be prodigious.

In an appendix we give illustrations of the working of the code for numbers in dealing with the whole series up to 100. It must be understood these are merely illustrations. It is a thousand to one that the code here set out will not be the code of any given director of a clairvoyant exhibition, and he will say in triumph, "That is not the way my

clairvoyant operates." But even if it be not the code any given director uses, it is a code and an example that illustrates all other codes.

Let us suppose that a coin is handed up bearing the date 1870. The conductor will, according to my code, say, "Give us the date." The answer will be immediate and unquestionable. Let us suppose the coin bears the date 1811. The director will say only, "The date." The clairvoyant will answer accurately at once. Could the director say less? and yet the answer is there given, plainly and indisputably. Even with the knowledge of "How it is done" the fact seems incredible, but the method is simple.

Let us suppose there is some curious inscription on this coin. The process in that case becomes less easy. We must remember that the director must have imprinted in his mind what that inscription is. The clairvoyant cannot read a blank mind, because there is nothing to read. Something definite must be put into the mind before the second sight can decipher it. Accordingly, the director must furnish his mind with the fact; and he asks questions of the person who exhibits this coin with the curious inscription. If the inscription is plain, those questions convey to the clairvoyant every word in that inscription before the catechism is completed; and the clairvoyant bursts in upon the conversation with surprising effect. She has apparently seen the lettering before her director has mastered it. The effect is marvellous. "How wonderful!" says the audience. "What a weird gift!"

These demonstrators of the occult tell us that the minds of the director and his clairvoyant are in sympathy, that the telepathic contact is complete, that the union of souls is perfect, that what he sees she sees, and that this result is

achieved by long, hard, and continuous work. The first four statements are a matter of leather and prunella, but the last is the simple truth. The work of the director and his clairvoyant is certainly long, hard, and continuous. For three hours each morning they practise their codes, and it is difficult to determine which is the more clever, the director who constructs the sentences to convey the fact, or the clairvoyant who extracts the answer from the question. The difficulties in the way explains the fewness of the clairvoyants.

CHAPTER IV

A CODE FOR WORDS

WE now proceed to the next branch of the codes, that relating to the reading of strange inscriptions and foreign words. This does not include the method of reading long passages from books and newspapers. These exploits are managed in a different and more elaborate manner. The code we now deal with provides for the communication of words such as the printing upon a share certificate or the inscription upon a coin. It is necessary that the code be constructed with sufficient elaboration to enable the clairvoyant to spell out language quite unknown to her. Nor need the language in question be comprehended by the conjurer. It is necessary only that he can get a knowledge of the letters upon the coin, or, if they be in a character foreign to him, to get from the person who gives him the coin a fulfilment of the one essential condition of all clairvoyant entertainments—that the person through whom the second sight is seen shall be fully acquainted with what he is looking at.

Cases have occurred in which a coin has been handed to an exhibitor inscribed with Sanscrit, Persian, or Arabic characters. These are refused on the ground that they cannot be read or translated. This is where the codes break down, and where the mind-reading stops. Obviously, if the pretensions to actual mind-reading were sound, there

would be no difficulty in copying the signs. Being imprinted on the mind of the director, the clairvoyant should see them ; but they say the letters of the inscription must be the Roman lettering, or the mind-transference cannot take place.

The communication of words is accomplished by means of a sentence in precisely the same way as figures are communicated. The first letter of each word indicates the letters of the word which the clairvoyant is to name. The word is, in fact, spelled to her by the sentence which the conjurer utters to the audience ; but, in order to prevent the audience from ascertaining the process, the letters which begin the words which he uses are not the letters which the clairvoyant is to take, but they are the letters which it is arranged should stand instead of those which make up the word she is to read.

All persons are familiar with those ciphers which occasionally appear in newspaper advertisements, designed to communicate between one person and another some private arrangement. The most common of all these ciphers is to use "B" for "A," "C" for "B," "D" for "C," and so on through the alphabet, until you discover that "A" represents "Z." The extraordinary jumble which a sentence assumes when written by a transposition of the alphabet such as this must be familiar to every one. Probably the most convenient code for the purpose of the clairvoyant would be this simple transposition, with some modifications which will be found to be essential. For instance, it may be thought impossible to use "Z" for "Y," or "X" for "W," because in the English language so very few words begin with Z or X ; but with modifications in these two cases a fair alphabet is made as follows :

THOUGHT READING

A is represented by B.			
B	”	”	C.
C	”	”	D.
D	”	”	E.
E	”	”	F.
F	”	”	G.
G	”	”	H.
H	”	”	I.
I	”	”	J.
J	”	”	K.
K	”	”	L.
L	”	”	M.
M	”	”	N.
N	”	”	O.
O	”	”	P.
P	”	”	Q.
Q	”	”	R.
R	”	”	S.
S	”	”	T.
T	”	”	U.
U	”	”	V.
V	”	”	W.
W	”	”	A.
X	”	”	Easy.
Y	”	”	Very Easy.
Z	”	”	Plain.

By this code the director can communicate anything he pleases by sheer spelling. The director has the most difficult task, since he has to discover an intelligible sentence out of words beginning with letters which he has not the choice of. If he should get the word "Hat," he has immediately to make up a sentence the first word of

which will commence with "I," the second with "B," and the third with "U." He might say, "If both understand," and then he could pause disjointedly, and finish up the sentence in any commonplace way. The change from "H" to "I" will be easy in the mind of the director. It will be less easy for the clairvoyant to travel backward from "I" to "H"; but inasmuch as she invariably receives more grace and time from the audience, hesitation on her part is of less concern. In fact, it is not expected that she should answer immediately, and hesitation upon her part, even when she is thoroughly acquainted with what she has to say, often heightens the effect of the exhibition.

With practice in this transposed alphabet anything the most abstruse may be communicated, and whenever the more particular code about to be described falls short, the director has always this full detailed spelling process to fall back upon. It will be observed that this code for spelling unexpected words is useful for describing documents presented by persons in the audience who adopt the rare test of producing an invoice or other document for the clairvoyant to read. This test is rarely introduced, because it is not every one who would care to bring his private or business invoices to a public assembly to read out. It is, however, sometimes done, and provision must be made for it and for other similar cases. This class of thing, however, is limited, and an easy code for them may be prepared and added to as new necessities are developed by experience.

Notwithstanding that all manner of things are handed up to be described by the clairvoyant, and things especially eccentric are taken by the audience for this purpose, it will be seen that the above mode of communication will not

baffle the performers when they are practised in the art. But although it is serviceable for the most unique articles there is a modification of it bringing it into more simple form for known objects. For instance, a word or an act may be decided upon between the performers in cases where coins are produced, and a particular sign may be given when a portion of the human form is indicated; another in the case of an article of dress; and so on. You may form a series of general indicators not in any way connected with the matter indicated, but distinctly understood between the director and his clairvoyant. And associated with this you may designate by the initial letter of your sentence the precise character of the article in question.

The best process for conveying the character of the article exhibited would be by the use of a certain phrase in the course of the preliminary sentence. If you were indicating a part of the human frame, you would say, "What is this I point at?"—to point being the ordinary action associated with the indication of a portion of the body of a man. The word "point," therefore, would be regarded as appropriate by the audience, but to the clairvoyant it would have a special meaning. It would mean, "I am pointing at a portion of the human frame," and would be easily understood. In the case of a garment it is natural to touch it and say, "What is this I touch?" The answer would come that it is a piece of clothing, and if the conjurer chose he might in his next question indicate the character of the clothing. If it were a difficult task he might pass on to the next article without asking more minute questions. Then, if he wished to indicate anything not of a movable character, such as a part of the decoration of the building or a mural ornament, he might say, "What is this I am looking at?"

Having had communicated to her by the phrase "looking at" that it was some article not removable from the building, she would unhesitatingly say it was something about the room. Articles from the pocket might be designated by the general word "thing." The definition of less general objects not definitely coded under the initial system may with propriety and without exciting suspicion be given by the director in the course of the sentence in which he gives the precise definition. For instance, if a flower were exhibited, he might ask the name, and in asking that he might tell her it was a flower by using a word previously agreed on to designate a flower, and in the same sentence also convey the precise name of the flower.

These methods of reducing the code to more simple proportions is the daily work of the performers. It may be described as "coding down." Regarded in its full character as here set out for figures and for spelling it will suggest the comment that to carry it out fully would involve far more essential speaking on the part of the director than actually occurs. This is so; but the coding by no means stops here. When a couple visit a town they code up all the hatters as a matter of course, the local banks, and any names peculiar to the district. The clairvoyant performers do this just as exploiters of "spiritual" manifestations visit the local graveyards and make notes of the recent burials. The preparations necessary for a successful and profitable entertainment are most engrossing, and the subsequent practice continues day by day, and for several hours each day.

Proceeding with the process of coding down, the performers may arrange that when a coin, not the current coin, is presented the director should say, "Yes, yes."

Another very common exclamation is "Certainly!" That might be used for an indication that some written document is being considered. The word could be uttered as the performer takes the article from the person who offers it. To the audience the exclamation means that the director is quite prepared to accept the task. To the clairvoyant it means much more. "Excellent" is an exclamation that might be used in praise of the clairvoyant's dexterity so far as the audience is concerned, but to the clairvoyant it might indicate a definite portion of the human frame, such as the human wrist, touched by the director as he proceeds. "Excuse me" might be used for indicating a particular portion of dress. To the audience it would be the apology of the conductor, but to the clairvoyant it would indicate that he was touching the collar of a gentleman's coat, or a lady's mantle, or some other ordinary habiliment.

General indicators, however, constructed on this plan, would be perfectly arbitrary in their character, and should be introduced sparingly. It is better to indicate the class of thing dealt with by a phrase in the question, and to give the generic description of the article in the initial letter of the first word of the question. The clairvoyant having stated the generic character of the article dealt with, subsequent questions will fully convey to her information as to the colour of the article of dress; the nature of a piece of jewellery; the value of a coin—whether it be a local one, a foreign one, or an antique one—and, if it be an exceptional or uncommon one, the director will have all the more excuse for talking to the gentleman who has handed the coin to him.

This illustrates one of the most interesting facts connected with the illusions brought about in the entertain-

ment. The production of strange, unusual articles really affords the performers their best chance of making an impression. It is essential that the mind of the director shall have a distinct impression of the object presented for description. If unusual and unique the director asks the visitor what the thing is. He must know. It is impossible for the clairvoyant to describe it unless he does know. The idea must be fully imprinted in his mind before she can read it. He reiterates this; perhaps gets impatient with the visitor—or rather, pretends to get impatient—and throughout all his conversation with the visitor he has been telling the clairvoyant everything she needs to know. When she is fully informed he puts her to the test, and out it all comes. Wonderful!

