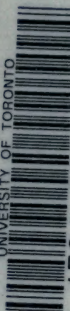



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**PSYCHICAL INVESTIGATIONS**



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# PSYCHICAL INVESTIGATIONS



SOME PERSONALLY-OBSERVED PROOFS OF SURVIVAL

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BY

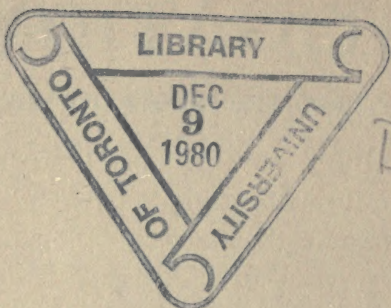
J. ARTHUR HILL , 1872

Author of "New Evidences in Psychical Research," "Religion and Modern Psychology," "Spiritualism and Psychical Research," etc.



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## PREFACE

IN debatable matters, such as psychical research, readers may naturally wish for information which shall enable them to estimate the amount of a writer's bias. It may therefore be useful to affirm that, at the beginning of my investigations, my prejudices and wishes were opposed to the conclusions which the facts gradually forced upon me. If I am now biased in favour of the belief in personal life after death, it is objective fact, not subjective preference, that has brought it about. And my judgments have not been hasty. I have worked at the subject for over eleven years.

Chapters I., II., and X. have appeared as articles in the *Quest*, *Nineteenth Century and After*, and *Occult Review* respectively. I thank the Editors and Publishers for their kind permission to reprint. The remainder of the book appears now for the first time.

I must beg the reader's indulgence for the repetition, in the central verbatim reports, of certain matter which appears in earlier chapters. It seemed desirable to present this matter in connected form as an easily-readable introduction to the detailed records; but the latter are necessary also, for in these things fullness and exactness are essential.

J. A. H.

*Bradford.*



"Cebes answered: I agree, Socrates, in the greater part of what you say. But in what concerns the soul, men are apt to be incredulous; they fear that when she has left the body her place may be nowhere, and that on the very day of death she may perish and come to an end—immediately on her release from the body, issuing forth dispersed like smoke or air and in her flight vanishing away into nothingness. If she could only be collected into herself after she has obtained release from the evils of which you were speaking, there would be good reason to hope, Socrates, that what you say is true. But surely it requires a great deal of argument and many proofs to show that when the man is dead his soul yet exists, and has any force or intelligence."—PLATO, *Phædo* (Jowett's trans.).

"I am confident that there truly is such a thing as living again and that the living spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence, and that the good souls have a better portion than the evil."—*Ibid.* (Socrates speaking).



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# PSYCHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

## CHAPTER I

### Immortality

**A**T different times, or at the same time in different minds, different aspects of Religion are emphasized. One school may lay stress on morals and social duty ; another may emphasize the sacramental aspect ; a still more thoroughly mystical school may concern itself with attaining divine union without special symbolism ; and no doubt many other divisions or subdivisions might be specified. All are good in their way, for all of them are helpful to one or other of us. But in the present terrible times, when a great war has spread mourning through many lands, there is another aspect which inevitably comes into special prominence ; namely, the question of the continuity of the personal self past the wrench of bodily death. These millions of splendid young men who have made the great sacrifice just at the period when life was most dear—can we reasonably believe that they are gone out of existence, that such a superb triumphing of will over instinct and self is followed by annihilation ? We feel that any such belief would involve pessimism of the most radical kind. It would condemn the Universe ; and we feel that it cannot be true. But we want more than feeling, for this is a



scientific age. We must consider the subject in the dry light of reason. What, then, can we say about survival of bodily death? And, to clear the ground, we must first discuss the more usual term of "immortality."

Dictionaries mostly say that immortality is the condition or quality of being immortal, and that "immortal" means "exempt from death," which, indeed, is its obvious etymological signification. Implicitly, then, if I say that I—the "I" as known to me—am immortal, I mean that the existence of that self is endless; that I shall go on for ever. A very depressing and indeed terrifying thought, as the child in Emerson's essay realized. "What! will it never stop? What! never die? *never*, never? It makes me feel so tired!"<sup>1</sup>

But a further question arises. How can we go on being the same for ever? We find in our present life, which is all we have to judge by, that we are continually changing. We are ceaselessly having new experiences, by the external action of the world (including other human beings) upon us through our senses, by the so-to-speak internal action of the natural development and ageing of our own bodies, and by intuitions. There is alteration, growth, progress forward. We acquire larger and larger experience-fields; and even when in extreme age the memory for details begins to wane, there often and perhaps generally remains a mellow wisdom, a sort of serene ripeness, which strikes us as superior—judging by the highest standards—to the phase of great knowledge of detail, which preceded it. In short, there is change and development. The man at seventy is very different

from what he was at seven, or from what he was just after birth. If, then, a short seventy years can thus transform an individual quite out of recognition, making him more different from himself of seventy years ago than he is from any other fellow-adult, and tremendously more different than he is from a fellow-septuagenarian of the same nationality and class, what shall we say of the possibilities of endless æons? Do we not perceive that this idea of personal immortality is a sort of verbal self-contradiction? If there is to be continued experience of any conceivable kind, we shall change out of all recognition, and shall therefore not be the "same." It is an inaccuracy to say that the septuagenarian is the "same" as the baby from which he has evolved. Much less can we remain the "same" after long periods of time, filled with new experiences. The tree is not the same as the acorn from which it grew; it has less resemblance to it than it has to other trees. Similarly, taking the reality of Time for granted, for the purpose of the present argument—though as a matter of fact this doctrine is debatable—and assuming continued experience, on the analogy of the present life, we see that if we are immortal we shall develop into beings of some inconceivably superior order—trees to our present acorns—much more like each other than like our present selves. There will be no identity with these present selves. "Persons" are not immortal; for their personality changes.

Even if we make the venturesome suppositions of reincarnation and the recovery of all past memories in some future condition, the difficulty will still remain. There has been development, increase of experience, growth, and the final product is not the

same thing as the thing that began. Change involves death—the death of the preceding state. Personal immortality, then, if it connotes experience at all—and we can conceive no consciousness without experience being involved—and if Time is fundamentally real, is a contradiction in terms, and cannot be discussed.

Personal survival of bodily death, however, is a more defensible phrase. It may be incorrect to say that I am the same person that I was ten minutes since—strictly speaking, it *is* incorrect—but as a useful though loose phrase it is allowable. And if it is, it is equally allowable to say that I may be the same person five minutes after death that I was five minutes before it. Such short periods do not allow of such development as to change our forms of manifestation beyond recognition. The word “same” conveys at least some meaning. There is close similarity, if not identity. We are not yet concerned with the question of whether persons do survive death, but only with the question of legitimacy of terms, in order to clear the ground. Personal immortality, then, is a meaningless or self-contradictory expression and must be avoided. Personal survival of death is legitimate, being based on common usage, and having a meaning, though a vaguely-defined one. And, indeed, this personal survival of bodily death is, for the most part, what people really mean by immortality. They do not, as a rule, hanker after endless ages of existence, or worry themselves about the metaphysics of Time. No; they merely want an extension, so to speak, of the present state of affairs; some assurance or some hope that death does not mean an utter darkness and annihilation. They want to believe that it



is "a covered way, leading from light to light, through a brief darkness," as Longfellow and most of his brother poets have thought.

At least, it is the general notion that this is what people do want to believe and are ready to believe, on sufficient reason or evidence being produced. Whether it is as much so as is supposed may be doubted. The state of mind of the average individual with regard to the question of his wishes about a future life is probably rather chaotic. If you ask a man whether he wants a future life or not, and if he is a man who thinks for himself and does not automatically respond with the stock phrases of his pastors and masters, he will answer in one or other of various and perhaps equally surprising ways. He may say "Yes" or "No," or that he doesn't care and never thinks about it if he can help it—which last answer would probably be true for very many people who would be rather shocked at the idea of admitting it! But, indeed, there is no harm, but rather good, in facing ourselves frankly on this as on all other questions. There can be no good in sham and hypocrisy and self-deception of any kind. There is nothing to be ashamed of in the admission that you never think about immortality or survival if you can help it. Certainly it was illogical of the man who expected to go to everlasting bliss when he died, but did not want to talk about such depressing subjects; but it is not illogical to avoid the subject if you have no particular convictions about the everlasting bliss. And, after all, it is this world that we are living in, and there is plenty to do in it. If we were continually speculating about the next we should neglect many duties. We are social beings, with various obligations to our fellows.

And this brings us to another consideration, namely, that of the fundamental unity, or possible unity, of many things which now seem sundered. The late Professor James said, in his free-and-easy way—as if it didn't matter much—that a sort of *anima mundi*, thinking in all of us, seems a more promising hypothesis than that of “a lot of absolutely individual souls.”<sup>1</sup> Our reception of this cavalier remark will vary according to temperament. Those who want to “remain themselves,” like Peer Gynt when the Button-Moulder wanted to melt him down again for a fresh start, will resent it. They will not like the idea that they are not really individuals—separate and walled-off entities, which will for ever remain themselves. A friend of mine, a man of heart and head, told me not long ago of his feelings when looking out over the sea. The thought occurred to him that human individuals were perhaps only like the wavelets which rose and fell on the water's surface; parts of a greater whole, but still only temporarily existing forms, evanescent, contributory but non-essential, relatively unimportant. And the thought filled him with sadness: if he had believed it true, his sadness would have reached the point of despair. Curiously enough, this same thought has no terror for me. I feel more like Mrs. Stetson:—

What an exceeding rest 'twill be  
 When I can leave off being Me!  
 To think of it! at last be rid  
 Of all the things I ever did!

\* \* \* \* \*

Why should I long to have John Smith  
 Eternally to struggle with?

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i., p. 346.

. . . Rest and Power and Peace  
Must surely mean the soul's release  
From this small labeled entity,  
This passing limitation—Me !<sup>1</sup>

However, perhaps both my friend and I are right. Perhaps we survive death and pass on into a better but not wholly dissimilar state :—

No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,  
But thro' the Will of One who knows and rules—  
And utter knowledge is but utter love—  
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening height,  
An ever lessening earth,<sup>2</sup>

and then, when the desire of continued personality is extinct, merge into the primal source, "ascend into heaven," reach the final stage. Icebergs survive from day to day, though gradually changing, as we may change in the forms of our manifestation through a series of planes or lives ; but they sink at last into the element which gave them birth. Rivers survive from mile to mile, losing by evaporation, gaining by tributaries, and continually changing their volume and shape ; but they merge in the ocean at last—"even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea." Indeed, the well-known hymn recognizes the parallel, and uses the figure as an analogy :—

<sup>1</sup> *The Cosmopolitan* of some unknown date. It reminds one of J. Addington Symonds's "sanguine hope" of "resumption into the personal-unconscious" ; the "immeasurably precious hope of ending with this life the ache and languor of existence"—*Biography*, by H. F. Brown, p. 416. But Symonds was an invalid ; this attitude is not the product of health and soundness. My agreement with him is probably due to likeness in physical constitution.

<sup>2</sup> Tennyson, *The Ring*.



Rivers to the ocean run,  
 Nor stay in all their course,  
 Fire ascending seeks the sun,  
 Both speed them to their source ;  
 So a soul that's born of God  
 Pants to view His glorious face,  
 Upward tends to His abode  
 And rests in His embrace.

The hymn-writer is a little ambiguous—probably he rather hesitated at the absorption idea—but the unity-thought is there, as indeed it is in a great proportion of the world's religious literature. The mystic, whether Christian, Buddhist, Mohammedan, or Taoist, aims at a union with the Divine, a renunciation of his own small and unsatisfactory self. The idea is expressed by Virgil, in one of his most earnest passages :—

To God again the enfranchised soul must tend,  
 He is her home, her Author is her End ;  
 No death is hers ; when earthly eyes grow dim  
 Starlike she soars, and Godlike melts in Him.<sup>1</sup>

It is the idea of the Christian hymn just quoted. And, indeed, it was taught by that great saint and missionary whom we may call the lieutenant of the Captain of our salvation, for his doctrine was that in Him we live and move and have our being, even now, though we fail to realize it.

But though some such conception may be present to the minds of most really religious people, and certainly to the minds of all mystics, it is not held by the majority of human beings in the West. We Westerners are individualists. We are great on Personality. Con-

<sup>1</sup> F. W. H. Myers's translation in *Classical Essays*, p. 175 (from *Georgics*, iv.)

sequently, whatever the mystic or Mrs. Stetson may say, and however we may agree with them in the comparatively rare moments when we are uncomfortably disgusted with ourselves and our activities, we usually think of Immortality as a proximate survival of the personality past bodily death, not worrying much about more ultimate things. But the question is, is such survival a fact? If men die, shall they live again, and, if they do, with what body do they come? What is their experience like, in their new state?

Some of these questions are now answerable. Not answerable in as complete and cut-and-dried a way as some would have us believe, for it is certain that any description of a spiritual world in materialistic terms must be wrong or inadequate; but answerable at least as to the main points. The advance in psychical research during the last thirty years enables us, as it seems to me, to go as far as that, to say that personal survival is a fact, and that something—not everything—may be learnt of the surviving spirit's state and powers and interests and feelings.

## CHAPTER II

### Investigation : Methods and Examples

#### I

BUT the task of attaining scientific conviction is not easy. Our generation has grown up in a materialistic atmosphere, and we do not easily get out of it. We run in the old grooves, and a pretty violent jolt is required, or long-continued pressure, to lift us up and get us free. Consequently it is generally found that the reading of books about survival does not prove very effective. Even the forty-odd volumes of *Proceedings* and *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research, which are devoted almost exclusively to the presentation of actual evidence, may be read without any resultant change or gain in belief. The reader may be impressed, but he will not be convinced. The people he is reading about are unknown to him, and they may have made mistakes. Perhaps they strongly wished to believe in a future life, and consequently were unable to state the case in a quite unprejudiced fashion. Other doubts also arise. If the investigators are eminent in science, philosophy, or letters, the layman reader wonders whether these people of the laboratory or the study are the best qualified to detect a fraudulent medium; if, on the other hand, the investigator is a shrewd business man, the reader says to himself: "Well, this writer has had no scientific training: can I safely take him as reliable?" Then



there are the various difficulties about telepathy and the like. Conviction remains unattainable.

The upshot of this is that personal experience is necessary. The seeker must investigate for himself. He must not expect to reach another person's point of view without laborious travelling. He will have to go over the same ground, or similar ground, and will have to surmount the same obstacles as that other person had to struggle with before him. And instead of grumbling at this, he should be thankful that at least the direction is indicated, and some sort of track made. His task will therefore be a little easier than was that of his precursors. The pioneering work is done.

And, this being so, perhaps I overestimate the need of personal experience. It was necessary for me, but I am of exceptionally sceptical habit of mind, and I was steeped in Spencer, Mill, and others of the negative school of those days. With the present generation it may be different. Certainly I am far from wishing that all should become "psychical researchers." The investigation is best left to specialists, as in other sciences; and perhaps most people will be able to feel that the records already in existence, though not furnishing absolutely knockdown proof, are nevertheless sufficient to render the old materialism an improbable hypothesis and to open the door to that belief in a spiritual world which is, as Myers said, the preamble of all religions.

Those inquirers who still seek experience of their own—and in many, perhaps the majority of cases, this desire will be felt—must seek it in the way best adapted to their individual circumstances. No doubt the ideal thing is to get into touch with some private person who

has these peculiar psychic powers of clairvoyance or trance; who, by making the mind quiet and hushing the turmoil of the external senses, can perceive in other and finer ways, obtaining knowledge not normally possessed. Full and careful notes should be taken of all that is said by both sensitive and sitter, so that it is known how much information, if any, has been given away. This is not easy, and needs practice, but it can be done. If identity can be hidden, as it can when one is introduced to a private circle, so much the better. But I repeat that the quest is not suitable for everyone. And good sensitives are rare.

My own investigations have been mostly along these lines, but mainly in the "normal clairvoyance" department, there being a good medium not far away whom I can see occasionally. The advantages of being unknown are here absent, but my friends and I have established the fact of this medium's possession of supernormal powers by introducing friends from distant towns, quite unexpectedly and without giving any names. Their deceased relatives and friends have in several cases been named and described as fully and as correctly as my own. Also it is a common thing for very intimate family matters to be referred to in my sittings; matters which the medium could not have learnt by any amount of outside inquiry. We were sceptical when we began the investigation, ten years ago; we are now fully convinced, all of us, that the explanation must be supernormal, and, further, that the telepathic hypothesis seems on the whole much less rational than the spiritistic. In fact, we do not stop at the "hypothesis" stage; we think the case is proved, so far as proof is possible.

Some of the evidence, obtained mostly in my friends'

sittings, has already appeared; <sup>1</sup> the main purpose of the present volume is to present further evidential incidents occurring in my own sittings. They will at least indicate the kind of evidence that may be expected by anyone beginning the investigation. It will be observed that a sitting often contains a number of apparently unconnected statements, the relation and significance of which become apparent only by having a series of sittings and carefully collating the reports; hence the importance of contemporaneous verbatim notes, which I make in shorthand. In what immediately follows I have sorted out a few main strands, omitting those irrelevant to the incidents I wish to present. The names are disguised, for obvious reasons; but I trust there is nothing to cause pain, even if this volume is read by some relative or friend who recognizes the people concerned. These latter gave me the evidence—we cannot force it—and I think they mean me to publish it in order to spread the knowledge of the truth.

## II

## THE "ROBERT PARBERRY LEATHER" SERIES OF INCIDENTS

In a sitting on July 21st, 1914, after giving various descriptions of deceased friends and acquaintances, some of them relatives, the medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson) remarked:

*"I get the name Dunlop. A doctor. Medical doctor. Old times."*

<sup>1</sup> *New Evidences in Psychical Research.* (Rider, London.)



This was mildly interesting, but of no particular significance so far as I could see at the moment. A Dr. Dunlop formerly lived here in my native town, and was well known to my parents. He died over forty years ago; certainly I never knew him. But his house was known as Dunlop House until about 1900, when it was divided into cottages; and there is a faint possibility that Mr. Wilkinson may have heard the name, though he lives many miles away, and I think it extremely unlikely. The house was hidden away among poor property remote from all high roads about half a mile from my home, and farther away from the railway station than this latter.

Later in the same sitting the medium said:

*"I get the name Leather. I feel that he would be an old man, very gentlemanly, rather retiring. I hesitate to say the name, for I never heard it before as a name. It only means boots, leggings, etc., to me."*

Now it happens that I knew a Mr. Leather very well some years ago. He lived three-quarters of a mile from my home (where all my sittings have been held), and died in 1909. The description is very apt as far as it goes. He was eighty-four at death; was rather retiring, and had very much the *grand seigneur* manner—a true gentleman of the old school. I visited him occasionally, between 1890 and 1899; but I saw most of him at Dunlop House in 1893 to 1895, where lived a friend of his who was also a friend of mine. A small party of us met there for whist nearly every Thursday evening in winter. Of that party all are dead or long since removed from this part of the country, except my sister and myself. Neither of us has ever told Mr. Wilkinson anything about this, and I feel pretty sure that no one by local inquiry could find

any connexion between me and Mr. Leather by way of Dunlop House. It is true that no definite connexion was alleged in the sitting, but it is a fact that if Mr. Leather is still alive and wishful to prove his identity by alluding to shared experiences which the medium could hardly know of, he could not do better than mention Dunlop House or Dr. Dunlop.

The next incident occurred a few months later, when I received (November 19th, 1914) a letter from Mr. Wilkinson, who happened to be at Bournemouth, whither a letter of mine, asking him to come over, had followed him. After answering this and describing his journeyings, he said :

*“By the way, did you ever know someone named Parrbury or some such name? I am impressed it would be a very old gentleman you might have known; however, I get the feeling while I am holding your letter. He was a man who retained his faculties in a large measure till the end of life almost. I am not sure but I feel perhaps he was called Robert, but of that I could not be too sure; the other name, however, being so uncommon that I thought I would tell it to you. He evidently is keenly interested in you.”*

On reading this I thought it was meaningless. But when I told my sister about it, she said that Robert Parrbury, or Parberry—spelling uncertain—was Mr. Leather's Christian name. Then I remembered that Robert was certainly right, but the other name was unfamiliar; Mr. Leather's friends never used it, nor did I remember ever having known it, though I may have known and forgotten. On inquiry I found that his full name was Robert Parberry Leather. He retained his faculties until near the end, as stated; remaining, indeed, particularly young and alert in mind

up to the time of his fatal paralytic seizure, after which he died in a few hours, never regaining consciousness.

I wrote to Mr. Wilkinson saying that the name "Robert Parrbury" had interesting significance, and that I should like him to come over for a sitting as soon as possible. I gave him no further information.

On December 14th, 1914, he came for a sitting, and I said in preliminary conversation that the Parrbury of his letter had meaning; whereupon he remarked that when writing the letter he had felt that the gentleman in question was waiting for some old friend to pass over. This, as it happens, was curiously true. At the time of that letter's being written, Mr. Leather's brother-in-law and most intimate friend was dying, not far from Mr. Leather's old home, and three hundred miles from where Mr. Wilkinson then was. Presumably space is less of an obstacle to those "over there," and, while waiting about in the old earth-regions or conditions generally, Mr. Leather could give his message to the medium at Bournemouth as easily as if the latter had been here, nearer the dying friend. I told Mr. Wilkinson, in reply to his remark, that it was quite correct, an old friend of Mr. Leather's having died, after gradually sinking for many months, on November 29th, 1914—eleven days after the writing of the letter. A fairly good sitting followed, with a considerable amount of matter about various deceased friends and relatives of mine whom I am sure the medium had never known; but there was no sign or mention of Mr. Leather. So I concluded that, the two friends having been reunited, they had now gone forward together.

This incident seemed to me to have an eminently pleasant and consoling significance. The intimacy of



these two men had been quite exceptionally close and unbroken over a period of about fifty years. They were, as I have said, brothers-in-law and neighbours ; alike in tastes and temperament ; both became widowers very early in life, and they spent much time together. I am quite sure that, assuming survival, the person whom Mr. Drayton (the second to die of the two friends) would most wish to meet him would be his old chum, Mr. Leather.

At the end of this sitting I asked the medium if he had ever been in Knowlston Cemetery. (That is where the bodies of the two men are buried.) He replied that he had never heard the name before, and had never been in any cemetery in this neighbourhood at all. Having fully satisfied myself of Mr. Wilkinson's genuine supernormal faculty through earlier evidence already mentioned, I have long since rejected the idea of wilful deception ; but I thought it just possible that he might have been in that particular graveyard, and might have seen and forgotten the names, for we must assume that " forgotten " things are still subliminally remembered. I entirely accept his statement that he has never been there. Moreover, it is a private cemetery, belonging to a Nonconformist Chapel ; and the grave of Mr. Leather—about whom I was mainly concerned because of the medium's getting the little-known second name—is hidden away in a remote part, far from the path. The tombstone inscription cannot be read without going close up to it, threading about among many other graves.

But this was not the end of it. At my next sitting, on January 15th, 1915, after evidential statements about someone else, the medium said :

" *There is a man by that bookcase* " (pointing), "*a*

*very old man, big, full-featured. Been gone some time ; old-fashioned shirt, white, very clean. Elias Sidney.*" [Medium took pencil and paper and wrote "Elias Sidney."] "*Politics interested him ; rather a strong politician—Radical or strong Liberal. Been dead some time. Somebody brought him, somebody on the other side, who has manifested here before. Not lived here. Good colour in his face. There is somebody behind him, and he shadows him. Had to do with Liberals. Rather heavy on his feet.*"

All this was quite meaningless to me. I had never heard of any Elias Sidney. Then came various deceased relatives and acquaintances of mine, one of them a very unexpected person whom I had known in youth (he died about 1890) but had not thought of for years. His name was given as Moses Young ; I was quite without recollection of the man's Christian name, but on inquiry it turned out to be Moses. Then :

"*Sidney appears again. Somebody brought him ; some spirit.*"

Still unrecognized. Other spirits came, and interspersed in their descriptions were ejaculatory sentences like : "*Sidney comes and goes ; enthusiast at politics.*" "*Sidney got excited when discussing politics,*" and the like. Apparently the medium received these impressions from the spirit who had brought Sidney, and who was describing his mental characteristics for the purposes of identification and proof. But I could think of no Elias Sidney or of anyone likely to bring such a man. Finally the medium said, just after giving some other evidential matter :

"*You remember me seeing an old man here before ? I can't remember his name.*"

Noticing that he seemed excited and eager, as if

something important were coming, I said, "Yes; Mr. Leather perhaps."

"Yes, Leather. It is Mr. Leather who has brought Elias Sidney. They were cronies. [Medium laughs.] They were cronies. Sidney has been passed away longer than Mr. Leather."

Further evidential matter was given about other people, but no more about Mr. Sidney or Mr. Leather. However, the last statement having given me an idea of where to seek, I inquired of several prominent local Liberals who had known Mr. Leather as to whether they had ever heard of a man named Elias Sidney. None of them had; and I began to think the medium was quite off the mark. But it happened that one of them knew an old gentleman who lives a few miles away and who has had a very extensive acquaintance with political men, and to him he addressed the same question. "Certainly," was the immediate reply; "I knew Elias Sidney very well indeed. He died eight or nine years ago, but had long been retired from public life, being a very old man. He was one of a coterie of friends, all vigorous Liberals. I was one. *Mr. Leather was another.*"

I then made further inquiries, finding that Mr. Sidney died in January, 1909, seven weeks before Mr. Leather's death. Mr. Sidney's age was eighty-three. I found and interviewed a man who had known him—not my first informant—and it turned out that he was a keen politician on the Liberal side, and very excitable in political argument. He went to the same club as Mr. Leather, daily, as long as health allowed. The description of his personal appearance is accurate. I have seen a photograph of him, which bears out my informant's opinion.



This incident does not seem to me satisfactorily explainable by any reading of my mind, either in its normal conscious levels or in those subliminal levels where forgotten things are supposed still to exist. For I asked a number of friends who had been in closer touch with Mr. Leather and with local politics than I have been, and not one of them remembered ever hearing the name of Elias Sidney. I am therefore sure that he must have lived a very retired life for at least twenty years before his death; and, indeed, he does not seem to have ever been a prominent man. (The fact that many of Mr. Leather's friends had never heard of Mr. Sidney is due to the two friends' meeting at the club and not visiting at each other's homes, which were several miles apart.)

These considerations, I think, justify the provisional conclusion that neither telepathy from my mind nor accidentally possessed knowledge on the part of the medium—who lives in another town twelve miles away—is a satisfactory explanation of the incident. There remain two alternatives; deliberate concocting of evidence, necessitating much inquiry and travelling, and the spiritistic theory according to which the messages came from the surviving mind of Mr. Leather, or Mr. Sidney, or both. And I have already said that I entirely reject the idea of fraud; not only because, in ten years' acquaintance with Wilkinson, my friends and I have found nothing at variance with the most complete integrity and veracity, but also because his mediumship has given us a large mass of evidence which no amount of detective work could obtain.