It is by his apparent inability to comprehend the character of the coin that he gets greater latitude to catechise the auditor, and so to convey to the clairvoyant a minute and ample description, even to the extent of spelling out a foreign inscription, or conveying to her the pronunciation of a sign with which he is himself totally unacquainted, but the pronunciation of which he procures in a whisper from the owner of the coin.

In illustration of the arrangement for complete spelling we will suppose the director first indicates a man's arm. In that case he would say, "Be sure, now, tell us what I am pointing at?" The phrase "pointing at" would tell her it is some portion of the human body, and the pause between "Be sure, now" and the remaining portion of the sentence tells her that the words "Be sure, now" contain the word she is in search of. "B" stands for "A," "S" stands for "R," and "N" for "M." The conductor might have his eye upon a lady's cuff, and he would say, as if pleased with

the answer given to the former question, "Delightful! Very good," which, interpreted, means "cuff." Then he would say, "Tell us what I am touching?" and place his finger upon the lady's cuff. Having the intention to do this in his mind, he made the exclamation following upon the answer to the previous question, and conveyed to the clairvoyant the answer to his next question. The clairvoyant being blindfolded is unconscious of the time when he begins to point. She listens only to what he says, and, for aught she knows, when he is opening his mouth he may be pointing to the next object. The audience, however, get a very different idea of what he is doing. They apprehend that he is expressing his gratification at the skill of the clairvoyant. And, having done this, he points to the next object, touches it, and says, "Tell us what I am touching?"

Here, it will be observed, the phrase indicating the general subject is given, and the object itself is spelt in full. This full spelling, however, is reserved only for abstruse cases. A more simple process will be described presently; and even in cases where detailed spelling is required of words not specially provided for in the code, it is not necessary to spell the word accurately or fully.

Unnecessary letters may be omitted, and frequently, as will be seen hereafter, the first letter will suffice. A shorthand writer knows with what facility the merest skeleton will bring home to him an entire word, and with practice between the clairvoyant and the conjurer equal facility may be acquired in apprehending what is meant. In fact, the whole process is a pure question of intercommunication by an arbitrary language skilfully used—a language that means one thing to the audience and another to the clair-

voyant. And it will be remarked that the scheme will involve a great deal of practice on the part of the clairvoyant and her mentor. The late Robert Heller spent several hours each day practising with his clairvoyant.

It must be distinctly understood that we are here simply describing a principle of coding. The designations given are not all followed in subsequent chapters, nor are they given as actually forming any code. They are stated here merely as examples illustrating the principle.

There are some things that almost every gentleman carries—as, for instance, pieces of money, a card-case, a pencil-case, perhaps a cigar-case and other smoker's material, rings, a railway ticket, a watch, a bunch of keys. These are all common things, and they are each and all likely to be brought to an entertainment as a matter of course, and produced in default of anything better. Perhaps pieces of money and curious coins, specially brought to the entertainment to puzzle the clairvoyant, are the most common.

If twenty men casually brought together were to empty their pockets and the articles produced were classified, there would not be twenty different classes. The same may be said of ladies, except that the objects they carry are less diversified. How easily, then, can the common objects be classified.

We have stated the principle on which a code is formed for conveying descriptions of things other than figures. Here we give a specimen code for classifying common objects—that is to say, a code that will serve the purpose of classifying and naming an ordinary thing in a sentence. It must be understood that it is merely a specimen, and that it is neither complete nor incapable of improvement. It is,

moreover, adapted rather to the minds of those who composed it than to the minds of any others, because every demonstrator of clairvoyance will find it easier to adapt a code for himself than to acquire a ready-made one. The code, in fact, is essentially a matter of association. The performers will naturally agree upon signs which to them are perfectly familiar and intelligible, but which to others would be far less so, if, indeed, not quite strange to them. There are, however, leading features in all codes, based upon universal knowledge, which can be easily explained and as easily acquired.

We have dealt with the code for communicating dates, and also for spelling out words. Both of these codes are used in describing articles offered in the course of the entertainment, but they are made far more simple in the working by an arrangement for preliminary classification—that is to say, a word uttered by the conductor on being presented with an object classifies it in the mind of the clairvoyant. We have seen that the director, by using the words “pointing at,” directs the mind of the clairvoyant to a portion of the human body. When he uses the word “touching” he refers to an article of dress; and when he uses the phrase “looking at” he directs her attention to a mural decoration, ornament, or other fixture in the building. Let us accept these designations as settled between us for the working out of this code, and in doing so let us dismiss any alternative from our minds.

Pursuing this process, we can classify the things which a person usually carries in the pocket; and in the first place the use of the word “thing” in the sentence is as good a generic term as you can desire. An alternative, or rather accompanying, designation is provided in “that I hold,”

The precise character of the thing may be designated by the first letter of the first word uttered ; and if there are to be any exceptions to this general rule consequent upon two things beginning with the same letter, they must be arranged beforehand. In default of any arrangement having been made, they must be spelt in full, as was shown in dealing with "arm" and "cuff." Now, let us put this process in form in respect of the things just now mentioned.

A gentleman produces a coin. The conjurer will say :

"Do you know what is this thing that I hold ?"

The use of the word "thing" designates the general character of the article. The phrase "that I hold" does the same. The letter "D" with which the question begins stands for "C," "C" stands for coin—that is, a coin as distinguished from the current coin of the realm. The particular description of the coin will be dealt with presently. We are now dealing only with the description of common objects.

Money may be designated by the letter "N," whether metallic or paper. A gentleman offers a shilling, and the conductor says :

"Now, can you tell me what thing this is that I hold in my hand ?"

The "N" stands for "M," and "M" means money.

A cigar-case is offered, and as we have already appropriated "D" for coin, it is necessary we find some other initial designate. Proceeding mnemonically, we arrange to spell cigar with an "S" and make it "segar," and then we take "T" as the designating initial and say :

"Tell me what thing this is ?"

"T" represents "S," and "S" stands for cigar-case.

The word "card-case" happens to be very much like "cigar-case"; but it is advisable to distinguish a visiting-card from a playing-card, and it may therefore be arranged to call a card-case a "visiting-card case," and to designate it by the letter "W" in the sentence, "Will you tell me what this thing is?"

A pencil is offered, and the director says:

"Quick, what is this thing?"

The "Q" represents "P," and "P" stands for pencil.

A ring will suggest, "Say what this thing is?"

A railway ticket offers some difficulties. "Ticket," however, is the best generic term to deal with, because it will comprehend all kinds of tickets. The letter "U," however, which represents "T," is a troublesome one to deal with by way of addressing the clairvoyant. It permits, however, of many exclamations, such as "Understand!" "Useful thing this!" "Usually speaking!" which will serve the purpose and vary the monotonous character of the communications.

"Keys" is easy. "Let us know what this thing is?" will serve the purpose; and with this example we close the specimens of generic terms for articles usually carried in the pocket. It may be remarked that when the director is running through a number of things, it is not necessary for him to use the word "thing" so long as he continues to deal with "things" without exception. As he goes on from one thing to another, and does not pass to an article of dress or other object, the clairvoyant follows without difficulty.

Here we have an explanation of one of the most puzzling incidents in a second-sight entertainment. So soon as by

these classifying methods the clairvoyant understands that her director is dealing with things from men's pockets, as indicated by the code phrase of the opening sentence, she continues to construe the following words as merely detailed description. The director takes care to keep to the same class, and thus article after article may be described by a single code word, joined probably with a continuous repetition of the word "this." This result on most auditors would be to convince them that no other word but "this" was uttered. There is a mode by which a string of articles may be run off with the utterance of no other word than "this"; but that method is associated with accompanying preparations of the nature of ordinary conjuring tricks, and will be dealt with in its proper place.

CHAPTER V

A CODE FOR CARDS

THE clairvoyant is blindfolded, and a new untouched pack of cards is produced. They may be opened by one of the audience, and placed face downwards by him. Any person in the audience may take up a card and exhibit it to the whole company. The conjurer will request the clairvoyant to say what it is, and she will reply with unfailing accuracy. The code may be arranged thus:

“Good” stands for Hearts.
“Very good” „ Diamonds.
“Well” „ Spades.
“Very well” „ Clubs.

1—T in the ordinary figure code—stands for Ace.
2—N „ „ „ „ Two.
10—TS „ „ „ „ Ten.
11—TT „ „ „ „ Knave.
12—TN „ „ „ „ Queen.
13—TM „ „ „ „ King.

A spectator lifts the Queen of Diamonds. The conjurer exclaims “Very good!” and he then adds, “Try now, if you please, to name this card.”

Very good : Diamonds.
T N : 12 : Queen.

Another spectator takes up the Two of Spades.

The conjurer casually remarks "Well"? and then he adds, "Name the card."

Well : Spades.

N : 2.

Another will take up the Seven of Hearts.

"Good!" says the conjurer; and then, "Go on."

Good : Hearts.

G : 7.

Another selects the Ace of Clubs.

"Very well," says the conjurer. "Denote, if you please, the card."

Very well : Clubs.

D : 1.

If there be much working in cards, alternative signs could be arranged; but for ordinary purposes this or some similar code would suffice. Nor is it an objection that the same word is continually being repeated, but rather an advantage, because some of the words have entirely different meanings when repeated in different connections. Care, however, must be taken not to frequently repeat the same word in precisely the same connection.

CHAPTER VI

A CODE FOR COINS

WE now come to a very interesting part of the clairvoyance exhibition. We have already seen how the conductor communicates that he holds up a piece of money or a coin not current. He has now to tell what it is, and all about it.

In the case of coins it usually satisfies the audience if the date is given, but the code is sufficiently elastic to give every minute detail, even to an inscription in a language unknown to the operators. If the inscription is difficult to communicate, it is quite within the power of the conductor to pass on to the next article. No one puts a limit to his discursiveness except himself. If he sees an easy way of communicating some abstruse point, he will do it, and astound the audience by the apparent prescience of the clairvoyant; but if he is content with some general description and the date, no one will complain, and few will fail to be surprised at what the clairvoyant appears to discern. His disinclination to tackle an inconvenient inscription is covered by the importunity of other visitors thrusting things upon him, and when deftly done the visitor who proffered the rejected article will not see any reason to complain.