I have ruled out, then, normally acquired knowledge on the medium's part, telepathy from my mind, and fraud. Telepathy from distant living people un-

known to the medium I regard as a mere guess and a rather absurd one. There remains the spiritistic interpretation, and this I provisionally accept as the most rational.

Nothing more was heard of Elias Sidney, but at a sitting of January 19th, 1916, Mr. Leather again purported to be present, this time bringing his friend, Mr. Drayton, whom he had come to meet when the latter was dying in November, 1914. The following is what was said. It occurs among evidential matter relating to other people. I abstract it from my verbatim shorthand notes :

*"Have you a friend called Drayton?" [J. A. H. : "I know some Draytons."]] . . . "There is a very old man—he has a job to stand up. Tottering with age."* [On first coming back into earth conditions, a spirit frequently shows itself in the bodily state which existed just before its departure ; partly perhaps for identification's sake, but partly no doubt spontaneously, somewhat as we tend to revert to the manner and speech and subjects of old times when revisiting the home of our childhood.] *"There are two old men together. Little, bent with age, white front ; another little old man with him. Brothers or friends. Henry and Robert. Don't know whether they were brothers or not. Henry is older than the other. They knew each other very well. Robert's face is smoother, not so lined. They are chums—perhaps brothers. Robert pre-deceased the other. I don't think Henry has been long gone. Somebody called Whitley is connected with Henry ; lives a long way from here. A woman ; not well ; belongs to Henry. She is called Whitley. She has something belonging to the old man. He liked his own way ; a bit dogmatic. Robert was rather milder. Henry had a lot of his own way.*

*He is very much surprised about things now. . . . Robert was a bit younger ; nice old man ; jolly. They had lots in common, though there was great difference. Perhaps difference in position. They're alike now in that respect."*

Mr. Drayton's name was Henry. He died November 29th, 1914, aged 89. Robert P. Leather died at 84, in 1909, so he "pre-deceased the other," and was "a bit younger." The characterization of both is strikingly correct. The hesitation as to whether they were brothers or unrelated friends is very noteworthy, for, as already said, they were brothers-in-law and great friends. Mr. Drayton has a living daughter named Whitley (married name), and I afterwards heard that she had not been well. She lives "a long way from here" a good part of the year, though she is often at a house about twelve miles from where the medium lives, in another town. I have no reason to believe that he knew she was Mr. Drayton's daughter, even if he knew of her existence. It is also noteworthy that of several daughters she is the only one connected with our family, her husband's uncle having married my great-aunt. If Mr. Drayton was really present he would naturally think of her, rather than of his other daughters, in connection with me.

After other matter the following came, in bits :

*"Henry had a portrait of old Mr. Gladstone, the statesman. I think he must have had one in his house."*

[Probably. He was a vigorous Gladstonian, and had been M.P. during one of Gladstone's Premierships.]

*"Robert has brought him. I think Henry has not manifested here before. . . . I saw those two old men so clearly that I could recognize their portraits if I saw them. Shall not remember them long—shall have forgotten them to-morrow."*



The next connected incident occurred on August 2nd, 1916. At this sitting, after some excellent evidence concerning distant relatives of mine, the following was said :

*"There is some man here who might have been a schoolmaster ; there is something over his shoulders like a gown. A scholar. Middle-aged ; about sixty, rather tall. Did you ever know somebody called Waldron—W-A-L-D-R-O-N ? [Yes.] Thomas Waldron. I think it is Waldron. Probably this man had been a professor or schoolmaster. He has a lot of books with him. He is 'well up.' A classical man, good at Latin. He is just by that bookcase. He has been deceased about twelve years, I should think ; probably more. [All that is very good.] This man was very fond of boys—teaching boys. He was a bit Churchy. I should not think he was a Dissenter—more Churchy. The letters on those big books are red and black. I can see they are Latin. He has a big book with H-O-M-E-R on it. Would that be the name of the writer, perhaps ? [Very likely.] Big leather binding. . . . The man would be about sixty when he died, and he was not ill long. . . . This man has been gone longer than I said. He is telling me something. How long did I say ? [Twelve years.] It is longer than that."*

The facts are that Mr. Thomas Waldron was headmaster of the school I was at from 1878 to 1886. He was a classical man, good at Latin, which was his pet subject. He wore a gown in school. He was a Churchman, and two years before his death he took Orders. He died of cerebral hæmorrhage, without being ill at all, in 1898, aged between fifty-nine and sixty. As a schoolboy I was keenly interested in the *Iliad*, and probably he knew that ; but I am not aware that he himself read Homer much.

Later in the sitting Wilkinson said :

*" You remember me speaking about Thomas Waldron ? There is some woman connected with this man : she is in the body, about seventy years of age. You may hear of her soon. Some circumstances linked up with this man."*

His widow, who left this district three years after his death, is still living, in a town about forty miles away. No relatives remain about here. The medium continued :

*" You remember me seeing an old man here a time or two ? A man with a funny name. [Leather, perhaps ?] That's it. He is here. He has a lady with him : very young, beside him. Quite youthful. I know the man's face well ; I have seen him before. The lady is about your age. [To my sister.] They are together. Her name was Sarah. She might be some relation to the man."*

Mr. Leather's wife was named Sarah. She died in 1866, aged thirty-eight. I did not know the name until I had the tombstone examined. It is in an almost inaccessible part of a private cemetery, as already said.

With regard to Mr. Waldron, it is noteworthy that he was one of the small party that met every Thursday evening at Dunlop House, twenty or more years ago. He and Mr. Leather were close friends.

That is the end, up to the present, of this particular series of incidents. I have no further comment to make except to draw attention to one curious feature. In the sitting of July 21st, 1914, the name Leather was given, without Christian names. In the impressions communicated to me by letter in the following November, the names Parrbury and a doubtful Robert were given, but nothing else ; and I afterwards ascertained

that Mr. Wilkinson thought it was a Robert Parrbury, and did not associate the names with Mr. Leather. Finally, in the sitting of January 19th, 1916, the name Robert was used throughout, with no use of Parberry or Leather; and I found that the medium did not associate the Robert of this sitting with the Mr. Leather of previous ones or with the Parrbury of his Bournemouth impressions. It would seem that Mr. Leather purposely gave different parts of his name on the different occasions, in order to keep the medium in the dark and to improve the evidence, knowing that I should piece them together and recognize the same person behind the communications, although the medium was thinking that several different people were concerned.

In all such incidents as these, the thing first to be settled is the extent of the medium's normal knowledge. Before proceeding to any supernormal hypotheses, even of telepathy, we must be driven to admit that normal knowledge cannot reasonably be suggested as a sufficient explanation. Now I cannot pass on to another person my own certitude or my own state of mind regarding the extent of Mr. Wilkinson's normal knowledge. My opinion is the result of multitudinous small factors—inferences as to his general mode of life, the people he meets, where he goes, what he reads, and the like—and I cannot produce them all here. The mere statement of my opinion must therefore suffice, and readers will accept it or not, according as they think well or ill of my general reliability. My opinion, then, is:

1. That Wilkinson had no conscious knowledge of Mr. Drayton, Mr. Leather, Mr. Waldron, or Mr. Sidney.



2. That he may have heard of, or read of, Mr. Drayton, whose name would appear in subscription lists to charities, etc., but that, if so, the knowledge will have been forgotten, for Mr. Drayton's activities and tastes would have no special interest for Wilkinson. Moreover, Mr. Drayton had been confined to his house for many years by the infirmities of age, and he had been out of public life for twenty-five years. I think it extremely unlikely—not quite incredible, but extremely unlikely—that Wilkinson knows, even subliminally, as much about Mr. Drayton as the sittings produced.

3. That Wilkinson is still less likely to have heard even the names of Mr. Leather and Mr. Waldron, or to have known anything about them. I do not believe that he had ever heard of Elias Sidney, or of Dunlop House, or Dr. Dunlop; and, even if he had, I should not be able to believe that he could have known of the significance of Dunlop House to Mr. Leather, Mr. Waldron, and myself, or that he could have had any notion of the club friendship and personal characteristics of Mr. Leather and Mr. Sidney. In short, basing my opinion on careful consideration of many data, I unhesitatingly reject the suggestion that the medium's normally acquired knowledge, supraliminal or subliminal, is sufficient to account for the facts of the sittings. To me, the only satisfactory explanation is the spiritistic one. I believe that Mr. Leather has been supervising from the other side, bringing various kinds of evidence of his survival and continued interest; and in particular the Elias Sidney episode seems to me a strikingly ingenious and successful attempt to get round the "telepathic hypothesis," which some investigators, without much basis of fact, are apt to

apply to all incidents in which the sitter is in possession of the knowledge shown.

Finally, I may remark that Mr. Leather in life took a very kindly and rather special interest in me, and after my schooldays I saw more of him than of Mr. Waldron. With Mr. Drayton my personal acquaintance was slight. If *he* had been represented as appearing first and bringing Mr. Leather, or if he had been represented as bringing Mr. Waldron, it would have been all wrong. As it was, everything was exactly in keeping with the actual degree of my acquaintance with the three men, and in keeping with their own inter-relations.

## CHAPTER III

### Further "Meeting" Cases

THERE seems very good reason to believe that all dying people are met and helped over by friends or relatives on the other side, as in the case of Mr. Leather and Mr. Drayton just described. The following incidents support the idea, though they are less extensive in their details.

In a sitting on December 14th, 1914, Wilkinson suddenly said, amid other matter :

*"Have you known somebody called Walker? . . . At some time or other you had acquaintances called Walker."*

He seemed, however, uncertain about the last syllable, so in order to help I suggested that it might be Walkley. He agreed, saying that he had never heard the name before, but had known some Walkers. This "helping" on my part may be seized on by sceptics, and indeed it is unwise to do much of it, for if we give away information we are spoiling our chances of getting evidence. But it sometimes happens, particularly if the medium is half right and apparently rather puzzled, that a little guidance leads to a further rush of evidential matter, without much real information having been conveyed ; and so long as everything "given away" is carefully noted down, there is no danger of the guidance vitiating the evidence, for we can make our own estimate of the amount to be



allowed as discount, so to speak, on any true matter that may follow. In this case, however, my hint seemed useless. Nothing further came, though I expected something; for I had known some Walkleys very well between 1883 and 1900, and I immediately thought of them when the medium said "Walker."

The next relevant incident occurred ten months later. In a letter dated "Bournemouth, October 1st, 1915," Wilkinson said:

*"Just when closing this epistle I felt as if some old man touched me, rather a gentleman, and he made me feel a bit like a parson. I cannot get any communication from him beyond 'A. S. W.,' whatever that means; an impression I get is that you might have known this man some years ago."*

The facts are that Mr. Walkley was a minister, that he was certainly a gentleman (more markedly so than the average village Nonconformist minister of those days), and that his full initials were A. S. W. I told the medium nothing except that what he had written was correct for someone I had known.

At my next sitting there was no mention of the Walkleys, but at a later one, on February 17th, 1916, the medium said, after other evidential matter:

*"You may hear of a funeral of somebody soon: I see a funeral party. A woman who will die soon: it is nearly up to you. Somebody old. There is a man here with a round soft hat, a felt hat, like a parson's: grey: been a parson. He is about here waiting for somebody. . . . That old woman will die soon. [Here I remarked: "She is dead already."] Indeed? It is somebody very old and feeble—over eighty; been going gradually."*

Our friends the Walkleys left this district in August, 1900. Mr. Walkley, minister at the chapel I attended

during his seventeen years' pastorate, died three months later (November 16th). He usually wore a clerical round soft felt hat, though occasionally a tall silk one; and he had grey hair and beard. His widow afterwards lived mostly in London, but was sometimes in these parts (West Riding of Yorkshire), staying with relatives. Two days before this sitting—i.e. on February 15th—she had died there, at the age of eighty-two, after sinking gradually. The funeral was fixed for the 18th—i.e. the day after the sitting. Apparently her husband had come to meet her, and was still in these regions although she was now dead; the reason no doubt being that the "departed" spirit often does not depart at once to supernal realms, but lingers about with those it loves, or is perhaps occupied for some little time in withdrawing from its old associations before setting its face to further progress in the larger life.

As to the possibility of the medium's possessing normal knowledge of her death or her connexion with us, or indeed of her existence, I think it is in the last degree unlikely. She was known to very few people; her relatives are in no way prominent, and she died at a place about ten miles from Wilkinson's home, in another town. She had no friends in his neighbourhood, and I think it practically certain that he knows no one who knew her or her people, except myself; and I had certainly never told him anything about either her or them.

In this same sitting of February 17th, 1916, after some very evidential things relating to my father, the medium said:

*"This big man with the full face [my father] must have known a man named Charlton, a younger man.*

*This man is just waking up. He didn't quite believe he was dead. I feel that he would be an impulsive man. He would swear when things went wrong. Hot-headed. Middle life. A proud man. He has been wandering about a while. Been gone some time.*

*"His influence is very authoritative. Almost an arrogant man in some ways. There's somebody in the body that he wants to approach—a woman. His object is to reach her.*

*"He had money. He has not manifested here before. He was one who would rush through fire and water to get at what he wanted. [After interluded matter relating to other people, he continued:] That Charlton's influence won't leave me. He knew somebody called William. It is a bit fragmentary, but they did not just agree about something. There is a divergence of opinion. Whether it is religion, I don't know. He has a big thick stick, not a walking-stick—it is too thick. He has a very light-coloured suit on—kind of sporting outfit. He is a new influence; not manifested here before. Very impulsive."*

All this is very true and characteristic of a Mr. Charlton whom I knew slightly, except as regards the stick; I think he fished, and it may be a jointed rod, but I am not sure. All the other details are exactly true. He was better known to a relative of mine named William than to me, and they were of different opinions in religion and politics, though my relative tells me that they never discussed either, and that he liked Mr. Charlton and got on excellently with him, in chats in tram or train mostly. But they lived not far away from each other, and were aware enough of each other's views in a general way.