It would be advisable in the matter of coins to set apart a few synonyms for descriptions of size and shape, as, for instance :

Pretty	might	stand	for	Small.
S	”	”		Round.
T	”	”		Square.
P	”	”		Oval.
G	”	”		Parallelogram.
R	”	”		Triangle.

It would be obvious to the clairvoyant that the question of shape was under consideration, because that would be apparent in the question; and it would suffice for the conjurer to begin the question with the letter denoting the shape to convey all that is needed.

Next comes the question of dates. This is very easy, and is worked by the code for figures already described. Dates within the last hundred years are described with the two final figures only—as, for instance, in the case of the year 1879, the 18 would be taken for granted, and only 79 stated. In the case of dates of the present century, only the last figure would be indicated.

“Give, please, the date?” would suffice in the case of 1879, and it should be noticed that “please” carries a different signification from “if you please.” “If you please” means the end of the communication. “Please” stands for figure 9, or for “O” in the alphabet.

Now, if the coin bears an inscription, and the conductor wants it fully explained, he gets time to construe it by talking to the person presenting it, and also by talking to the audience. The clairvoyant would not be attracted by the conversation with the individual. A sign is, therefore, necessary to convey to her the fact that she is being addressed. The sign may be a stamp of the foot or a snap of the fingers just previous to the first word of the communication. This sign, or something similar, is also useful

when, a first communication having been made, the conjurer continues his remarks with irrelevant matter, and then desires to make a second communication.

The following may be taken as ordinary examples :

“ Do you know what this pretty thing is that I hold ? ”

D : c : Coin.

Pretty : Small.

Confirmation is given to the interpretation by the use of the words “ thing ” and “ I hold. ” It is something taken from a pocket ; it is a coin ; and it is small.

“ Please tell me the shape of this coin ? ”

“ Oval, ” because “ P ” represents “ O, ” and “ O ” stands for “ Oval. ”

“ Make out the inscription ? ”

An inscription, the clairvoyant knows, must be in a language. “ M ” represents “ L, ” and “ L ” stands for Latin. She answers, “ It looks like a Latin inscription. ”

The clairvoyant goes on hesitatingly :

“ The letters are too small for me to read. ”

“ Well, just say here, if you please, what it is about. ”

W : v ; j : i ; s : r ; h : g,—Virg. “ If you please ” stops the spelling, and the clairvoyant knows it is about the “ Virgin, ” and the coin is a Roman Catholic token, common enough abroad, but very seldom seen in Great Britain.

Sometimes a mistake is made. The conductor misapprehends what the article is, and he has misinformed the clairvoyant. He then has to go back and give the correct information. Let us give an instance :

A spectator offers a gold pen in a silver holder. The conjurer, without opening it, asks :

“ Quick, describe this thing ? ”

The clairvoyant answers, “ A pencil. ”

The spectator says, "Wrong."

"I see it," says the conjurer, "it looks like it. What is it?"

He opens it and finds a pen inside, and no penoil. He then snaps his finger and says:

"Quick, find out, if you please, this thing."

"Q," "F," "O"—"Pen"; and then comes "if you please." The answer is complete.

But there is a silver holder and a gold pen. Here is a complication that needs care. There are two ways of doing this—one connected with the arrangement for money, to be described presently, and one which may be used for all other metallic articles:

Brass	is represented by	C.
Copper	„ „	D.
Silver	„ „	T.
Gold	„ „	H.
Iron	„ „	J.
Tin	„ „	U.
Lead	„ „	M.

The above are the representative initials of the several words. So, when the conductor says:

"Tell, if you please, what this holder is made of?" the clairvoyant knows it is a question of metals; she knows the answer is contained in "Tell," because it is followed by "if you please"; and she knows "T" represents "S," for silver.

Next comes the pen, the metal of which is designated by "H," and the conductor says:

"Here, if you please, this metal?" and he puts his finger on it to suit the word. The clairvoyant interprets "H" as "G," which stands for gold, and there is the answer.

The description seems long, and at first sight complicated,

but thought is rapid, and practice makes perfect. It would be ridiculous to imagine that a system which has puzzled thousands of people for many years past and defied detection should not be associated with difficulties, or need a considerable amount of practice, before proficiency can be arrived at. But the groundwork is easily acquired, and the principle is capable of indefinite extension, and is limited in practice only by the expertness of the operator.

The most difficult of all tasks is the spelling out of entire words. It is not often the conductor is obliged to undertake this task, and he need do it only when he can see an easy way to accomplish it—that is, an intelligible and natural sentence spelling the word. Suppose a ring is offered with a seal in it, and that, as a closing triumph, a Latin word is to be pronounced by the clairvoyant. The conductor has told her that it is a ring; that it is gold; that it has a seal engraved on it; and now comes the word.

“Make out the inscription?”

A pause. Perhaps the clairvoyant has not quite caught it.

“Make out the language?”

“Latin.”

“Well, just say” (this to the clairvoyant). “Undecided” (this to the audience). “Very unusual form, if you please, this design” (this to the spectator who offered the ring).

Here the clairvoyant has the word “Virtute.”

w j s u v u f
v i r t u t e

Practice alone will give the conductor the necessary adroitness for compiling natural remarks in the necessary order, but, when once it is acquired, there is positively no limit to the power of communication.

CHAPTER VII

A CODE FOR MONEY

THE current coin must be included in the four descriptions :

Gold	:	1.
Silver	:	2.
Copper	:	3.
Paper	:	4.

The four figures are placed opposite to the four descriptions, and the figures represent the currency. No. 1 currency is gold, No. 2 is silver, No. 3 is copper, No. 4 is paper.

“Money” may be represented by “N,” the substitute for “M,” and to proceed from the beginning the conjurer must say :

“Name this thing I am holding.”

The clairvoyant, from the words “thing” and “am holding,” knows that it is something taken from the pocket. She is told this by both words. She looks to the first letter of the first word, and she knows that “N” represents “M,” and that “M” stands for “money” among things taken from the pocket; consequently she answers with perfect confidence :

“Money.”

“Tell me what sort of money?” says the conductor.

"T" represents figure 1, and No. 1 money is gold. Therefore the answer is :

"Gold."

"Now, say, if you please, its value."

It is expedient that gold should be described in shillings, and silver in pence, because it is easier to communicate "ten," than "a half." This having been agreed on, the clairvoyant considers the sentence, "Now, say, if you please"; fixes on the two words "Now, say," because they came before the full stop "if you please"; and interprets "N" as "2" and "s" as "0." This gives "Twenty shillings," or "A sovereign," as the answer.

If the direction had been "Tell us, if you please, its value?" the answer would have been "Half a sovereign"; for "T" represents "1," and "S" represents "0," giving "ten shillings."

"The date?" inquires the conjurer.

"T" represents "1," and "D" represents "1." The century is not given, and therefore the answer is "1811."

The foregoing instance has been described in detail. The following cases will be given, question and answer, as they would fall from the lips of the performers.

"Now, what is this thing I hold in my hand?"

"A piece of money."

"Now, what kind of money?"

"A piece of silver."

"Here! Say, if you please, the value."

"A five-shilling piece;" (*i.e.* sixty pence).

"Read, now, if you please, the date?"

"It is a Queen Victoria coin. The date seems to be 1842."

"Name this thing I hold."

“ A piece of money.”

“ Make out its character.”

“ Copper money.”

“ Right.”

“ It is a penny piece ” (*i.e.* four farthings).

“ Give us the date ? ”

“ 1870.”

In dealing with paper money it is necessary to arrange for the name of the bank and the value of the note. The number follows, as a matter of course, by the code for figures.

The simple word “Bank,” as an interruption, should always be set apart for the bank of the country. For instance, in England it would stand for the Bank of England. If it were a Scotch code, for the Bank of Scotland. If there were any other note-issuing banks in the district, they should be coded at once. In Scotland, for instance, a code would have to be made somewhat after the following fashion :

The Bank of Scotland would be indicated by “Bank.”

„ Royal Bank	„	„	S.
„ Union Bank	„	„	V.
„ British Linen Co.	„	„	C.
„ Clydesdale	„	„	D.
„ Commercial	„	„	M.

The last letter would be given for this bank so as to distinguish it from the Clydesdale.

For example :

“ Now, tell me what I hold in my hand.”

“ Money ” (from “ N,” the substitute of “ M ”).

“ Right.”

“ A bank-note ” (*i.e.* “ R ” for “ 4,” paper money—*i.e.* a bank note).

"Say, what bank?"

"Royal" (from "S," the substitute for "R").

"Let us hear its value?"

"Five pounds."

"Right. If you please, how many figures are here in the corner?"

"Four" (from "R," which stands for "4").

"Tell me the first?"

"1."

"Right."

"4."

"Good."

"7."

"Good again."

"7."

"All right," says the director. "1,477."

It may be here mentioned that "All right" can be used in its simplicity for both audience and clairvoyant.

A sign is needed for a general termination of an experiment. It should be one which the clairvoyant will understand to be so, and not a phrase for interpretation. "All right" would answer this purpose admirably.

So far this code for money has been given in full detail. It has passed step by step from money to the kind of money—whether metallic or paper—to the value, and then to the date. Now, it would be easy to shorten this in some respects. While "N" may be used for "money," a word commencing with "N," followed by "quick," would stand for "paper money." For instance:

"Now, quick, if you please. What thing is this I hold?"

"N," money; "Q," paper. Answer, "Paper money."

“ Bank ? ”

“ Bank of England.”

“ Let’s have its value.”

“ Five pounds ” (*i.e.* “ L ” for “ 5 ”).

This, however, has shortened the code by only one step. It may be still further condensed. The five-pound Bank of England note is the most common note in England, just as the one-pound note is the most common in Scotland. If a person has paper money in his pocket in London, it usually consists of five-pound notes. Therefore the five-pound Bank of England note should be coded to extreme simplicity. The final definition of the five-pound Bank of England note is represented by “ L,” which stands for “ 5.” Why should not that letter be used for the entire description at once? Let the performers so determine it, and the following may be enacted.

A gentleman may produce a five-pound Bank of England note at a time when things from the pocket are being dealt with. The conductor will hold it up in full view of the audience, and will say :

“ Listen, if you please ” (this sentence being pre-arranged).

He need say no more, or he may add, “ What is this I hold ? ” The clairvoyant will answer :

“ You are holding up a piece of paper. It is a bank-note. I see it is a Bank of England note for five pounds. You have your finger on the number.”