It is curious that Mr. Charlton was said to be only just waking up (from the recuperative sleep which



seems to follow death), for he died a few years ago. The post-mortem sleep or rest is usually an affair of months or even of days or hours; rarely of years, though it is occasionally so—e.g. in some of the Piper cases. The remark that he “didn’t quite believe he was dead” is noteworthy. It is often said that when people wake up on the other side they can hardly believe that they have died, their surroundings seem so natural and they feel so well; but in Mr. Charlton’s case there is a special significance. He died of a much-dreaded disease, the nature of which is often kept from the patient’s knowledge, and in which anodynes are mercifully used towards the end. It is quite likely that in such cases the sufferer does not realize that he is dying; and afterwards, having made the crossing so easily and so unconsciously, he may indeed “hardly believe that he is dead.” The naturalness of the proximate post-mortem life is often emphasized by Swedenborg: “The first state of man after death is like his state in the world, because his life is still external. He has therefore a similar face, speech, and disposition, thus a similar moral and civil life; so that he thinks that he is still in the world, unless he pays close attention to the experiences he meets with, or remembers what was said to him by the angels when he was raised up. Thus life remains the same in the other world as in this, and death is only the transition from one to the other.” (*Heaven and Hell*, § 493, p. 266, “Everyman” edition.)

I have quoted this as a “meeting” case, with less justification than in the preceding ones. But the surmise is suggested by the fact that Mr. Charlton’s brother was dying at the time of the sitting, though I did not know it. He died on March 6th. I did not

know him, even by sight, and I did not know of his illness until I saw his death announced in the newspapers. It seems likely that Mr. Charlton had come to meet his brother, as Mr. Leather came to meet Mr. Drayton, and as Mr. Walkley came to meet his widow.

And we must remember that this "meeting" idea is not by any means based solely on mediumistic communications. There is a very considerable body of evidence of another kind. Dying people often see spirit friends who have come to meet them. The sceptic will, of course, say that hallucinations are common enough in illness, and that a dying person's statements are not evidence of the objectivity, in any sense, of what he sees. But wait a moment! The matter is not to be settled as easily as that. If a man, who has never had an hallucination in his life and whose mind in all other respects seems quite clear, informs us quietly when dying that he sees his father and sister—which latter died when a child, forty years before, and has consequently been hardly ever in his thoughts—it is mere unscientific dogmatism to say that this is subjective hallucination. How do you know it is? It *may be*, of course; but there is no basis for an assertion that it *is*. The man has never had such a vision before. Why does he have one now? Effects must have causes. And if the materialist ventures to say that the cause is a hypothetical and hypothetically adequate physiological change, we must ask him to be much more definite than that. He must prove his point. We cannot accept it on faith. Moreover, there is a recognizable difference in kind between psychical and visceral hallucinations. In great weakness and with a temperature of  $104.5^{\circ}$ , I have had incipient hallucinations myself, which I noted down as soon as I could hold a

pencil,<sup>1</sup> and they never took the shape of my deceased relatives. They were merely grotesque and dream-like.

But the argument can be carried further. Admitting that a dying person is likely to think about those who have gone before, and that this thinking may initiate hallucination, we will grant that experiences of this type must not be considered strictly evidential. But there is one kind of deathbed vision that *is t* namely, when the dying person sees a vision of someone *whom he does not know to be dead*. Such cases are, inevitably, rare. Miss Frances Power Cobbe made a collection of them in her *Peak in Darien* volume, and there are several in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research. The following may be given as brief *résumés*.

Mrs. Y., wife of Colonel Y., when dying, told her husband that several times during the day she had heard voices singing, and that she thought it was the angels welcoming her to heaven; but "it is strange, there is one voice amongst them I am sure I know, and cannot remember whose voice it is." Suddenly she stopped, and, pointing over her husband's head, said: "Why, there she is, in the corner of the room; it is Julia X.; she is coming on; she is leaning over you; she has her hands up; she is praying—do look; she is going." Colonel Y. looked but could see nothing, and thought it was only the imagination of a sick person; though, indeed, Mrs. Y. in all other respects was in full possession of all her faculties. Two days afterwards Colonel Y. heard that Julia X.—a young woman with a beautiful singing voice whom they had

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, Society for Psychical Research, vol. xvi., p. 235 and following. In *Proceedings*, vol. xix., p. 267, Mr. Piddington analyses a number of hallucinations of visceral type, comparing them with the psychical.



known some years before—had died about a week before Mrs. Y. It is certain that the latter had no normal knowledge of that fact.<sup>1</sup>

Another excellent case is recorded by Dr. Minot J. Savage in his *Psychic Facts and Theories*. Two little girls, schoolmates and intimate friends, aged about eight, fell ill of diphtheria. At noon on a Wednesday Jennie died; but the doctor and parents of Edith were careful to keep from her the knowledge that her playmate was gone, fearing the effect on her of such a shock. That they were successful is proved by the fact that on the following Saturday, just before Edith became unconscious, she selected two of her photographs to be sent to Jennie. On the evening of that same day, at half-past six, Edith died. She became conscious just before, talked about dying, and showed no fear. Then she appeared to see one and another of the friends she knew were dead. But suddenly, and with every appearance of surprise, she exclaimed: "Why, papa, I am going to take Jennie with me. . . . You did not tell me Jennie was here." And she reached out her arms as in welcome, saying: "O Jennie, I'm so glad you are here."

We are not given the firsthand accounts of the parents in this case, and consequently the evidence is less strong; but Dr. Savage was an experienced investigator, and he knew the people concerned. They wished their names to be withheld from the public, but full information in proof of *bona fides* was given to Dr. Hyslop, the Secretary of the American S.P.R.<sup>2</sup>

In what has just been said we have been dealing, on the one hand, with mediumistic communications in

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. iii., p. 92. *Human Personality*, vol. ii., p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal*, American S.P.R., July, 1907, p. 50 and following.

which a spirit was said to be waiting about for a dying friend, and, on the other, with the dying person's vision of the spirit who is waiting. It would be exceedingly interesting if we could get these two kinds of evidence in combination ; for example, if I could learn that Mr. Drayton, during the last week or two of his life, saw his friend Mr. Leather and realized that he had come to meet him. This would have corroborated my mediumistic messages. But it is hardly to be expected that such corroboration will often be obtainable, for any such experiences of dying people are not talked about by surviving relatives except to intimate friends. However, there is one case, not precisely of the kind required—for the dying person knew that the welcoming spirit was “dead”—but possessing such important evidential features of a similar kind, reported by the experienced and critical Dr. Richard Hodgson, that it may suitably be quoted here.

Some hours after the death of a man named F., Dr. Hodgson had a sitting with Mrs. Piper. A Mme. Elisa (known in life to Dr. Hodgson) communicated, saying that F. (whom she had known) was there with her, and that she had met and helped him as he was dying. She repeated what she said to him, “an unusual form of expression” (says Dr. Hodgson), and indicated that he had heard and recognized her. Later, Dr. Hodgson learnt that F., when dying, had said that he saw Mme. Elisa, who was speaking to him. He repeated to his nearest surviving relative, who was with him, what Mme. Elisa was saying ; and the expression so repeated was the same as the one that Dr. Hodgson had received from Mme. Elisa through Mrs. Piper.<sup>1</sup>

It is desirable, as such narratives indicate, that

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xiii., p. 378.

more serious notice should be taken of anything that a dying person may say than has hitherto been the rule; particularly when there has been no sign of any impairment of mental faculty. To many good people there is no doubt something of irreverence in this, and the idea is repellent. But though this is natural, it is seen on reflection to be a mistaken idea. Death is admittedly a solemn event, but so is birth—which is a time of rejoicing; and so is every change in life; even a removal from one house to another; still more the emigration of a relative to the Colonies. There is an irrevocable break with the past, and a separation. All such events are to be treated seriously; but there is no irreverence in trying to understand them to the full, and in noting down all circumstances for later consideration, particularly if it is recognized that such observation and record may furnish data which will strongly support the highest religious conceptions, rendering the old hopeless materialism entirely unscientific and irrational. We may be very sure that the departed one—who has not really departed except from the field of our limited sense-perceptions—will be glad if in even his last helpless moments he has still succeeded in being useful; and if he has said something potentially evidential but which his friends neglected to note, from mistaken ideas of "reverence," it will be for their negligence, which is an irreverence done to Truth, that he may blame them.

On this point of regarding the end of our present phase with a more depressed solemnity than is necessary, we may well remember the curious and indeed startling words of Sir Thomas More:

"They" (the Utopians) "think that . . . nothing can be more pleasant and acceptable to the dead"



than "the rehearsing of his virtuous manners and his good deeds." . . . "But no part of his life is so oft or gladly talked of as his merry death."

And Sir Thomas met his own death, as history tells, entirely in that spirit; not with any bravado or forced gaiety, but with a genuine cheerfulness and mirth, not only when he joked on the scaffold, but also before, when he watched the equal jollity of Latimer in the courtyard.<sup>1</sup>

But if this is above the power of most of us, we can still attain to the similar if milder view of our own Tennyson, whose wisdom sings:

I hate the black negation of the bier,  
And wish the dead, as happier than ourselves  
And higher, having climb'd one step beyond  
Our village miseries, might be borne in white  
To burial or to burning, hymn'd from hence  
With songs in praise of death, and crown'd with flowers.  
—*The Ancient Sage.*

On this subject of reverence in regard to the whole question, I have noticed that those who come fresh to the subject are sometimes slightly shocked by the matter-of-fact and everyday tone in which we speak of the other side and those who are there. It has been customary to regard spirits and the idea of them with awe and fear, instead of with friendliness and love;<sup>2</sup> and to talk of them familiarly seems almost flippant. I have heard people say, "I hope *I* shall never see anything," "I should be frightened if my mother communicated," and the like. "Frightened" of one's mother! What must that mother's feelings be when she sees her child turn away from the thought of her,

<sup>1</sup> Green's *Short History of the English People*, pp. 344, 345.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lanœ Falconer's fine book, *Cecilia de Noël*, for an exemplification of the right attitude.

in fear? Must it not cause her pain, so far as pain is experienced there? Even indifference and the thought of them as "dead" must be unpleasant to them; so, also, is excessive grief.

There is nothing reverent or praiseworthy in such attitudes. Is it not more sensible, now that we have definite scientific assurance of their continued life, to think of them often, cheerfully, and with loving thoughts, which, they assure us, greatly help them in their progress, as we are helped by love while here? Thinking of them thus, as alive and human still, though with "spiritual" bodies (1 Cor. xv., verse 44), instead of fleshly ones, we commit no irreverence. Reverence is due to noble character, both in and out of the body; but the mere fact of a man's being dead does not call for any fundamental change in our feelings about him. He is still a human being; he has progressed one stage beyond our village miseries, and is therefore to be congratulated and mildly envied; but the amount of our reverence is to be decided by our idea of his spiritual excellence, not by the fact that he is dead.

There are many grades of progress on all the planes, and there are men alive now who are more worthy of reverence than many who are dead; though death, no doubt, is "promotion" for everybody—in proportion as we have tried to walk in accordance with what light we had—and a great and holy and loving man here will be a greater and holier and more loving man there, for he will have more scope for the exercise of his faculties, after dropping the fleshly vesture "which doth so grossly close us in." But we revered him while here also. All is continuity and gradation; the gulf of death is not a gulf; it is only a thin veil; and man remains himself after passing through.



## CHAPTER IV

### Other Incidents

IN most sittings with mediums, the sitters are people who have been recently bereaved and who are seeking communications from someone who has crossed over; and it is perhaps under these conditions that the best results are obtained. For, whatever the explanation, I think that all investigators are agreed on the fact that a strong emotional link between a sitter and someone on the other side is found to conduce to successfully evidential messages. The fact itself, though to many minds—as to my own—suggestive of the genuineness of the ostensible communicator, who, if still existent and retaining the loves of earth, will certainly wish to communicate, nevertheless does not prove any particular explanation. It is reasonable on the hypothesis of the phenomena being what they claim to be; but it is also reasonable, more or less, on the hypothesis of telepathy, though I shall argue later that telepathy is a doubtfully applicable “explanation” when this supposititious mind-reading is meant. We may admit, then, that this fact of the emotional link’s giving good conditions does not count greatly in favour of the spiritistic theory, though in my opinion it does so count to some extent.

But, what is more important to the scientific consideration of these things, the fact of such an emotional link is itself sufficient to cause a certain distrust



in the minds of sceptical readers who have had no firsthand experience of these things. Such a distrust is natural, and is, indeed, to some extent well grounded. A bereaved mother, seeking evidence of her soldier-son's continued existence, of his love, of his hoped-for well-being, is not an ideal investigator. She is inevitably biased. Her emotions and strong desire are likely to affect her observation and interpretation of the phenomena. Her state of mind is entirely right and creditable, and we should not wish it different; but it prevents us from accepting her testimony with entire confidence. And it is so, more or less, with the testimony of all investigators who have a strong emotional link with someone on the other side and a strong desire to know of his well-being. This is, of course, particularly so if they come new to the subject soon after their bereavement. An old investigator, who took up the research from scientific motives and has had years of experience, will be a reliable witness even after a near relative has gone over; for he knows to be on his guard against his own bias. Yet even in such a case the sceptic will distrust, and we cannot altogether blame him. Where there inevitably is emotion, the critical faculty, speaking generally, cannot be at its alertest.