This sentence may be varied, but it should be produced falteringly, as if the object were dimly seen and hesitatingly made out. The mention of the number will call forth the following :

“ How many figures is the number made up of ? ”

"Six."

"Read them."

"The first figure is 4."

"So it is."

"A nought comes next."

"Right."

"Then 4."

"Well?"

"Then 8."

"Good!"

"7."

"The last?"

"1."

"All right—404,871."

Then comes a pause, after which the conjurer exclaims:

"Something more. What letter is this preceding the figures?"

"The letter 'R.'"

"And another?"

"W" ("W" being represented by "A").

"All right. Is it right, sir?"

The gentleman will find it perfectly correct, and will be proportionately astonished. He will probably be glad to have the note back in his pocket.

The one-pound note in Scotland or Ireland may be treated in much the same way, and this also may be taken as an example of the mode in which very common things may be coded down to extreme simplicity.

CHAPTER VIII

OTHER SPECIAL CODES

IT will have been remarked that, in the course of describing the principle of the code, instances have been given of the director spelling the names of common objects in detail. This has been done merely to illustrate the principle upon which words, even the most abstruse, can be communicated, not because the code stops there, or because it is necessary to spell out these simple things. The examples were given to show what could be done in difficult cases. In the chapter immediately preceding, cases are given of classification, so as to reduce communication of the less common objects to as simple a form as the most common.

Some coins are common. Special care has been taken to reduce their designation and description to simple form. The same may be done with everything else. To give an out-of-the-way instance, it would be easy to construct a quick and detailed code for a minute description of every part of the human form, anatomically displayed in diagrams upon the wall, and for the clairvoyant to follow the wand of the conductor as he pointed from one bone to another. The conductor has, in fact, to enrich his code, as he goes from place to place, with the nomenclature of the district reduced to a simple form from the complicated form, and he has also to code up the money peculiar to the district, and perhaps the

dress and manufactures. It will suffice, however, to further illustrate the principle by giving a few codes for special matters, showing how easily this can be done.

We have seen that when the conjurer deals with articles of dress, he indicates the fact by using the word "touching." He should also enlarge this by reducing every outer garment to a simple code—as, for instance, "Hat" may be represented by the substitute for its initial letter, namely, "I"; so that when he says, "I am touching something," the clairvoyant knows that what he is touching is an article of dress, and she knows that she will find what that article is by going to the first letter of the first word uttered; and on meeting with "I" she knows that "I" stands for "H," and that "H," in the code for dress, stands for "Hat."

This process of coding is easy, so long as words do not begin with the same letter; but when they do, the conflicting words must be accommodated. For instance, "handkerchief" would clash with "hat." It is easy, however, to drop the first syllable, take the word "kerchief," and make "J" stand for the word. "Just name this that I am touching?" would serve in this case.

"Collar" and "cuff" would clash too. In a former instance, illustrating the complete spelling out of words, "cuff" was dealt with. It would be purely matter for arrangement as to which should be designated by "C," and what should be done with the other word. It is easy to proceed upon the mnemonic principle, and arrange that "collar" shall be "lapel," and "lapel" shall be nominated by "M." Every part of this business is matter for arrangement, for it would take very many pages to illustrate every possible form of code. A brief code for some

parts of dress, however, will be useful. Let it be arranged that—

Cuff is to be represented by D, the substitute of C.

Collar, transposed to lapel, is to be represented by M, the substitute for L.

Sleeve is to be represented by T, the substitute of S.

Hat " I, " H.

Button " C, " B.

Jewellery " P : O, for ornament.

These are all words descriptive of a lady's, also of a gentleman's dress. Some designation, therefore, is necessary to distinguish between the two. This may be managed by introducing the word "now" into the sentence applying to a gentleman's dress, and leaving the lady's with no such designation. For instance, the director may say :

"I am now touching something?"

The answer would be, "A gentleman's hat."

If the hatter were the most fashionable hatter in the town, and the one agreed upon to be the chief hatter of the code, the director would say :

"Hatter's name?"

If the hatter were a second-rate one, he would ask the question with the necessary initial. In another case he would say :

"Can you tell me what I am now touching?"

"A button on some gentleman's dress."

"A waistcoat or coat button?"

"Waistcoat" (because "A" would be the representative initial of waistcoat, or it might be arranged that in putting an alternative the clairvoyant should always answer the first).

The director would proceed :

“Can you tell me what I am touching?”

“A button on a lady’s dress.”

“Now, what is it made of?”

“It looks like silver.”

This last question would be rather dangerous without more coding than is given here. It would need the word “metal” to be introduced into the question, but a code could be made up for buttons and also for materials of dress. Here are some examples:

Velvet	may	be	represented	by	W	for	V.
Sealskin	„	„	„	„	T	„	S.
Lace	„	„	„	„	M	„	L.
Ribbon	„	„	„	„	S	„	R.
Silk	„	„	„	„	L	„	K.
Metal	„	„	„	„	N	„	M.
Glass	„	„	„	„	H	„	G.

Suppose a gentleman wearing a sealskin waistcoat with gilt buttons—a very unusual costume, and therefore a good test—the following would be the conversation:

“Can you tell me what I am touching now?”

“A button on a gentleman’s dress.”

“Now, have you any idea what it is made of?”

“Metal, I think.”

“Tell me what kind of metal?”

“It looks like gold or gilt.” “T” represents No. 1 metal, or gold.

“Tell me what the waistcoat is made of?”

“Sealskin.”

A sealskin waistcoat with gilt buttons, and all seen blindfolded! It will be observed, too, that there are three codes, or sub-codes, used here. The code for “things” touched, or exterior articles of dress is first used, and this

leads to the code for metal, and that leads to the code for material. They do not clash, because the mind naturally passes from one to another.

The ornaments usually worn by ladies and gentlemen may be coded in the same way.

The generic term "Jewellery" or "Ornament" may be designated by "P," the letter for "O," and under this may be classified all the various stones and diamonds, and gold and silver rings and brooches. As, for instance:

"Ring" may be represented by "S," the letter for "R." It may be assumed to be gold if not otherwise designated. Suppose a sailor were to offer a silver ring, and the conductor were to say:

"Say, now, what am I touching?"

The clairvoyant should say, "A ring"; but she might say, "A gold ring."

The conductor would reply, "Not gold," upon which she would say, "A silver ring." She would know it was a ring, and the "Not" would tell her it was No. 2 metal, or silver. A mistake of this sort adds versimilitude to the exhibition.

Diamonds would be represented by "E," the letter for "D." The various stones would have to be classified, and it is a question whether jewellery should not be classified under dress rather than under a separate division. This question, however, should be settled by the person who is to use the code.

The colours, however, are to be dealt with in full, but we need not go beyond the colours of the spectrum for examples:

Violet may be indicated by W.

Indigo ,, J.

Blue	may be indicated by	C.
Green	„	H.
Yellow	„	Very easy.
Orange	„	P.
Red	„	S.

A few other colours may be added, and new colours can be classified as they become fashionable. Chocolate and drab would be incorporated without clashing. Mauve and magenta would have to be reconciled, but it will be noticed that since the conductor always conveys the fact that he is dealing with colours, the code is very simple.

“Say what this colour is,” gives red.

“Come, the colour,” gives blue.

“Here, the colour,” gives green.

“Please, the colour,” gives orange.

It is needless to complicate matters by multiplying instances. What cannot be communicated by an initial can be given by a special sign, and with a little thought these special signs can be mnemonically associated with the word so naturally as to make their remembrance almost a matter of no effort whatever.

The days of the week can be coded by the figures 1 to 7; the days of the month by their figures; and the months themselves may also be specified by numbers. The conjurer in asking for the day would indicate that he wanted the day, of course, and his question would give the answer, just as if he were asking for a figure. The clairvoyant would simply say “Wednesday” instead of “four,” or “June” instead of “six.”

There should also be an arrangement for negatives and affirmatives. That “Yes” or “No” is the answer must be made apparent from the question, and for a variation

the answer might be communicated by the last word of the question, as, for instance :

“ Can you see anything on this paper now ? ”

The answer in this case would be “ No,” from “ Now.”

“ Can you see anything on this paper ? Quick.”

The answer in this case would be “ Yes,” from “ Quick.”

Both instances are purely arbitrary ; but they will serve.

They may be applied in this way :

“ Can you see any inscription on this coin ? Quick.”

“ Yes.”

“ Be sure now. What is this first letter ? ”

“ A.”

“ Make out the second.”

“ L.”

“ Find out the next.”

“ E.”

“ Easy with the rest.”

“ I see it all. It is ‘ Alexander.’ ”

The word “ Easy ” gave the “ X,” and the whole name would be obvious. This is another instance of full spelling, but in practice it would be advisable to form a code for emperors and kings. Just as Alexander may be reduced by the clairvoyant to Alex. without prearrangement, it may be by arrangement reduced to “ Al.” or even “ A.”

CHAPTER IX

COMBINATION CASES

UP to this point we have been dealing with second-sight cases of the ordinary sort. We now come to deal with composite cases.

One of the prime conditions of conducting clairvoyant exhibitions consists of arrangement to enable the director to familiarise himself with his audience; and it is advisable for the director to introduce experiments which partake of the nature of clairvoyant exhibitions in appearance, and which yet are performed by some other process than that of the code described, the object being to create confusion in the mind of the auditors by the use of a variety of methods of communication. It is customary for the director to adopt these varieties of methods in rapid succession, so that no portion of the entertainment of any length will be devoted to a process of communication identical in all respects. We have seen that much of the entertainment consists in the clairvoyant naming numbers written by persons in the audience, and that the clairvoyant reads the answer in the question. If the entire entertainment were confined to that process, there would be some probability of an ingenious person, by the use of shorthand, or some other convenient mode, recording what occurred, and thereby discovering the symbols by which the figures were communicated. In order, however, to prevent

this, it is customary to break in with other processes in which figures do not occur at all, but which appear equally marvellous with those in which the clairvoyant seems to read the figures in the mind of her director. One very common experiment is for the director to present a book to any person in the audience who chooses to hold it in his hand, and ask him to open it at any page he pleases. He informs the clairvoyant that, although blindfolded, she may be able to see the spectator from under the lower portion of the bandage, and would thus get some idea of the page at which the book was opened ; he therefore proposes that she should sit with her back to the audience, and for further precaution suggests to her to place a shawl over her head. The visitor having opened the book at page 32, the director requests him to count down a certain number of lines, and show him where he wishes the clairvoyant to read. The director then asks the clairvoyant to begin, and she immediately reads the passage indicated.

The result is most marvellous, but the explanation is simple. The clairvoyant, having her back to the audience and a shawl over her head, produces another copy of the book from her dress and opens it on her knee. When the director asks the gentleman who has the book, "Have you opened the book?" the clairvoyant becomes aware that the next words he addresses will contain an indication of the page where the book has been opened. He will say next, "Make no mistake." The clairvoyant takes notice that the initials of the first two words uttered by the director are "M" and "N." The clairvoyant knows that "M N" is to indicate to her the number of the page of the book, and she interprets the letters without any difficulty to read 32. The next thing is for the director to ask the spectator to

put his finger at the beginning of any line he likes on that page. Hearing that request made, the clairvoyant keeps on the watch. The next words he utters tells the clairvoyant what the line is. If it be 19, he will make use of some such remark as, "To be sure," and the clairvoyant will know that the "T" and the "B," the initial consonants in the first two words spoken, indicate to her that she is to begin at the nineteenth line. The clairvoyant begins at once to recite the passage from the point indicated.

The spectators are filled with wonder, but they are not aware of the fact that immediately the clairvoyant turns her back to the audience, and gets the shawl comfortably round her head, she produces a duplicate of the book from her dress, and follows the conversation with commonplace regularity until she discovers the place in the book, and then reads from it. The bandage and the covering with the shawl is used, not for the purpose of preventing the clairvoyant from seeing what goes on in the audience, but simply for preventing the audience from seeing what goes on under the eyes of the clairvoyant. This is an example almost ludicrous in its simplicity, but it is admirably complete.

Another experiment can be performed in which numbers form the leading feature, but in which the ordinary code takes no part. The clairvoyant, apparently mesmerised and being in a state of trance, is placed against a stand, with her left arm resting upon a pedestal, and there she remains completely unmoved. The director, however, before leaving her, bares her arm to show that there is nothing upon it, and thereafter draws her sleeve down. The reason for this will be apparent shortly.

He then calls upon the man who keeps the door to bring

in a Webster's dictionary, and he asks him to give it to anybody he likes in the hall. He then goes to some other person in the hall and says to him, "I have here another copy of this dictionary and a paper-knife ; I shall be obliged if you would take this paper-knife in your hand and place it between the leaves of the book as I hold it to you, that the audience may see that you determine at what page I shall open this book, and that I do not open it at any page I choose myself."

The spectator places the paper-knife between the leaves of the book, and the director immediately thereafter opens the place and displays the paper-knife. He then puts the open book upon a stand, and the visitor announces at his request that he has indicated page 115. The director then asks the spectator holding the other copy of the dictionary to open it at page 115.

He then goes into the body of the hall with a bag of counters with numbers upon them. He asks any lady or gentleman to take out of this bag the counters and look at them. They find that each counter bears a number upon it, from one upwards. He then remarks that the dictionary is open, and that he proposes to ask a lady to select the word by taking a counter from the bag, the number on which shall be the number of the word, counting from the beginning.

He then opens the bag to the lady, and asks her to take one of the counters, and only one. She takes out one counter, bearing, let us say, the number 17. The counter is held up to the audience, and the director requests the gentleman who holds the dictionary to count down the first column of the page which he has opened, and to put his finger on the seventeenth word, and to be sure not to

name it aloud, although he may point it out to his neighbours to show there is no collusion.

This having been done, the director makes a few passes towards the clairvoyant, and brings her from an apparently somnolent condition to that of an awakened subject of mesmerism. When she has recovered partially he asks her to bare her left arm, and, upon her doing so, the audience sees to its amazement the word "Mystery," or some other word, imprinted apparently in blood, which proves to be the word selected in the manner described.

This very puzzling exhibition is produced without any regard to the code, and is eminently calculated to confuse any person who may be on the track to discover what that code is.

The way in which the trick is done is simple. The word is selected beforehand, and a slip is prepared in red ink, which, in the act of pulling down the sleeve of the clairvoyant, is unrolled and pressed upon the arm so as to leave an impression there in imitation of blood. In the book which the director presents to the gentleman who inserts the paper-knife so as to indicate the page of the dictionary there is concealed another paper-knife at page 115; so that, no matter in what page the gentleman puts the paper-knife, by the exercise of some dexterity the director takes good care that he opens it and displays the paper-knife at page 115, and not at that place in the book where the spectator placed the paper-knife. The bag of counters is a double bag, with a division running from top to bottom, and while on the one side are a number of counters, each with a different number, on the other side are a set of counters all with one number only upon them, the number of the word he has selected for the evening. The director,

of course, will not have on every evening in that side of the bag counters bearing the same number. One time he will have 51, at another 20, at another 32, and so on. He will place in the bag the number of the word which he has already inscribed for imprinting upon the arm of the clairvoyant. This experiment, as before remarked, deals with numbers without regard to a code, and prevents the detection of the principle of the code.

Another experiment equally effective as a piece of clairvoyance is carried out in the following manner, and serves the double purpose of astounding the audience and enabling the director to gather together all the various peculiarities in the articles of dress in the front rows of the gangway, with which he afterwards deals in the manner already described. The director distributes among the audience a number of white cards, on which people are at liberty to write anything they please. An envelope is given to one of the audience, and he is asked to collect the cards written upon and place them in the envelope. When they are all collected the gentleman seals up the envelope and places it in the cleft of a stick, which is fixed up in full view of the audience. It will be observed that up to this time the director has not touched the envelope or its contents.

While the sealed envelope is thus exhibited the director goes among the audience, and collects a number of articles in a hat. He probably collects "a gold pencil-case, richly engraved," "a corkscrew of iron," "a penny match-box," "a visiting-card," "a half-crown of 1858," and other similar articles. He is in no hurry about it, and he examines each particularly before dropping it into the hat.

He has thus the sealed envelope in the cleft of the stick which has not been in his hands, and the hat contain-

ing the collected articles. He blindfolds the clairvoyant, and takes the packet from the stick. He opens it, and as he places each of the cards—which he thus touches for the first time, and even then does not read—she announces what is written upon them, to the great amazement of the audience. The director then takes the hat containing the collected articles, and these he extracts one by one without speaking more than sufficient to notify to a blindfolded person to name an article. Probably he continues in each case to utter the simple word “this.” As he holds them up to the audience the blindfolded clairvoyant describes them accurately.

This trick may be done in two ways—either with the assistance of the code, or entirely without it; and as one of the objects of these tricks is to divert the audience from the system of the code, it is usual to do it in the following manner.

The preparation of the pieces of card and the placing of them in the sealed packet is done exactly as it appears to be done, and when the envelope is placed in the cleft of the stick neither the director nor the clairvoyant knows anything about its contents, or what is written upon the cards—not even how many cards are there. The director, of course, knows what is in the hat, but the clairvoyant does not. While the director, however, is bandaging the eyes of the clairvoyant—and he takes some time about it—he has an opportunity of making any communication he pleases to her, supplemental to their code scheme.

The contents of the sealed envelope are communicated in another way. The director withdraws the cards from the packet, and, placing one against the forehead of the clairvoyant, asks her to read what is written upon it. She

reads, let us say, "A case of pickles." If the director should choose to have a confederate in the audience, he will call out that he wrote that. If not, the director will pretend that some one did claim it, and thank him, urging the writer, however, to speak out so that all may hear. The card, however, thus dealt with does not really bear the words "A case of pickles," but something else. There is, in fact, no card bearing these words in the packet. The card, however, which the clairvoyant says bears upon it "A case of pickles" is then placed on a table just below the clairvoyant, and she is able to read what is written upon it beneath the bandage, though none in the audience can see that her eyes are within range of it. She then sees that the card has written upon it the words "Universal arrangement," and when the next card is placed against her forehead she says there is written upon it the words "Universal arrangement," and that card being placed upon the last she sees what is written upon it, and appropriates that phrase for the next, and so on to the end, when a fresh card which has never been in the packet is produced, and is held to her forehead to do duty for the last genuine card lying before her. No sooner has the amazement subsided at this wonderful display than the hat is produced, and the clairvoyant, with marvellous accuracy, describes the articles drawn from it, in accordance with the prearranged code of the order in which things taken from the pocket are to be named. As stated in another passage, the articles could be named as they are taken from the audience in the order of the code, but the hat may be used to distract attention and give time. This compound experiment is used largely apart from all codes, and is in fact an expedient for enabling the director to make himself acquainted

with his audience, and to dissipate any suspicions which other portions of his entertainment may excite as to his method of operation.

There is yet another trick unconnected with the settled code equally marvellous in its appearance, and admirably adapted to throw the audience off the scent. It consists in asking one of the audience to draw one from a pack of cards. The auditor draws the ace of spades. The card is exhibited to all the people, and then presented to the person who drew it, with the request that it be placed between the pages of a book held by another person in the audience. This is done, and a dozen other cards are given to other people, and they are each placed in the book. The book so interleaved with cards is held by any one in the audience. The director has never touched it since the ace of spades was placed in it, so far as could be seen, nor has the clairvoyant; yet the blindfolded clairvoyant announces the page in which the ace of spades is placed. The effect is electrical.

This trick is quite unconnected with the code. It is a combination of forcing and sleight of hand. A duplicate for the ace of spades is placed in the book beforehand in the page designed. The ace of spades is forced upon the lady or gentleman in the audience. It is taken back by the conductor, who exhibits it to the audience, and in the act of swinging round, that all may see the card, he brings his hand round to the pack, and as quick as lightning places the ace at the bottom of the pack, and offers the person who drew it a card from the top—it may be a king, or a two, or anything. The spectator quite unsuspectingly takes it and places it in the book, thinking it is the ace first drawn. The dozen other cards are merely blinds, but they

appear to add to this marvel of divination by being calculated to confuse. There are points at which this trick may fail, as, for instance, if the person who drew the ace looked at the card given to him before inserting it in the book; and also if the person holding the book looked into it and discovered the duplicate ace. This, however, is exactly what in practice is really never thought of.

The effect of this may be heightened by asking the clairvoyant to read the first three lines of the page that the card faces, if she can see them. She will, of course, have previously committed them to memory when the false ace was inserted.