It is on this count that I think my own testimony is, if I may say so, rather exceptionally trustworthy. I have no strong emotional link with anyone on the other side. My parents are there, it is true, and I hope my feelings are not unfilial; but my mother died thirty years ago and my father eighteen years ago, and time heals the pain of such natural losses. Certainly I never felt any of that keen yearning for communication that many parents naturally feel in

the case of the untimely death of a son. I did not become interested in psychical matters until about eight years after my father's death, and my motive was sheer scientific curiosity, entirely uncoloured by any special desire either about survival in general or the continued existence of my deceased relatives in particular.

Having found, through a certain trance-medium, a considerable amount of evidence for supernormality, which however did not prove, or purport to prove, spirits, I was interested enough to follow up the subject with other mediums, whose powers bore more closely on the question of survival. My friends Mr. Knight and Mr. Oddy first undertook a series of sittings—extraordinarily successful ones, as it turned out—with Mr. A. Wilkinson, the “Watson” of my *New Evidences in Psychical Research*, and I have now been able to follow them up with sittings on my own account, carefully arranged and reported. And the point is, that although some of my deceased relatives do occasionally announce themselves, in entirely calm and unemotional ways, the major portion of the evidence concerns people whom I knew only slightly or not at all, and with whom, consequently, I have no emotional link.

From this I hope it will be fairly clear, if my statement of a matter of fact is believed, that the element of emotional bias is not present in my case, and that no discount needs to be deducted from my evidence on this score. I will now give a few rather fragmentary incidents illustrating what has just been said. They are of similar character to those already described, except that they do not happen to be “meeting” cases. The spirits in question do not seem to have been in proximity to the earth-state and therefore

perceptible to the medium because they had come to meet some dying friend, but rather to have called in, so to speak, for reasons of their own, being interested in the locality or in people known to me; or, perhaps more probably, they may have been brought, by some spirit better known to me, for the express purpose of eliminating telepathy or at least making it seem improbable.

It has often been said, at sittings, that a certain spirit brought another, as Mr. Leather brought his friends Sidney and Drayton; and there does, indeed, seem to have been something like a definite plan on the part of a small group of people, known to me in life but not related to me or in any way closely or emotionally linked with me, to supply me with evidence of survival which should exclude all the other and more scientifically fashionable hypotheses. And I admit that they have succeeded in convincing me. The separate items of evidence may seem not strong; and certainly I should base no theory on any one of them alone. But the strength is cumulative. No one item is entirely without evidential strength, so it is not a case of adding a lot of nothings and making something. It is a case of adding littles until they make quite legitimately a mickle. The sticks are weak, but the faggot is strong.

In my sitting of December 14th, 1914, among other evidential matter, the medium said: "*Some man named Driver here.*" This conveyed nothing in particular to me, for though I immediately thought of a living Mr. Driver who was slightly known to me, I could not recall any deceased Drivers. On reflection afterwards I remembered one man of that name who died perhaps thirty years ago, but I knew him only by sight.



In my sitting of February 17th, 1916, the medium said: "*Do you know any Driver?*" To which I replied only: "Yes," thinking about the same living Driver as before. Later, after a great deal of extraordinary evidence about other people (e.g. the Mr. Charlton and the Walkleys mentioned in the foregoing chapter), the medium said, abruptly: "*Have you known someone named Edmund?*" I said: "Yes," thinking of a local tradesman named Edmund Stott, who died a few years ago. The medium continued:

"*Man of seventy or seventy-three, this Edmund. Did not die about here; I am taken away. He went to Morecambe. Might have lived at Morecambe. Might have lived or died there. Tall, fairly straight, full beard and on cheeks, big nose, well dressed, black, very tidy. Name, Edmund; biggish-bodied man, good physique.*" [This, I thought, would fit Edmund Stott, except that I felt pretty sure that he died at home, sixty miles from Morecambe. The medium proceeded:] "*I smell a smell of brewing—beer. Malt, as if you were passing a brewery. A nice smell. But it's quite different from those flowers.* [Pointing to flowers on the table.] *It's malt.*"

The medium looked rather puzzled, so I remarked: "No brewers among my relatives, but there is a connexion between brewing and Mr. Charlton." This latter gentleman, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, was a business man in quite a different line, but he was also interested in a brewery company.

It will be observed that if telepathy from the conscious levels of my own mind had any directing influence on the phenomena, the medium ought to have dropped the Driver subject after the first shot on December 14th, 1914, for it evoked no particularly

fitting recollection. Then on February 17th, 1916, when an Edmund was mentioned and described, he ought to have got details about the draper's shop kept by a deceased Edmund Stott whom I had known. Instead of this, however, he went on to a smell of brewing, which I attributed to the influence of Mr. Charlton, though I recognized that this was a trifle far-fetched, as his connexion with the actual fact of brewing was not close. But, thinking of Mr. Charlton at the time, my thoughts—one might surmise, on a telepathic hypothesis—should have led the medium astray in a Charlton direction, as my thoughts about the draper should have led him among my Stott recollections. But they did not. Now for the sequel.

Happening to re-read the report of the February 17th sitting a month later, I for the first time put the "Edmund" and the "Driver" together; and the name seemed dimly known to me. After some reflection I felt half sure that such a man had lived. Later, I began to remember, vaguely, that he had tenanted a hotel not far away, about twenty years ago. But I had known him—if, indeed, the recollection was trustworthy at all—only by sight, and had not thought of him for many years. However, I inquired of a relative, who said that a man of that name had certainly kept that hotel; so I investigated further, finding at length a friend of mine who had known Edmund Driver very well. The medium's description, says this friend, applies to Driver exactly, and more closely than it applies to Edmund Stott, whom also he knew. And at the time of Driver's tenancy of that hotel the owners *brewed on the premises*; so the smell of brewing was very relevant. No relatives of his remain in the district. As to the medium's ever having heard

of him, it is extremely improbable. He died while Wilkinson was a boy.

The death, however, did not occur at Morecambe. But it happens that the son (known to me) of the owner of the hotel in those days does live there; and I am inclined to think that Driver was trying to allude to him, in order to put me in the way of his own identification. This is conjecture, and I do not press it. But I have so often found that an apparently wrong statement had evidential meaning behind it, that I think the conjecture in this case is justified. I think Driver was trying to say: "Ask Mr. —, of Morecambe; he will tell you about me." It is to be noted that the medium was uncertain about the nature of the Morecambe connexion; probably he got the impression of Morecambe, and supplied by his own inference that Driver died there.

It is, of course, impossible to feel absolutely sure that any one item of information has never entered a given person's mind; and we must remember that we have to allow for subliminal (forgotten) knowledge, quite apart from conscious deception, which in Wilkinson's case is completely excluded both by specific facts of evidence and by my high estimate of his character. Consequently, I would not build a theory on any one assumption, such as that of the medium's ignorance of facts concerning Edmund Driver. But when the evidence reaches a certain degree of extensiveness, an assumption of ignorance becomes justifiable. A medium may have some knowledge, subliminal or conscious, of one or two people of whom it seems improbable that he should know anything; but when the number of people becomes considerable, this explanation by normal knowledge becomes incredible. "There is a point,"



Andrew Lang has well said, "at which the explanations of common sense arouse scepticism." Moreover, normally acquired knowledge is eliminated in several cases where my friends or I have introduced sitters from another town, people of whom we knew next to nothing and whose deceased relatives cannot reasonably be supposed to have been known to the medium or to have been the subject of conversation in his hearing.

As to why Edmund Driver communicated—if he was indeed here *in propria persona*—I do not know. Perhaps some friend of mine brought him, for evidence's sake, as Mr. Leather brought Mr. Sidney. And two things are perhaps noteworthy: (1) the hotel he kept is the nearest place of its kind to my house, where the sittings took place; (2) he almost certainly knew me better than I knew him, for he would see me pass frequently on my way to the station. During the period of his tenancy I should pass it twice daily, and sometimes oftener. Also his brother and my father knew each other very well, and probably he himself was rather well known to my father, who, as it happens—if anything does "happen"—also purported to be present at the sitting of February 17th, and may have brought him.

A less detailed but equally curious example of an unexpected and almost forgotten person communicating may be briefly described. On January 15th, 1915, the medium said, among evidential matter:

"When you were a little boy, did you know a tallish woman who had a wooden leg or a false foot? Tall, thin woman; thumps with her foot. Elderly. Thud every time her foot goes down. Been associated with you in your childhood days."

This evoked no recollection at all in my mind. Later in the same sitting the medium said :

*“ Woman with foot wrong walks past again. Tall, thin. Old-fashioned mantle she has on. It is the right foot that goes down with a thump.”*

Here he got up and walked about, imitating the form that he could see, and limping heavily as with a short right leg. Still I failed to recognize ; and there the matter remained for over a year. Then, on March 10th, 1916, I happened to mention the incident to my sister, who said the description reminded her of Emma Steeton. I then remembered Emma Steeton very well. The description fits, except that I am quite uncertain which leg was deficient, and I doubt whether she had a wooden leg or foot. Our impression is that her lameness was due to a fall. She was a worthy old cottager who lived near us in our childhood, and occasionally had us in to tea and looked after us generally if our parents were out. She died probably thirty years ago, and no relatives are left that I know of. Few living people will remember her, and I do not believe that Wilkinson has ever heard her mentioned, his orbit being very wide apart from that of the few living people who have any interest in her. At that time we were living in an outlying part of the village of Thornton—now a ward of Bradford—and Emma’s circle of acquaintances was extremely small, her lameness keeping her near home to a greater extent than was the case with her neighbours—though they also were hard-working, stay-at-home villagers.

Nothing more was heard of her for over a year, and of course I never mentioned her either by name or description to the medium. In my sitting of April 12th, 1916, however, there was a reappearance. I do

not believe that Mr. Wilkinson had any conscious recollection of the woman described fifteen months before, but of course I cannot prove that. I can only say that in my opinion he remembers practically nothing of what he has seen and said, unless something special has happened at a sitting only a few days before. If I could adequately represent his busy life, continually occupied with addresses and clairvoyance from Exeter to Aberdeen, very little of his time being spent at home, it would be clear to the reader that any normal memory explanation of these sequential incidents is quite unacceptable.

This is what was said on April 12th, 1916 :

*"Did you ever know a woman with a wood leg? Tall, elderly, a wood foot or leg."* [I said I thought I knew who it was.] *"I could hear the thud on the floor."* [A. W. got up and limped about, thudding with his right foot.] *"You would know this woman with the leg when you were a boy. She has been gone on many years. I feel as if she takes me somewhere where she lived. It is a local connexion; I don't get far away."* [And, later in the same sitting:] *"This woman with the wood leg must have had a good voice, and could sing. She is showing me some hymn-books; she was interested in hymn-books and music."*

I have now made further inquiries of the two or three local cottagers who remember Mrs. Steeton, but not much detail is obtainable. Nothing special seems to be remembered about her voice, and I incline to think that this was an inference of Wilkinson's own mind. What he actually saw, with his psychic sight, was a hymn-book or some hymn-books, and this may have been merely a reminder of the Wesleyan Chapel near by, which she attended and the services at which



were probably the pleasantest and most notable incidents in her monotonous and lonely life—for she was a widow without children, so far as I know, and certainly lived alone. This view that the hymn-books mean the chapel is supported by the incident which the reader will find later, described in the report of the sitting of January 15th, 1915, in which a Moses Young appeared, holding a chapel hymn-book. I had forgotten this old man, and even when I remembered him I had no recollection of his first name, which, as a matter of fact, turned out to be Moses. He attended the same chapel as we did, and his pew was conspicuous in my field of view, as my place in the choir was in his. I never had anything to do with him, and probably never exchanged a word with him, rarely seeing him except on Sundays. The reminder of the chapel was therefore very appropriate.

I have been unable to ascertain whether Mrs. Steeton had a wooden leg or foot. All who remember her are, however, agreed about her lameness. There seems no certainty attainable as to which leg it was, though one informant, without knowing what answer I expected, said she thought it was the right leg, which is what the medium said.

The name I have given is a pseudonym. I have hopes that the real name will yet come through, for Wilkinson is particularly good at names. The evidence will then be greatly improved. But I have not much doubt about Emma Steeton being intended, for she is the only lame woman I remember having known in my childhood days, and the other details also seem to fit.

## CHAPTER V

### Introduction to Detailed Reports

IN the foregoing chapters I have presented evidence extracted from the records of several sittings, in order that a series of connected incidents may be seen as a whole. But though this is necessary, something more is necessary also; for the reader has no assurance that I am not picking out things that fit perhaps by chance, and suppressing many things which were meaningless or incorrect. Without a complete account of the sittings, with hits and misses fully recorded, it is impossible to estimate the evidential value of incidents contained in them. I therefore now give the reports as copied from my verbatim shorthand notes, with comments made the same day or within two days of the sittings. These reports are complete as to misses, though not quite complete as to hits; for I have had to omit several striking pieces of evidence out of consideration for living relatives of the spirit communicating—often someone quite unrelated and, indeed, only slightly known to me. Consequently, in estimating the evidence here presented, the reader may feel sure that he is estimating on the conservative side. If I could have given the reports in absolute completeness, the evidence would have been much stronger.

It will be seen that though the reports contain in scattered fragments the matter quoted connectedly

in the foregoing chapters, they are not merely a repetition, for they contain many other small incidents of an evidential character, duly explained in the inserted notes.

In the first few sittings, though everything said by the medium (except for the reservations just mentioned) is put down, there is no verbatim record of what I myself said. It may, of course, be taken for granted that I was on my guard to give nothing away, and I am absolutely sure that I gave no information or guidance save what is recorded; the Torrington and Walker incidents being the main ones. But, realizing the importance of absolutely verbatim reports, I succeeded in later sittings in getting down everything that was said during the period of the clairvoyance, whether by the medium or myself. The reader will therefore be able to judge for himself how much or how little assistance I involuntarily gave.