These several cases are described fully because they are instructive examples of the combination of code work, sleight of hand, and preparation. It is probable some who have been mystified by the performances of the professional thought reader will have some incident in their minds that these cases do not explain; and it may be that, so far as they are informed, no code, no sleight of hand, and no preparation could account for some wonder-creating incident which to them appears to have been the result only of some abnormal power of divination—some power that enables the “gifted stranger” on the platform to look into their very soul and divine what they conceived to be their most private thoughts. To them I answer that no explanation can be offered of cases the facts of which are casually gathered, simply because the observers are usually inexperienced, and because they begin to gather together the facts after the incident is closed and after wonder has been awakened. The ordinary human being is notoriously incapable of giving a succinct and perfect account of any given occurrence, and scarcely any one could be

found accurately to report an incident, the chief mover in which was engaged in designedly suppressing important facts. In most of such cases the subject is vehement in declaring that the "clairvoyant" could not have known of a particular incident in his career; but how can any one declare a negative? To say that such knowledge is improbable is reasonable; but those who know the ways of public entertainers, who live by pleasant deception and trade on chance communications, find by experience that the thing to marvel at is the ingenuity with which the entertainer utilises the common incidents of life. What we should remember in all such cases of the incomprehensible is that the whole process of the platform is intended to disclose only so much as is necessary to interest, and that there is always something kept behind the veil.

It should also be stated that this class of trick, reading passages from books selected by others, takes many divers forms according to circumstances, and is never attempted unless the preliminaries are carefully worked out. When the circumstances do not permit of the necessary pre-arrangement the trick is not attempted, but the audience, private or public, is never told that "the reciting of passages from a chance-selected book cannot be done this evening."

CHAPTER X

MNEMONIC DEMONSTRATIONS

WHENEVER any explanation of any particularly striking second sight demonstration has been given and it is shown to be merely a clever conjuring trick the recipient of the information accepts the explanation with pleasure, immediately dismisses that particular incident from his mind, and ceases to wonder at it. The disposition to wonder, however, and belief in the supernatural is so ingrained in the ordinary human being that the next moment the very same person will recall some other extraordinary second sight demonstration and pronounce it inexplicable, and therefore, they reason, supersensuous. Thus it comes to pass that, after going over case after case, the reader of these pages will probably say that the code theory is all very well, but things have been done to which no code will apply, and instances are given in which the advocates of the occult theory fix upon some purely conjuring trick as the most indisputable evidence of the occult. One of the most conclusive pieces of evidence to the minds of such persons consists of cases in which very few or no words are spoken, and it may be done by repeating only the word "this." In the chapter on figures it will have been seen how a row of nine figures of a most puzzling kind have been read by the clairvoyant after having heard only two

words from her director. That was done by coding. A similar, and to some minds a more extraordinary, result can be achieved without a code.

In earlier times, when this class of entertainment was in its infancy, the entertainer on passing among his audience in the early part of the show remarks peculiarities of dress in a particular row. He may observe that a lady has a yellow flower in her bonnet, that the gentleman next her has a gold scarf-pin, that the person next him wears an extraordinary watch-chain, that the person next him has shirt studs of a striking character. These objects of more than usual prominence may be easily noted by the most casual observer from any part of the room. When passing to and fro the conjurer arranges these objects in his mind in order; and by a process of association well known to professors of mnemonics, and easily acquired, those articles can all be strung together with precision in a very few moments while the operator is going through his ordinary work, and they are communicated to the clairvoyant when looking after the bandaging of her eyes or when engaged in some other casual proceeding. This having been done, the clairvoyant will keep the series of articles in mind until she gets the signal to begin repeating them. This signal is given by the conjurer after informing the audience that he will touch certain articles; and, as he touches them, the clairvoyant will describe their characteristics. With such a speech necessary for the information of the audience as to what he is going to do, he also communicates to the clairvoyant that the first of the fixed objects is about to be touched. He then proceeds to the second, and says, "And this?" and so the whole string can be rattled off without the

slightest communication between the two beyond the preliminary arrangement. After the first series has been run off some general conversation ensues, and then a second experiment is proceeded with; and, at some time which may be either indicated by information stated to the audience, or by previous arrangement as to time, the second series can be run through in like manner; and the same with the third.

It was a common practice with the late Mr. Heller to collect a number of articles very rapidly in a hat and take them up to the platform. It has been already shown that the variety of articles usually carried in people's pockets is few and that they can be easily classified. This classification is extended by an arrangement for running them off in a prearranged series. By taking them out of the hat in accordance with that prearranged series the task is easy, and it is a reasonable thing that they should be taken to the platform and run over in the face of all the audience. The continuous repetition of the word "this," so long as the prearranged series is followed, has a striking and baffling effect. To drop into code conversation when something out of the series has to be dealt with does not detract from the striking effect of the repetition of the word "this" in several diverse cases following each other.

It is, however, not necessary that the articles should be collected in a large number and taken up to the platform. The eagerness with which members of the audience press things upon the director as he walks among them gives him an opportunity of making up a short series of articles as he takes them from the hands proffering them. He takes them in series, starts the series code with the clair-

voyant, stops it when he comes to a difficulty, and reverts to the fuller code from time to time.

Preliminary arrangement or communication is not always necessary. The director can always, if he chooses, run articles of dress in a certain order. No matter whether he begins with brooch, bonnet, watch-chain, or an umbrella, he will always be able to follow in the series, and the spectator will not detect that he always runs in the same order, provided always that he does not begin at the same point; and provided also that he does not continue the scheme at too great a length. Without prearrangement, however, the series cannot be carried on for any great number, because the articles will not be found for a long series in the row chosen; but the break and reverting to the ordinary code completely baffle the ordinary investigator.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION OF SECOND SIGHT

SUFFICIENT has been stated to enable any person with wit enough to practice clairvoyance to construct any additional codes he may need for himself. It is only necessary to add, as was stated in the opening pages, that a scheme which has puzzled large audiences for years cannot be concocted without trouble or worked without long practice. Brains, energy, and perseverance, however, could achieve a great success in this business; but a stupid and indolent person would make a wretched bungle of it. Robbed of all pretensions to the supernatural or abnormal, the scheme provides a pleasant pastime. The moral to be drawn from the mystery which has hitherto enshrouded the exhibition of clairvoyance entertainments, coupled with this explanation of "how it is done," should warn people not to be too ready to ascribe to the supernatural that which they do not understand. The fact that a person does not comprehend a given result is evidence rather that he does not know everything, than that the cause is supernatural or even abnormal. The director of the clairvoyant, like the "spirit" medium, comes upon the scene with his conditions and his preconcerted arrangements. He tells you just as much as he chooses, and no more. If you draw your conclusions from what you see, or think you see, you will draw erroneous conclusions; and as a good conjurer, like an expert medium,

will never tell you enough to enable you to draw an accurate conclusion, you had better draw none except this—that since the performer is an entertainer, you may be sure he is not superhuman, but simply a man, who knows how to throw dust in your eyes very pleasantly, and to befool you while he amuses you.

An exhibitor of second sight will tell you the mode described here is not the way his clairvoyant does it. You may answer that you are quite prepared to believe that. The details of this code, as here suggested, may be better or worse than any code in actual operation. The conductor may adopt any course he pleases, but the principle on which he will work is the principle of a code supplemented by pure conjuring.

In dealing with the exposition of second sight, it should always be remembered and clearly admitted that there are undoubtedly existent, in the form of electro-biology or hypnotism, certain remarkable mental phenomena calculated to awaken amazement and to provoke inquiry. This was so in the case of the patients of Mesmer, and it has been the case with every subsequent illustration of the principle he developed. These phenomena may all be classed under one common description—the subjection of a weak will to the domination of a stronger. This directing and controlling power can be exerted by one will over another with such extraordinary results that a common belief is induced that all the pretensions set up by clairvoyants and thought readers are genuine occult phenomena wholly distinguished from conjuring. As a matter of fact it may be taken that ninety-nine parts of all exhibitions, private and public, of mesmerism, electro-biology, hypnotism, clairvoyance, and thought reading, consist of common conjuring, and that

the explanation of the hundredth part of genuine psychic phenomena will be found in the remarkable fact that the mind of one person may become subject to the will of another, so that the dominating person will become absolute master of the subjected person, and for the time being will control and dictate his every thought and act. It is, however, an invariable condition that the subject of hypnotic influence will never act or speak except at the instigation of the person controlling, and that the announcements made, the things done and supposed to be seen are all suggested by the person controlling, either at the time or by previous communication. When an entertainment is given combining the results of this curious psychological fact with the sleight of hand and clairvoyant exhibition of the expert conjurer the effect is marvellous.

Clairvoyance or second sight as an exhibition was brought to its highest pitch of excellence by the conjurer, Robert Houdin. His methods were largely developed in this country by Robert Heller, whose sister was a most expert clairvoyant. Those who have seen these at their best during the middle and later part of the nineteenth century would probably dispute the proposition that they were nothing more than skilled conjurers; and it is probable that, if they should be weak in the matter of logic, no explanation will suffice to disabuse their minds of the belief that what they had seen was the result of an occult power. Moreover, it is inevitable that there must be very many demonstrations dissimilar from those described here, and to which the explanations given will not apply. In such cases those who revel in the contemplation of the marvellous and incline to belief in the supernatural will dismiss the cases that are explained, and cling to the unexplained as evidence

of the occult. Those, however, who approach the subject with clear brains, uninfluenced by imagination, and not predisposed to belief in the supernatural, will recognise the soundness of the dogma, that those who attempt an investigation of the alleged occult should be guided by the rule that no supernatural cause for anything under the sun should be for a moment admitted if any natural cause for the effect can be assigned. It is not necessary to prove that the natural cause assigned for the effect was the real cause; it is necessary only to show that a natural cause could have realised the identical or a similar effect. There may be several natural causes capable of producing a given effect. One cause is sufficient for destroying the pretensions that the process was supernatural. Should any reader, in defiance of this accepted dogma, continue to assume a supernatural cause for an incident that these pages do not explain, only because he cannot perceive a natural cause for the incident in question, then it is necessary only to refer him to the numerous mysterious facts here recorded, and ask him to remember that without the explanation given he would unquestionably attribute them to supernatural causes. Should he continue to persist in his belief in the occult we have only to congratulate him on the possession of an unsophisticated nature and pass on.