As to facial indications or the like, I think I may say that I have a fairly sphinx-like countenance—so, at least, I have been told by friends—and I do not think much is revealed in that way. For one thing, I am so busy doing the reporting that my mind does not always quite take in all the connotations and significances, in the stress of getting the *words* down correctly; and, further, no expression of countenance would tell the medium my great-grandmother's maiden name or the occupation of Benjamin Torrington's father, whom I had never known. And in this matter of names, a department in which Wilkinson is far ahead of any other medium I have ever known or heard of, there is hardly ever any fishing or hesitancy. The Torrington and Walker incidents were very exceptional; the name is usually hit off at the first shot,



with no hesitancy whatever. And there is no physical contact in the sittings, so muscle-reading is excluded.

I wish I could make it as clear to the reader's mind as it is to my own, that, whatever the true explanation, it certainly is not a normal one. Knowledge is shown, in the clairvoyant gleams, which has not entered the medium's mind through the known sensory channels. Unfortunately, I cannot pass on to others my conviction on this point, partly because firsthand experience is more convincing than secondhand testimony, and partly because I cannot give all the evidence on which my conviction is based. For instance, on one occasion a certain spirit was said to be present, and the medium got an impression concerning a private family matter in which that particular spirit would certainly be interested. I am absolutely sure that only four people knew of the matter—four people, that is, on this side. And it is certain that none of them had told Wilkinson about it. A curious feature was that the medium did not get the details, which on a telepathic hypothesis we might expect he would; he got just enough to show that some intelligence which did know them was at work. Things of this kind have occurred several times, and they irresistibly suggest that a discarnate mind is conveying to the medium just sufficient allusion to private matters to indicate supernormality and its own identity, without giving enough detail to enable the medium to understand.

Other contributory pieces of evidence come to me from people who visit halls in various towns where Wilkinson is giving platform clairvoyance. For instance, only yesterday (October 26th, 1916) I heard from my friend Dr. Horsman—who is not a member of any spiritualist society—that he attended a meeting

in Northumberland last week, and that Wilkinson described and named a spirit beside him, said to have been a doctor who died of blood-poisoning some time ago, aged about sixty-three. The full Christian name and surname were given, but were not recognized by either Dr. Horsman or anyone else in the room. Making inquiries later, however, he discovered that a doctor of that name had died in a town some miles away, eighteen years ago, aged sixty-three, and that the cause of death was blood-poisoning. Also that one of his own (Dr. Horsman's) patients had formerly been attended by the doctor in question, and had been operated on by him. Perhaps he is still interested in the "case" !

As to Wilkinson's knowledge of Bradford people, past and present, I am confident that it is practically *nil*. He never comes into the district except to see me. And I am equally sure that he has not amassed subliminal perceptions in local cemeteries, for he says he has never been in one about here, and I believe him. Sensitives are not fond of such places ; not that the fact of death is as terrible to them as it is to the average person, but because the emotional atmosphere, so to speak, is depressing, as a result of the living mourners who are continually there.

There remains the consideration of how much I involuntarily "let out" in general conversation before the sitting. This is not noted down, because it is not worth it. I fear that here I must make demands on the reader's faith. I cannot prove that I do not let things out. I can only say that in these preliminary conversations, which usually last only a few minutes before clairvoyance begins, the subject is the weather, the war, or anything except deceased people or private

affairs; and that a man of cautious habit and of rather unfluent speech, trained to further restraint by years of psychical research, is not likely to spoil the evidence by telling a medium things that he does not want him to know.

For the sake of furnishing additional data for the reader's judgment, in the exact form in which they were received, I include extracts from some of Mr. Wilkinson's letters. Lest it should be thought that I have involuntarily given information in general correspondence with him, I may here say that we do not "correspond" in the ordinary sense at all. I write when I want to ask for a sitting; that is all. And I am careful not to give anything away that would spoil possible evidence. He himself is equally keen on this; and at sittings he often says: "Don't tell me anything; let's see if more will come"; and after a sitting I never expatiate on the details. I usually say: "You got some very good clairvoyance," or "I recognized most of them," or something like that, encouraging but not informing.

Mr. Wilkinson's mediumship is remarkable, as I have just said, in the ease and correctness with which he gets names. This is usually one of the difficult things in mediumistic communications. Most mediums seem to have to guess at a name from some symbolic pictures which they see, as when Mrs. Thompson's Nelly gave the name "Happyfield"—seeing children playing happily in a field—the right name being "Merrifield." No doubt the method varies, and sometimes there is a more direct communication, even in cases like Mrs. Thompson's and Mrs. Piper's. In Wilkinson's case I think his exceptional success in this department may be due to his very bad sight. He



has had several operations on his eyes, and is indeed half blind, even with his specially-made glasses, reinforced with a lens for reading. Consequently his world is much more a world of sounds, and much less a world of sights, than the world of a normal person; and his perceptivity will perhaps therefore be above the normal, in non-visual directions. This is so, even in my own case. I am extremely shortsighted; but my hearing is more acute than that of anyone else in the house, and I can recognize voices much better than most people. Also, it is somewhat the same with my sense of smell. It will be noticed by the reader of the sitting-reports in this volume that Wilkinson often gets supernormal facts through his psychic sense of smell, as he gets names through his psychic hearing—clair-audience or direct impression.

I now give the full reports, preceded by copies of the letters mentioned. These are arranged chronologically.

## CHAPTER VI

### Medium's Letters, and Reports

*Extract from letter dated July 22nd, 1907, from Mr.  
Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

. . . RESPECTING a *séance*, I might tell you I don't habit myself to giving private ones, as I am more a public test giver, but, of course, I may possibly be able to say something to you. I take no fee unless I give an equivalent, so that should I come to see you my out-of-pocket expenses would be my only charge. I could not come very well this week, and next week I am away from home nearly all the week in Lancashire, so that as soon as I can conveniently spend an afternoon with you I will do so. It would perhaps be as well if you just dropped me a card, say in about two weeks from now. I shall then at least by to-morrow fortnight have returned from Walsall, where I have engagements to meet, and if you did so it then would not slip my mind, as I have so many calls.

*Extract from letter dated February 24th, 1911, from  
Mr. Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

. . . I quite appreciate the tone of your letter when you say you and your friends believe in my honesty, though, of course, that does not prove much. Respecting the results obtained through me at any of the sittings, I can emphatically say no previous in-

formation had been given me by anyone. Referring to the possibility of me seeing a tombstone inscription, I may tell you I never was in a cemetery in Thornton in my life, and moreover how would I know which to visit to find such, not knowing you in any way? I am fully aware of the practices of fraudulent mediums and the necessary caution to be taken to guard against such, so that I quite understand your reference. If the phenomena are not what they purport to be, then I cannot say what they are or how it comes about. I am perfectly conscious that no other than the proper motive has prompted me. My chief regret is that the power is so limited. . . .

*Extract from letter dated March 3rd, 1911, from  
Mr. Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

. . . A strange feeling touches me while I write you, and a voice speaks in my ear: "Tell him John Hey is very interested in his welfare." Of course, I don't know if you ever knew such a man, but he was old when he died, and related to you somehow, I think.

[My mother's father was John Hey, and he died at eighty. He appears in various sittings later.]

*Extract from letter dated Newcastle-on-Tyne, March 20th,  
1911, from Mr. Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

. . . It seems to me so strange that this faculty should be looked on in the light it is, because it appears so natural to me. . . . I am not an imaginative person, I am sure, and it would be difficult to imagine things of this kind, which almost invariably are proven to be correct.



[Wilkinson has often said to me, when a form has appeared to him with exceptional clearness : "Do you really see nothing ? I can hardly believe you can't see that form ; it is as real to my eyes as you are or as my own body is." But I think the "sight" is psychical, not physical, for he sees more detail in the forms than he could see with his physical sight. I should say it is true that he is not imaginative ; he is quiet, matter-of-fact, critical, not jumpy, or oratorical, or neurotic.]

*Extract from letter dated November 24th, 1911, from  
Mr. Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

P.S.—While writing to you I am visibly impressed by the name of "Bannister." I have no idea whether it is a man or woman, and I cannot feel a name to precede it. I thought I would just drop it down ; it might interest you, whether it means anything or not.

A. W.

[My father's name was Bannister Hill. I have no reason to think that this was known to the medium, and I did not tell him anything about the correctness or applicability of his impression.]

## SITTING 1

*July 21st, 1914, 2.20 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Present, J. A. H.  
and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

This was very nearly a blank sitting. Probably the medium was not yet quite at ease, having seen me only twice before, not in this house ; also he is very

thoughtful for others, and was no doubt more or less anxious lest I should get nervous or tired, my heart not being good. And, whatever theory we adopt in explanation of the phenomena as a whole, it is certain that any anxiety on the medium's part tends to inhibit them.

The following is all that was obtained.

A. W. : I get an impression of a Jonas. Also of a Sarah connected with him. She died since him.

[I had a great-uncle Jonas, who died in 1898. He had a niece Sarah, who died some years later. She was his sister's daughter, and was my aunt.]  
I get the name Dunlop. Doctor ; medical doctor. Old times.

[A Dr. Dunlop lived at Dunlop House, about three-quarters of a mile from here, dying or removing probably forty or fifty years ago. I remember my father used to talk of him ; he was before my time.]

There is a man behind you. Armitage or Hermitage. Arthur. Thirty-five to forty years old. Dead.

[I knew an Arthur Armitage who died about 1902, probably aged thirty-five or thirty-six. But the acquaintance was of the slightest. I am not sure that I ever spoke to him, but I knew him well by sight, as I am sure he knew me, for I passed his shop frequently. I know no reason why he should appear at my sitting.]

I get the name Leather. Old man, very gentlemanly ; rather retiring. I hesitate to say the name ; never heard it before as a name ; it only means boots, etc., to me.

[I knew a Mr. Leather very well, and the description fits him exactly. It happens that I

met him mostly at whist evenings at Dunlop House—long after Dr. Dunlop's time,—a doctor living there who was more or less a friend of mine as well as of Mr. Leather. That was in 1893 and for a few years afterwards, but certainly not extending later than 1897. If Mr. Leather wanted to remind me of himself and of shared experiences, he would be likely to mention the Thursday evenings at Dunlop House.]

Clairvoyance ended. I may here mention that I never visited Dunlop House after my friend left it, about the year 1896; nor, I feel sure, did Mr. Leather. It no longer exists as a house, for it was divided and made into cottages within two or three years after my friend's removal. (*See Chapter II.*)

*Extract from letter dated Bournemouth, November 18th, 1914, from Mr. Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

By the way, did you ever know someone named "Parrbury," or some such name? I am impressed it would be a very old gentleman you might have known; however, I get the feeling while I am holding your letter. He was a man who retained his faculties in a large measure till the end of life almost. I am not sure, but I feel perhaps he was called Robert, but of that I could not be too sure: the other name, however, being so uncommon that I thought I would tell it to you. He evidently is keenly interested in you. . . .

[On reading this I thought it was meaningless. But when I told my sister she remarked that Mr. Leather's name was Robert Parrbury Leather (spelling of second word uncertain). I knew he was Robert P. Leather, and may have known



the middle name, but if so, I had forgotten it. On November 21st, 1914, after inquiry, I found that the name was Robert Parberry Leather.]

## SITTING 2

*Monday, December 14th, 1914, 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

In preliminary conversation I told Mr. Wilkinson that the Parrbury of a recent letter of his to me had meaning, and he then said that when he wrote that letter he felt that "Parrbury" was waiting for some old friend to pass over. I remarked: "Very good and true; an old friend was dying." The facts are that Henry Drayton, the brother-in-law and lifelong friend of Robert Parberry Leather, died on November 29th, 1914, aged eighty-nine. Wilkinson (as we have seen) wrote the letter about "Parrbury" eleven days before—on the 18th.

My mind being occupied more or less with these men, I expected some appearance of one or other of them at the sitting; but, as the following record shows, no mention of either of them was made. Perhaps they have now gone on together.

After further general talk the medium said:

I get the feeling of a Helen—spelt with an H. [A. W. pronounced the word again, aspirating it strongly.] It is Helen Torringham, or some such name.

[A. W. seemed uncertain about the ending. I supplied "Torrington," having known many people of that name. He accepted it, remarking that

he knew some Torringhams; hence, perhaps, his mistake.]

Middle-aged or rather more; portly figure, been deceased a good many years, and the form I see is very ethereal. She moves behind your chair. She moves about a good deal, and I feel that she is looking for someone who is not here. She has something on her head, I cannot see what; all is so thin. A shrewd woman.

[All correct for a Mrs. Torrington, if the Christian name is right. I have no recollection of what it was, but will ascertain. She died in 1896.

(Later—December 22nd, 1914. I have inquired, and find that Helen is correct.)

She usually wore a white lace cap on her head, indoors. The description is correct in every detail, except perhaps age. She died at about sixty-five. (Note.—April 14th, 1916. But A. W. calls people "middle-aged" up to sixty or more. He has said so, specifically, in a later sitting, April 12th, 1916, referring—curiously enough—to a reappearance of this same person.) She was no relation, but I knew the whole family intimately; the son was a chum of mine, and a daughter of hers had called two days before the sitting, apparently leaving her influence. No doubt it was for her that Mrs. Torrington was looking. The latter had a characteristic way of emphasizing her aspirates, speaking very deliberately. I often used to notice this.]

Now there is a very old lady, of rather low stature, standing by the couch end, looking at you. Hair very grey, and done over the forehead like this [indicating with two forefingers two curved lines from centre of upper part of forehead to the temples]. Face drawn

and old, but nice. Wide dress, very full; pleated—a good dress. Rather a proud old person. Name Mary. Quite old, close on eighty.

[All correct for my maternal grandmother, Mary Hey, who died March 21st, 1890, aged eighty-one. There was no photograph of her in the room, and I have never talked to Mr. Wilkinson about my deceased relatives. I have no belief that he has any normally-acquired knowledge of any of them.]

Helen is still here, but she has nothing to do with Mary; they go apart to show that they are not connected. Helen is looking about for someone not here; someone she would like to speak to. She was a woman with will, “plenty about her,” as we say in Yorkshire.

[Correct; and true that she and my grandmother were not related. But they knew each other in life, and it is not surprising that they appeared together.]

Mary is still standing there, like an image, looking at you.

A voice behind me says, “Purcell.” A man; quite another influence.

[Several years ago some relatives of mine named Purcell lived in this house. But they are still living. Perhaps an ancestor was trying to communicate. *See sitting of June 5th, 1916.*]

There is a Timothy about; I don't know whether it is Purcell or not.

I get Benjamin Torrington. Helen and Benjamin had some association. Benjamin was an old man.

[Timothy unrecognized. Benjamin Torrington, Helen's husband, died about 1901, aged nearly eighty.]



There is a funny smell. Have you known somebody who kept a drug-shop? I smell all kinds of concoctions, as in a drug-shop.

[I learnt a fortnight after the sitting that Benjamin Torrington's father, who, I suppose, would be dead before my time, had kept a druggist's shop, so Benjamin would be in that atmosphere until he married.]

The old lady is dying away gradually. Prim old person.

I feel as if I were in a drug-shop.

Somebody here called Purcell, an old man. Might be Timothy; not sure.

Have you known somebody called Walker? Had you visitors yesterday or Saturday? Some influence is left.

At some time or other you had acquaintances called Walker.

[But the medium seemed uncertain about the last syllable, so I remarked "Walkley, perhaps." Friends of ours thus named lived near, from 1883 to 1900. One died in 1898 or 1899, another in 1900. No relatives of theirs, or anyone of that name, so far as I know, remain in this district. They were well known to my grandmother and to the Torringtons.]

Have you had anybody called James Bannister connected with you? I feel old-fashioned, about my neck. Shirt. A big, powerful man. [Gets up, squares shoulders, standing erect.] This goes back a long number of years; before this place was built. [House is twenty-five years old.] Your people have been farmers. Somebody belonging to your mother been farmers.

[James Bannister is unrecognized; but my father's paternal grandmother was a Bannister before marriage, and James might be a brother or her father. I am trying to trace my Bannister ancestors, but it is difficult. My father was named Bannister Hill, after them. My mother's father owned two farms at one time, though he was hardly a farmer. It is probable, however, that there were farmers farther back.]

Some man named Driver here. Funny name.

[Unrecognized. I know some living Drivers slightly.]

I get the name Ishmael. There is quite a circle, but all is mixed up. I feel among a farming class.

[Ishmael Ogden was my maternal grandmother's brother. I do not know whether he was a farmer or not. I never knew him.]

James Bannister again. Something to do with a quarry. Lot of stone and flags [flagstones] about. Long time back.

[Likely enough, for my grandfather, John Hill, was a quarry owner and stone merchant, and, as said, his mother was a Bannister before marriage.]

I feel all the accompaniments of a quarry—horses, wagons.

(End of clairvoyance.)

During the sitting the medium had kept pencil and paper in front of him on the table, and occasionally wrote a few words. These were found to be "Benjamin Torrington" and "Ishmael."

Wilkinson gets at the length of time that has elapsed since death partly by a direct impression or intuition, and partly by the solidity or thinness of

the form. But it is, apparently, chiefly intuitional, for though Helen Torrington was so ethereal that he could hardly see her, he did not place her a long way back in time. She died, as a matter of fact, in 1896; my grandmother, he said, was solid and lifelike—he could see her eyes and every detail. Yet she died in 1890. It rather looks as if the solidity or thinness of a form indicates the stage of progress of that spirit, for I should say that though both Mrs. Torrington and my grandmother were shrewd and able women in a material sense, and about equal in intellect, the former was the more spiritual of the two, and she may accordingly have progressed farther away from earth conditions.

### SITTING 3

*Friday, January 15th, 1915. Present, J. A. H., medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson), and Mr. Trevor for a few minutes.*

About five minutes after the medium's arrival, and while we were talking about ordinary things, an unexpected and infrequent visitor called: Mr. Trevor, vicar of a parish not far away. He came in for ten minutes and I introduced him by name. Immediately after his departure Wilkinson said: "What did you say that man's name was?" I told him, and he remarked: "I thought I heard somebody say 'King'; a shadow, older than him, and not so tall—a faint outline or phantom—seemed to come out of him."

Mr. Trevor's predecessor in the vicariate of his parish was named King. He died in 1909, aged sixty-four. Mr. Trevor is under fifty, and taller than Mr.



King was. Mr. Trevor's waistcoat indicated his vocation, but I do not think that he or his predecessor was known to the medium, either by sight or by name. I have good reason for believing that Wilkinson has never been in that particular church—which is many miles from his home—and not often even in the parish.

After a few minutes' silence, Wilkinson continued :

There is a man there by the bookcase, right-hand corner ; very old man, big, full features. Been gone some time ; old-fashioned shirt, white, very clean. Elias Sidney. [Medium took paper and pencil and wrote "Elias Sidney."] Politics interested him ; rather a strong politician, Radical or strong Liberal. Been dead some time. Somebody brought him, somebody on the other side, who has manifested here before. Not lived here. Good colour in his face. There is somebody behind him, and he shadows him. Had to do with Liberals. Rather heavy on his feet.

[Unrecognized.]

Have you been connected with anyone called Young ? Old man, straight, grey hair, nice old gentleman. He has a hymn-book in his hand ; looks like a chapel hymn-book.

[Couldn't remember anybody at the moment, but thought of several living Youngs well known to me.]

Sidney appears again ; somebody brought him—some spirit.

I feel as if somebody took me on a train, not a long way. To Bradford, then train to some place, hilly, where there is a big building. I go very quickly to this place, very large place on a hill, workhouse or prison. Asylum place ; asylum.

I do feel moidered.

You don't know anybody at Menston? Some influence takes me in that direction. I don't get into the asylum. I feel big, tall, strong, a young influence. Train, railway, feeling of backwards and forwards, on a railway. Menston is not far from Bradford, is it?

[W. knows of the large asylum at Menston, of course. Young man unrecognized. Later: I have found indications of the truth of this, but the matter is private.]

Did you ever know a Moses Young?

[I said I believed so—not sure. I now find, on asking a relative, that the father of a local Young known to me was named Moses. I knew him when I was a boy; he went to the same chapel. The hymn-book is perhaps a reminder of this. His pew was very prominently in front of me as I sat in the choir, and he would be continually seeing me, past the minister, the pulpit being nearly between us. I was in the gallery, he in the area. No relation to us.]

There is a woman here named Mary Bannister. She is not very tall. I see her hair; it stands up a bit—a bit wiry; she is rather full figure. Been dead some time, by style of hair dressing; very antique, ancient.

[My father's paternal grandmother was Mary Bannister before marriage. I know nothing of her personal appearance.]

Sidney comes and goes. Enthusiast at politics.

There is somebody with Mary Bannister named Jowett, a man, with peculiar leggings on, kind of boots, long ones, very big ones; no hair on lips or chin, but whiskers sticking out at sides, very old-fashioned man, big, old. A very long way back. He lived in a very country place.

[Unrecognized; but I believe there is a Jowett strain in us, some way back.]

There is a young man, rather tall, nicely built, moustache, rather weird, intent look—a bit wild, bewildered; age twenty-five or twenty-six, biggish man. Looks strange, as if he had been lost. A motionless image, steady gaze.

[Unrecognized. Later: but see sittings of June 5th and August 2nd, 1916.]

Sidney got excited when discussing politics.

There are a lot of men about you [i.e. J. A. H.]—oldish men. That woman, Mary Bannister, had a curious, old-fashioned dress. It stood out. Have you known a lady, who died in middle life, named Hanson? She would be ill some time. Interested in school life—I feel as if she moved in a school atmosphere. Something to do with a school, very nice-looking woman, much afflicted before death.

[Unrecognized.]

Later: But see sitting of April 19th, 1916.]

There is a face over you, pale, rather small features. Head and shoulders. Serious look on face, but slight smile; name Mary. Face like marble just here [touching cheeks near mouth]. Right over your head, builds up over you; over sixty by the look of her, but not an old woman. Delicate. Inclined to be religious.

[True of my mother except that she was only fifty-four at death—but she looked older—and had not been a particularly delicate woman, though always pale and thin. W. has described and named her before. See my *New Evidences*.]

When you were a little boy did you know a tallish woman who had a wooden leg or a false foot? Tall, thin woman; thumps with her foot. Elderly. Thud



every time her foot goes down. Been associated with you in your childhood days.

[Unrecognized.]

Later: See note at end of this sitting, also sitting of April 12th, 1916, in which the same person reappears.]

You remember me seeing an old man here before—I can't remember his name. [Here W. seemed excited and eager, so I suggested "Leather."] Yes, Leather. It is Mr. Leather who has brought Elias Sidney. They were cronies; they were cronies. [W. laughs.] Sidney has been passed away longer than Mr. Leather.

A girl moves towards the bed. About fifteen years old. Tall, pale girl, lot of hair, beautiful, pale features. Slender, graceful. Hair not "up." Something in her hand—looks like music, copy of music. Been gone some time. Somebody is in this house that she has known. Subtle; I can nearly see through her form. Name Purcell, I think.

[Unrecognized, but must make inquiries. I have an aunt who married a Purcell, and Wilkinson has got this name before, so there is probably some sense in it.

Later: Cannot make anything out. If a Christian name had been got, I might have found some application.]

There is a man by the side of you, looking down at you. He has a sort of long pinafore on; prime of life, about forty or forty-two, nicely built, moustache, no beard, the pinafore is soiled and dirty. Died suddenly; his death was a surprise to all who knew him. He had something to do with someone you [J. A. H.] know intimately. There was some sort of

special trouble when he died ; of course, death always causes sorrow to those left, but in this case there was some sort of special trouble. He was not related to you, but there is some connexion. I see a lot of steps which run up ; a warehouse. Funny smell—musty. I think the man must have been a wool-sorter. Died very suddenly. No machinery about. Warehouse.

[Unrecognized. But my Purcell relatives are in the wool trade, so I must inquire of them.

Wool-sorters wear a sort of pinafore, known locally as a “checker brat,” and this gets very dirty in front.

Later : My relatives do not recognize him. But the warehouse, steps, smell, and wool are significant, and if a name could be got it might recall the man.]

The girl has some connexion with your family, a good way back. Her hair looks fair, sandy, her form is very subtle ; might be dead before your time, but perhaps some living person could tell. In your family circle.

That girl lived near a quarry : I see flags and stones. She is very attractive. Has not manifested here before. Long gone.

There is a man, Jonathan Ainsworth. Big man, tremendous. [W. stood up and seemed half under control.] I do feel big, as if I nearly touched the ceiling. He and a John Hey collaborated. An old gentleman. Ainsworth not so old as Hey. Yewton is to do with Hey. [W. spelt it, tentatively, but seemed at a loss or confused, thinking it was a man's name.] Hey and Ainsworth had to do with Yewton. I see a barn.

[Here I interposed to help, saying: "Yewton is a farm, not a man." John Hey was my maternal grandfather. He once had two farms near Yewton, and his daughter still owns one of them. I think its land adjoins Yewton. They are across the valley, a mile or two from here. I know of no connexion of my grandfather's with Yewton itself, and Ainsworth is unrecognized, but I will inquire about him through my aunt, John Hey's daughter.

Later: January 22nd, 1915. My aunt says that she, and her father, John Hey, knew a Jonathan Hainsworth who hawked tea a long time ago. But he was short and bent, and had no special connexion with John Hey or with Yewton, so far as she knows. He was an old man, and probably died long before my grandfather Hey, who died in 1889.]

Woman with foot wrong walks past again. Tall, thin. Old-fashioned mantle she has on. It is the right foot that goes down with a thump. [Medium got up and walked, imitating her, as if with a short right leg or a wooden leg.]

School, woman named Hanson. I see desks, scholars.

[Unrecognized.]

Later: See sitting of April 19th, 1916.]

What a lot of Marys there are about you! I get mixed among them.

[My mother and both grandmothers were named Mary, also a great-grandmother.]

I wonder who that poor young man can be?

[Apparently the one who looked wild.]

I suppose somebody lived here before you? This is not a new house.



[It is about twenty-five years old, and has had several tenants.]

I feel as if I were in a warehouse. Fusty old smell. Somebody has been about you as if their clothes smell. No machinery. Warehouse.

Benjamin: male side of you. Some man getting on in years; tall.

[Unrecognized.]

Here the medium sat back and apparently could get nothing more. He had been at it for nearly an hour. (In this Report I am compelled to omit some good evidence involving other people.) I got most of it down verbatim, though once or twice he went too fast and I missed a few words. Between each burst, so to speak, he is silent, or muttering abstractedly, "m——, m——," but gives the impression of *intense listening*, a tense concentration, not merely of listening with his ears, but with all of him. It is difficult to describe this, for intense effort seems incompatible with passivity; but nevertheless there is somehow a combination of the two. I have noticed it before, but never so markedly as in this sitting—e.g. about the girl of fifteen or sixteen I said: "Try to get her name," and he said: "I'm trying"; and his intense effort of "listening," or feeling, or reaching, or straining after something just beyond reach and beyond audibility, was particularly noticeable.

I told him very little about how far he was correct, but said I recognized Mary Bannister. He would see that several of them were unknown to me, and probably this led him to wonder whether they belonged to some of the people who lived here before us, which indeed is probably the truth.