There is no part of the professional entertainment so profitable as the demonstration of these pseudo-occult exhibitions. The audiences are always divided into the two camps of believers in a supernatural faculty and those who refuse any explanation but that of expert conjuring. The quarrel being carried on in public, the exploiters of the show profit by the consequent advertisement. The demonstrator usually disclaims all knowledge of "how it

is done." He is anxiously looking to scientific investigation for the exposition of the mystery. To say that he knows this to be untrue is to say what must be said of every conjurer. It is an essential part of his business to delude, and one cannot construe his professional statements by the ordinary canons of truthfulness. When the call for scientific investigation is responded to, the method by which it is carried on is usually unscientific, although associated with scientific principles and conducted by scientific men. Nearly always the scientific men are disposed to believe some new mental condition has been demonstrated, and they hunger for the honour of defining its characteristics and marking out the limits of its influence.

Concurrently with this conflict of belief, those capable of unveiling the mystery find a difficulty as members of an audience in making clear to the inexperienced what part of the exhibition is code work, where sleight of hand comes in to add to the mystery, and to what extent preliminary preparation makes sleight of hand and codes unnecessary.

CHAPTER XII

THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

THE whole of the incidents recorded in the previous chapters are based upon the theory that two persons are concerned in working them—that one mind receives the impressions through the ordinary senses, and that the second person reads the impressions so made on the other mind telepathically. It is odd that those who persist in looking for an occult cause for these effects, and who believe that the result is achieved by the actual transmission of thought, do not recognise that if such were the explanation it would be unnecessary for any words whatever to be spoken by the director of the entertainment, and that the whole process could be realised in complete silence by every one but the clairvoyant, who would be able to read the mind of her director and state what he was thinking about. This, however, is not done. There are conditions imposed by the performers, and there are conditions imposed by the managers of the place where the exhibition is carried on. These conditions preclude a test such as is here suggested.

It is always the case in conjunction with this class of entertainment that the press takes its cue, so far as it deals with the exhibition, from the popular standpoint of wonder, and occasionally makes up its report from information vouchsafed by the entertainer himself. This is always the

case with private and especially royal entertainments. The fact remains that the clairvoyant has ears and the entertainer a tongue, and we know codes are possible.

In the matter of thought reading, or thought transference, as recently introduced during the last five-and-twenty years, the case is somewhat different. The first performer in this exploit, so far as my information goes, was the late Washington Irving Bishop. He worked out his experimental performances in my house, and I made some of his secret apparatus for him, so that whatever else may have been done by others, I am at least informed as to his methods. Not only so, but the pretension to occult thought transference was very completely dealt with by Professor Huxley in a remarkable seance, in the course of which the professor conducted his own experiments in his own way without breathing a word to any one as to what he intended doing, and his conclusion stands as a sound, reasonable, and complete definition of the whole business.

The thought reader is in effect the clairvoyant. The thinker is any ordinary spectator. There is no intermediary, as in an ordinary clairvoyant show. There is one condition—the thought reader must be in physical contact with the person whose thought he has to read. There are, however, expositions in which this condition is not imposed. In such cases of non-contact as I have seen the explanation is found in the ordinary conjurer's portfolio. I have had cases reported to me by others, and I admit that I am unable to explain some of these cases as stated; but I do not believe in any such unexplained case the facts have been properly recorded.

Professor Huxley's test was ingenious and conclusive. The professor hid a shilling in a given place. It was

the duty of Bishop to find that shilling blindfold, holding Professor Huxley by the hand, the professor in the meantime being enjoined to keep his mind concentrated on the place where he had hidden the shilling. Bishop failed three times, and at the fourth attempt he was successful. Professor Huxley said that Bishop's failures had been more convincing than his success. Others had seen the professor hide the shilling; others could, therefore, have communicated the place of concealment. By imagining that he had hidden the shilling in some other place and by concentrating his mind on that place the professor ensured that he alone was concerned in the experiment; and in the case of the three failures Bishop had taken him to the imagined place and found nothing. The professor, in conclusion, gratified him with the success. In each case Professor Huxley was quite sure that he had not consciously led Bishop; but he was equally certain that he had done so unconsciously. He described the communication between the two hands, in the language of Dr. Carpenter, as a case of "unconscious cerebration," and this is indeed the whole matter. Bishop himself told me that, as he and his companion cautiously and slowly moved as if on a pivot, facing round the room in all directions, the moment the pair actually faced the locality of the object he remarked a minute sensation of pressure, instantaneous and tremulous. It was at this moment that he darted forward suddenly and impetuously dragging his companion after him until he came to an obstacle over which he could not pass. Then the process was repeated up and down to get the next indication, and finally the sensation was provoked again at the exact spot, but usually in a more pronounced form. The mind

of the thought reader's companion being concentrated on the place, it is impossible for him, try as he will, to refrain from a spasmodic sensation impelled by a natural but unrecognised desire for the success of the experiment. Upon the occasion of a private experiment before Bishop had appeared as a thought reader in public, an artist had acted as the agent of contact. The experiment was a failure, to the great chagrin of Bishop. The artist afterwards told me that he had not been thinking of the place where the hidden article lay, but had been studying the shadows of some flowers on the table cast by an overhanging lamp. Obviously, no cerebration, conscious or unconscious, could supervene on this deviation from the conditions of thought transference.

Accepting the exposition of Professor Huxley, it must be admitted that the process is one of thought reading, because the signs provoked by the thoughts are read and conveyed. Instead of using the ordinary vehicles of speech and hearing for the transference, the spasmodic but unconscious action of the brain upon the nerves of the hand give the necessary signal, and with practice the indications are as plain as the plainest speech.

This is the whole foundation of thought reading as commonly understood, but it has been the practice of performers in this branch of the pseudo-occult to associate the exposition with experiments in which personal contact between the thought reader and another is not a condition. Bishop himself gave one in his spirit-rapping disclosures in which some hidden writing was repeated, and the writing was supposed to be transferred along a wire charged with electricity. Bishop used to be very particular about the battery, and grave professors certified to its

capacity ; but the whole affair was a matter of sleight of hand by the commonplace trick of palming.

There is one case of thought reading by Bishop that has never been equalled by any other thought reader or any other performer of second sight. It confounded the whole body of professors of the Glasgow University, assembled in a professor's house to test him.

Bishop asked the professor to fetch him a book from his library that he was sure he had not seen. The professor hurried to his library and returned to the drawing-room, book in hand. Bishop took it and held it up unopened. He then asked the professor whether he had a visiting-card about him. The professor produced one. Bishop asked the professor to hand this card to the Principal of the Glasgow University, and Bishop, holding up the closed book, said impressively :

“ Here I have a book that our host has brought from his library, and that he is sure I have not seen. It is closed, and I am going to ask the Principal to insert the professor's visiting-card between the closed pages to mark a page without opening the book. When the page has been so marked, I propose to recite the first three lines of the left-hand page of the opening selected.”

The card was inserted as desired, and, with the book still closed, Bishop pressed it against his left temple, and by a series of physical contortions, suggestive of extreme mental excitement, appeared to be extracting from those closed boards and some three hundred pages of letterpress the three lines in question. After this effort had been gone through he exclaimed breathlessly, “ I have it,” and, holding the book dramatically at arm's length, he recited those three lines.

So far the professors had no evidence that those were the three lines, but Bishop was anxious to impress them with the fact that the book had as yet not been opened. He then opened it, showing the visiting-card as inserted by the Principal, and holding the open book in front of the professors upside down, so far as he was concerned, and with the others pressing eagerly around, he again recited the passage. Has any one ever been present at any equally astounding example of thought reading? There was, in fact, no thought reading about it. It was a variation of a highly expert conjuring trick. Not one of the professors had the slightest idea how it was done; and I do not believe they have ever heard the solution of the mystery. As Bishop is dead, I suppose I am the only person who does know how this particular trick was worked; but there must be several conjurers who could frame a similar demonstration of occult power, and realise it if circumstances were kind.

It is within my experience that when a marvellous trick of this sort is explained, your earnest inquirer, who has believed it to be positive evidence of the supersensuous at least until he has heard the explanation, immediately dismisses it as of no importance, and reverts to some other far more simple exploit as the unquestionably occult. I am, therefore, disposed to refrain from explaining this remarkable instance of thought reading so-called, or second sight through book covers and letterpress. I leave it with the assurance that the explanation is quite simple, and that the professor in whose house the entertainment was given was not an accomplice and was as much astonished as his guests.

Whenever a demonstration of thought reading is pro-

claimed as distinguished by an absence of personal contact, the explanation must be looked for in the ordinary repertoire of the expert conjurer ; and it is essential that all the facts should be clearly ascertained, because the art of the conjurer consists in the concealment of the essential, and the obtrusion of the unimportant.

CHAPTER XIII

“SPIRITUAL” MANIFESTATIONS

THE pretensions of the spirit medium are pretty well exploded by this time, but there are still living ordinary human beings who believe that spirits are pleased to knock on tables, blow trumpets, and move furniture about through the medium of experts whom they select for these unedifying processes, and it is appropriate that some mention should be made here of some of the more mysterious “manifestations” usually associated with the spirits of the dead, but which should more properly be associated with the money-making propensities of the living.

I believe that an article from my pen, published in *The Globe* in the year 1865, upon an exhibition by the Davenport Brothers, was the first attempt to deal reasonably with their dark cabinet exhibition. The cabinet itself was afterwards effectually disposed of by a counter demonstration, led by the late Sir Henry Irving and the late Mr. Toole; but it was not until 1879 that the late Washington Irving Bishop gave a complete exposition of the whole art of producing “spiritual” manifestations, before thousands of persons, under the auspices of the professors of the Universities, in which the late Professor McKendrick, of the Chair of Physiology at Glasgow, took a leading part, and in which the late Professor George Buchanan expounded the muscular action involved. The late Professor Simpson, of

the Chair of Medical Jurisprudence, assisted in the matter of evidence. Among others present who are now living were Lord Kelvin and Professor Ramsay.

Bishop amazed an audience of four thousand by exhibiting a number of the most extraordinary "spiritualistic" manifestations, with all the accompaniments of the dark cabinet and the most incontestible evidence of inability to leave the cabinet and his bonds. On the succeeding evening he performed every one of the tricks, for they were shown to be nothing else, before practically the same audience, but in the open light, to demonstrate the fallacy of regarding them as supernatural. These tricks included the famous ring trick, and no reasonable person would ask for any more crucial demonstration of the cause of "spiritual" manifestations than the explanation of how the ring trick was done in the dark cabinet. I propose to content myself in dealing with this branch of the subject by explaining this exposition and the equally puzzling galvanometer test worked out in the residence of Professor Crookes, and described in a remarkable work in two volumes by the late Serjeant Cox, entitled *The Mechanism of Man*, published in 1879 by Longman.

It should be presumed that all those who performed as spiritual media who were liberated from bonds after the manner of the Davenport Brothers were fitted by nature for this trick. They were all endowed with very large wrists and very small hands. This physical condition, combined with the fact that the twists, turns and knots of a rope are capable of enlargement, solves both the problem of binding and the rapidity with which action arose in the dark cabinet after the closing of its doors. The medium being free from his bonds, and the room

being in darkness, with every one in it expecting something mysterious to happen, nothing that followed needs explanation.

Bishop, however, showed that it was not necessary to rely on this condition of rapid freedom from bonds. The ring trick is based on complete bondage. He had linen bands tied tightly round his wrists, and these were sewn to his shirt wristband, so that release from these bonds meant stripping himself from his shirt. The two wrists were then tied together behind his back, and secured to an iron ring bolted with an inch bolt and nut to a post. This post was securely fastened to a board four feet square, upon which was placed the chair in which he sat. His ankles were similarly tied with linen bands, and the two ends were nailed to the board on which the chair was placed. To make sure he did not rise, two penny pieces were placed upon his two feet. They would inevitably have fallen off if he had risen.

In this position he had a linen band put round his neck, with the ends crossed on his breast, and a gold ring was placed in his mouth. The cabinet doors were then closed, and after a short interval the signal was given to open them and turn up the lights. Bishop was found in a semi-comatose state, the linen band was found double-knotted tightly on his throat, the ring was threaded on the ends, these being double-knotted again close to the neck. He was revived with a pint of champagne, and Professor George Buchanan announced the exceedingly high state of his pulse and the general excitement under which he laboured. On the next evening the trick was done in the full light of the audience, and the professor explained that by constant practice Bishop had managed to acquire the

capacity of throwing his right shoulder out of joint at will, and was thus able to elongate the distance between his right arm and his neck. This elongation, combined with the various lengths of the knotted linen (and there are always many knots in this sort of bandage), the length of the solid iron ring, and the bending of the neck to the left, enabled him to take the ring from his mouth, thread it on to the linen band, and tie the several knots with the first two fingers of his left hand. The top joints of these fingers had a prehensile capacity that was truly astonishing.

Professor Buchanan expressed the opinion at the time that the task was too dangerous to admit of frequent repetition, and it was not repeated many times after this public exposure. In its place Bishop designed a substitute, in which he was to be seated on a form with his wrists bound to two strong iron rings, bolted through the form forty inches apart with an inch bolt and nut. I made the bolts and rings for him in my private workshop. With half a turn of the wrist he was able to separate the ring from the bolt and be free. The bolts were made of the finest steel, and, in order that the very fine line of the joint should not be seen they were cleaned up and made bright with coarse sandpaper worked in the line of the joint, and wholly disguising it among the many scratches. This was at a time when Bishop was actually engaged in exposing the pretensions of the spiritualistic medium. Subsequently his friends thought it advisable to allow a notion to get abroad that he was endowed with abnormal powers in the matter of thought reading. He died a victim to this pretension, it is alleged, for his skull was opened and his brain exposed by some New York doctors immediately after

what was supposed to be his death. He had been performing at a club and fainted. That he was dead is disputed; but the passion for research was a sore temptation to the doctors present, and his skull was removed that his brain might be examined for abnormal appearances.

So ended the most remarkable exponent of thought reading, and the most efficient exposé of so-called “spiritualistic” manifestations.

The other case that may be taken as crucial is that of the galvanometer test of Professor Crookes, in relation to the exhibition of the medium Mrs. Fay. The theory was that, if the medium were placed in a chair in a darkened room, holding as she sat the terminals of two wires connected with a galvanometer in another room, in such a way that she was unable to connect these two terminals except by holding them so that the connection would be made only through her body, proof would be secured that she had not left her chair, and that such manifestations as occurred would be carried out by occult means. The conditions were observed, and very remarkable manifestations did occur, during which the galvanometer maintained its position, showing that the current was never broken.

A full description of what occurred is given by Mr. Serjeant Cox in his second volume. He says that he saw “the psychic,” Mrs. Fay, “or an exact duplication of her,” touched her hand, which “was moist, warm, and fleshy, and the same rings were on her fingers. Looking, I saw another form like that we had left upon the seat grasping the handles still there, but too much in shadow to enable me to note the dress.” Remarking upon the experiment, Serjeant Cox says that “the phenomena occurred under conditions that appear to preclude the possibility of im-

posture, with a scientific test, pronounced by the experts present to be conclusive, that during the whole time of their exhibition the magnetic current had *not* been interrupted."

It is an accepted rule that the supernatural should not be looked for so long as any natural means can be pointed to as a possible cause of the effects dealt with. I remember it was pointed out to me at the time that a duplicate wire could be carried under the carpet, and that the current could be maintained by putting the leg of the chair upon a particular pattern in the carpet, underneath which terminals could be pressed together. It is also obvious that a medium of no great ingenuity, and the medium in question was one of remarkable capacity, could have had a wire up the sleeve of one arm that could have been brought into use in the darkened room for connecting the terminals. Nothing more was needed to carry out the whole performance, for there was nothing else done that is not done any day by a first-class conjurer. Serjeant Cox says, concerning this particularly notorious case, that "whatever the agent, it certainly was *not* a spirit of the dead. It was undoubtedly the *living* psychic (or a duplicate of her) we saw and spoke with. . . . But one query remains. Did some other non-human being maintain the needful contact while she moved about? Certain it is that no human being did so." In another comment he remarks upon the fact that in no single instance has the psychic and the unknown being who is supposed to assume the form of the psychic been seen at the same time. It is extraordinary that in the face of this very sensible comment so much of the marvellous should have been recorded in the two bulky volumes by Serjeant Cox, or that so much value

should have been attached to the proceedings of persons who never rose above the level of the expert conjurer of the present day.

Nothing has ever been done by “spiritual” media to surpass these two famous demonstrations; and finding natural means are at command to account for them, the whole range of “spiritual” manifestations may be dismissed from the region of the occult and supernatural.

APPENDIX

THE following examples of denoting figures from 1 to 100 are given as exhibiting the working of the full code.

- 0.—“See this figure?” s represents 0.
- 1.—“Tell us this figure.” t : 1.
- 2.—“Now read this figure.” n : 2.
- 3.—“May I trouble you to denote this figure?” m : 3.
- 4.—“Read this figure.” r : 4.
- 5.—“Let us hear what this figure is.” l : 5.
- 6.—“Here is another figure.” h : 6.
- 7.—“Can you see this figure?” c : 7.
- 8.—“Will you state this figure?” w : 8.
- 9.—“Pray tell us this figure.” p : 9.
- 10.—“Tell us this number.” t : 1 s : 0.
- 11.—“Try this number.” t : 1 t : 1.
- 12.—“The number.” t : 1 n : 2.
- 13.—“Tell me the number.” t : 1 m : 3.
- 14.—“The reading of this number should be easy.”
t : 1 r : 4.
- 15.—“This little number should be easy.” t : 1 l : 5.
- 16.—“Try her yourself, sir, with this number.” (This
may be addressed to the gentleman who proposed
the figures.) t : 1 h : 6.
- 17.—“Try again. The number.” t : 1 g : 7.
- 18.—“This will be an easy number.” t : 1 w : 8.
- 19.—“Tell, please, this number.” t : 1 p : 9.
- 20.—“Now, see this number.” n : 2 s : 0.
- 21.—“Now, tell us this number.” n : 2 t : 1.
- 22.—“Now another number” n : 2 n : 2.
- 23.—“Any more after this number?” (This to the audi-
ence.) n : 2 m : 3.
- 24.—“Now, read this number.” n : 2 r : 4.

- 25.—“Now, let us hear this number.” n : 2 l : 5.
- 26.—“And here is another number.” n : 2 h : 6.
- 27.—“Now, can you state this number?” n : 2 c : 7.
- 28.—“Now, will you tell us this number?” n : 2 w : 8.
- 29.—“Now, please, this number.” n : 2 p : 9.
- 30.—“Make us acquainted with this number.” m : 3
s : 0.
- 31.—“Many thanks. The number.” m : 3 t : 1.
- 32.—“More numbers.” m : 3 n : 2.
- 33.—“Make me acquainted with your notion of this
number.” m : 3 m : 3.
- 34.—“Most readily will she read this number.” m : 3
r : 4.
- 35.—“More light would be acceptable on this board to
some in the hall. Oh, you can see very well, you
say. The number, please.” m : 3 l : 5.
- 36.—“Make haste. The number.” m : 3 h : 6.
- 37.—“Most kind of you, sir. The number.” m : 3 k : 7.
- 38.—“May we hear what this number is?” m : 3 w : 8.
- 39.—“My pointer is at the next number?” m : 3 p : 9.
- 40.—“Really, sir, I am obliged for this number.” r : 4
s : 0.
- 41.—“Read this number.” r : 4 t : 1.
- 42.—“Round numbers will do.” r : 4 n : 2.
- 43.—“Read me this number.” r : 4 m : 3.
- 44.—“Ready-reckoning this! The number, please.” r : 4
r : 4.
- 45.—“Our last number is?” r : 4 l : 5.
- 46.—“Read here. The number.” r : 4 h : 6.
- 47.—“Read carefully the number.” r : 4 c : 7.
- 48.—“Really, we are getting on famously. The number.”
r : 4 w : 8.
- 49.—“Read, please, the number.” r : 4 p : 9.
- 50.—“Let us hear this number.” l : 5 s : 0.
- 55.—“Listen!” (To the audience.) “Let us hear this
number.” l : 5 l : 5.
- 60.—“Here is another number.” h : 6 s : 0.
- 65.—“Here, let us have this number.” h : 6 l : 5.
- 66.—“Ho! Here is a number.” h : 6 h : 6.
- 70.—“Give us this number.” g : 7 s : 0.
- 75.—“Come, let us have this number.” c : 7 l : 5.
- 77.—“Come, give us this number.” c : 7 g : 7.

80.—“What is this number?” w : 8 s : 0.

85.—“We leave you to guess this number.” w : 8 l : 5.

88.—“Very well. The number.” v : 8 w : 8.

90.—“Please say the number.” p : 9 s : 0.

95.—“Pray let us have this number.” p : 9 l : 5.

99.—“Be pleased to let us have this number.” b : 9 p : 9.

100.—“Good! The same story. Our friends always think numbers of this sort puzzling.”

“Good” indicates that there are three figures, and the following initials give the actual figures :

t s s
1 0 0