Note: February 5th, 1915.<sup>1</sup>

I asked a relative who is a local Liberal worker and business man whether the name Elias Sidney was known to him. He said: "No." I told him why I asked, and gave him the details of what Wilkinson had said; but they stirred no recollections—he did not remember ever hearing of the man or the name before. He said, however, that he thought he could ascertain whether such a man had existed, by asking some old Bradford Liberal.

To-day, February 5th, 1915, he called and informed me that he has made inquiries in the town, and has found a man who knew Elias Sidney very well indeed; that he died eight or nine years ago, but had long been retired from public life, being a very old man; and that he (Sidney) was one of a coterie of friends—all vigorous politicians on the Liberal side, to which he (my relative's informant) *and Mr. Leather* belonged. Their rendezvous was a certain Liberal Club.

My relative did not tell his informant why he asked; he merely asked whether he had ever known an Elias Sidney.

The name Elias Sidney still sounds quite unfamiliar to me, and if I did not know a good deal about the possibilities of subliminal memory I should be prepared to swear that I had never heard of him. Certainly he cannot have been a prominent man in

<sup>1</sup> In what follows, and in other places, there is some repetition of matter which has appeared in the earlier chapters; but I think the critical reader will wish to see my notes exactly as made at the time, so I reproduce them fully. They are sometimes instructive by showing the difficulty I had in verifying certain statements of the medium; and this difficulty has a bearing on the evidential aspect, since—generally—what I found it difficult to verify, the medium is proportionally unlikely to have known normally.

any way, or my relative would have known the name; for he has been in close touch with leading local business men for thirty years (he is fifty), and also with local politics.

Note: April 29th, 1916.

It occurred to me that a gentleman fairly well known to me—professor in a theological college—might have known Elias Sidney, so I wrote and asked him a week ago. To-day I have seen him; he knew Mr. Sidney well, and says that the description given by the medium is exact. I have now learnt from him, for the first time, where Mr. Sidney lived; the town is neither Bradford—where I live—nor Halifax—in an out-district of which the medium lives. It is more distant from the latter than from the former.

May 3rd, 1916.—Yesterday I ascertained that Mr. Sidney died on January 7th, 1909 (seven weeks before Mr. Leather), aged eighty-three. He was a keen politician and excitable; went to a certain Liberal Club every day when well enough, for many years, staying from 3 p.m. till about 7 p.m. Mr. Leather went almost daily to the same club, at about the same time. I have seen a photograph of Mr. Sidney, and the description fits. I cannot find that the medium ever goes to the small town where Mr. Sidney lived (I have interviewed people who live there, including spiritualists, who would be likely to know if he did), and there seems no reason to believe that Mr. Sidney was known to him even by name. And, in particular, it is in the last degree unlikely that he could have known of the association of Mr. Sidney and Mr. Leather at the Liberal Club, for neither my friends nor I, who knew Mr. Leather fairly intimately, were aware of it. Nor can he reasonably be supposed to know of my meeting



Mr. Leather at Dunlop House. The most rational theory seems to be that the surviving mind of Mr. Leather himself was in operation.

March 10th, 1916.—Mentioning to my sister an old woman, lame, who was described in a Wilkinson sitting, she said it reminded her of Emma Steeton. I then got this report, and read to her the two paragraphs (pp. 70, 73) about the lame woman. The description certainly fits, so far as we remember. Emma walked with a heavy limp, owing to a fall; we do not remember which leg was the lame one. We think she had not a wooden leg or foot, but she certainly walked with a thump on one foot. She was a near neighbour of ours at Roundfield Place, and occasionally looked after us children, more or less, if our parents were out. She died probably twenty-five or thirty years ago; no relatives left that we know of.

(See sitting of April 12th, 1916.)

*Extract from letter dated Bournemouth, October 1st, 1915,  
from Mr. Wilkinson to J. A. H.*

Just when closing this epistle I felt as if some old man touched me; rather a gentleman; and he made me feel a bit like a parson. I cannot get any communication from him beyond "A. S. W.," whatever that means; an impression I get is that you might have known this man some years ago. However, it is rather vague. When I tried on a separate paper I could only get the letters named.

[The initials of the full name of Mr. Walkley, whose name was apparently groped after in my sitting of December 14th, 1914, were A. S. W. He was a parson, and was a "gentleman"; died 1900; had left this district some months before;

no relatives of his remained; I have no reason to think that Mr. Wilkinson has ever heard of him normally. I heard Mr. Walkley preach nearly every Sunday for seventeen years, and he knew me well.]

#### SITTING 4

*Friday, November 19th, 1915. Present, Mr. Frank Knight and medium.*

This was a sitting held by my friend Mr. Knight (whose experiences are described in my *New Evidences in Psychical Research*) on my behalf, at his home in another town, with the medium A. Wilkinson. What follows is a copy of Mr. Knight's notes.

Preliminarily it may be mentioned that the glove used as a rapport-object had belonged to the Mrs. Napier elsewhere alluded to both in this book and in *New Evidences*. This is a pseudonym, and Mr. Knight did not know her real name, or anything about her except what had appeared in my book. She had died about a fortnight before the sitting—on November 3rd, 1915.

The letter mentioned was a letter of mine to Mr. Knight, received by him on the morning of the sitting. It contained no information about my relatives or friends.

[W. placed glove to face.]

Glove feels very cold and damp. A very calm, tranquil feeling, notwithstanding great weakness. Person had a lot of pain in her breast. Feel as if I must lie in a bed in extreme physical weakness: heart or

chest. Very calm feeling, ready and prepared for everything. This is as someone gone to sleep and won't waken—as if her mind was slumbering. Not yet awake, not fully conscious; asleep, not able to make any actual demonstration.

The person who wore it had much pain about the heart. Doesn't appear to fully understand how to reach me.

[Mrs. N. *was* tranquil and prepared. She had much pain in chest—growth behind breastbone—and became very weak owing to inability to take even fluid food for some weeks. She had an operation for a breast tumour in 1913, and the doctors said it was cancer, but she was not told this. She also had obscure heart attacks—intermittency, without valvular disease—during the last five years or so.]

[From the letter.]

Impression of a man called Ishmael Hey. Elderly gent, some time back, rather big, not very old, old-fashioned in way of thinking.

Someone called Sarah, deceased, age not obtainable.

[Ishmael Hey is unknown, but Ishmael *Ogden* was my grandmother Mary Hey's brother. I never knew him. Sarah may be either of two aunts of mine. Wilkinson has got a Sarah for me before.]

[Glove.]

Feel might be put in carriage and carried some distance. Of opinion the subject not able to communicate.

[Mrs. Napier lived and died over a hundred miles from where the sitting was taking place.]



[Letter.]

Elderly gentleman, used to go to some Anglican church, something to do with that letter.

Some woman, Helen, elderly, silk dress. Man Torrington, connected with Helen.

Rather a big man about sixty, corpulent, fresh-complexioned, about fifty-nine or sixty, good-looking. Had something to do with cloth some time, rolls of cloth about.

[Helen and the man Torrington are evidently Mrs. and Mr. Torrington, whose names and descriptions Wilkinson gave me at my sitting of December 14th, 1914, two days after a visit of their daughter, whose influence seemed to have attracted them here. I feel sure that Wilkinson knows nothing of my association with their family. It is twenty years since any of them lived in Thornton.]

The corpulent man may be my father. The description is correct except that he was sixty-six at death. He had to do with "rolls of cloth" in his working days, and the allusion is a particularly apt and identifying one.]

[Glove.]

Get no further: feels like running against a stone wall. Wearer been more than ordinarily thoughtful serious type of mind. Will give anything to get further impressions.

[*I.e.* I suppose he was expressing his strong wish to get something for me.]

## SITTING 5

*Wednesday, January 19th, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

After ten minutes' talk about the war—Wilkinson was in London when two Zeppelin raids occurred—the medium said he had tried several times, at home, to get psychometry from the glove I sent him, or messages from its late owner, but without success. Once he had a vision of flowers, and smelt flowers in general, but that was all. It was cornflowers that he saw.

[She used to send me flowers nearly every week in summer. In fact, she sent me more flowers than I have had from everybody else put together probably; so it is a characteristic touch. But I was not thinking of flowers when the medium said this. I do not know whether cornflowers were special favourites of hers; she sent me sweet-peas and roses mostly, I think. It is roses that I should most naturally think of in connexion with her.]

J. A. H. : She was fond of flowers.

[Pause.]

A. W. : There is an old man here, big, tall, well built, leans forward, bent with age. Nearly eighty. He has a stick. He is connected with you through your mother. Name, John. Been passed away a good many years. Good colour in his face, was perhaps out of doors a lot. Robust. He is quite a real presence to me.

J. A. H. : My grandfather. [A. W. has got messages from him before, with surname, so I was not giving anything away. It is my mother's father.]

A. W.: Indeed! Some folks laugh when I say a John is here, because it fits in for nearly everybody; but I have to say what I get.

[Pause.]

There's a man called Jonas, not very tall, but heavy. Old, but not so old as the other one.

[Had him before; probably a great-uncle of mine, Jonas Ogden, died at about eighty. He was not very heavy, though, but was well built.]

[Pause.]

There's somebody called Lewis. I am taken away somewhere, on a train. Country place; up and down, rather steep. I feel I was taken to the Bradford Great Northern station, then a journey—not far, not many stations. I come to a house where there is someone linked up with you. Somebody there has been in trouble; something which cannot be helped; no remedy but Time. Not a flat place. Houses not close together—a bit distant from each other. I can't get into the house. Somebody there you will either see or hear of. Something interesting will come of it. You will see them, I think.

[A Mr. Lewis once lived about a mile from here, dying in 1912. I knew him fairly well, meeting him mostly at the local Mechanics' Institute, where I played an occasional game of billiards with him. His widow left the town, soon after his death, and has since lived at a place which is on the Great Northern line from Bradford, not many stations away. It is a hilly place, as said, and there are many detached houses. But we are not in any close way "linked up" with Mrs. Lewis. I have not seen her for about twelve years. Mrs. Lewis has grieved greatly about her hus-



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band's death. It is very improbable that I shall see her. Wilkinson said I should either "see or hear of" the person.]

[Pause.]

There is a mind trying to get me into a house at that place. Something happened rather tragic, painful. Somebody there who can't get it out of their mind.

[Mr. Lewis died suddenly of heart disease. I believe it is very true that Mrs. Lewis cannot get the tragically sudden event out of her mind; though he had been ill before, his disease was known, and she was aware that he *might* go suddenly.]

This Lewis evidence is very impressive to me. I had not been thinking about either Mr. or Mrs. Lewis. I have nothing in the house that ever belonged to either of them, and I do not believe that Wilkinson normally knows anything about them. Psychometry and mind-reading do not seem to me good explanations of this incident; the spirit explanation seems much more reasonable. Mr. Lewis had few friends, and he knew me probably as well as anybody except one or two other local men, and I should quite expect him to give me a look in, if able, when a medium is here, though I had never thought of him before in this connexion till Wilkinson said "Lewis." I never talked to him about psychical things, for at that time I knew nothing about them; so I have never associated him with the subject.

Later: September 13th, 1916.—To-day, after a chain of antecedently improbable events, Mrs. Lewis has been here for the first time, to tea, and I saw her for a few minutes. The medium's pre-

diction, which at the time seemed wildly unlikely, is thus fulfilled. I cannot give all the details of events leading up to this, lest identities of living people should be disclosed; but I may say that the initiative did not come from us—there seems to have been a Mr. Lewis agency impressing the mind of his widow.]

[After a few minutes' silence, I gave A. W. a small silver box which had belonged to the glove-owner, and, before that, to a close male connexion of hers who predeceased her; in fact, her husband.]

A. W.: I feel rather buoyant—exhilarated—with this. Nothing depressing. The other person may have got away. [Perhaps in reference to the glove yielding nothing.] Sense of leaving a man behind, in the body.

J. A. H.: She was a widow.

A. W.: There seems a man in the case.

J. A. H.: The box belonged to her husband.

[Pause.]

A. W.: Have you known somebody called Tranter?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: A woman called Tranter. Do you know any Percy Tranter?

J. A. H.: No.

[Not striking, but it is perhaps worth noting that a few days before the sitting we had a caller, a cousin's wife, who calls very rarely—not once a year—and who knew the Tranters better than we did. They lived at a farm next my cousin's, but are no longer there. It has happened before, more than once, that spirits connected with some recent caller have purported to turn up.]

A. W. : You never hear raps, perhaps ?

J. A. H. : No.

A. W. : There is something I can't break through, like a net. [Handling glove and box abstractedly.] Have you a friend called Drayton ?

J. A. H. : I know some Draytons.

A. W. : You will have a visitor called Drayton. He has to do with some kind of work that smells funny. Nothing to do with this box.

[Unrecognized. I have no regular Drayton visitors. But I think this is a misinterpreted foregleam of what follows. The " visitor " was coming in the spirit, not in the body.]

There is a very old man—he has a job to stand up. Tottering with age. There are *two* old men together; neither of the men I saw before. Little, bent with age, white front; another little old man with him. Brothers or friends. Henry and Robert. Don't know whether they were brothers or not. Henry is older than the other. They knew each other very well. Robert's face is smoother, not so lined. They are chums. Perhaps brothers. Robert predeceased the other. I don't think Henry has been long gone. Somebody called Whitley is connected with Henry; lives a long way from here. A woman, not well; belongs to Henry. She is called Whitley. She has something belonging to the old man. He liked his own way; a bit dogmatic. Robert was rather milder. Henry had a lot of his own way. He is very much surprised about things now. Robert was a bit younger; nice old man; jolly. They had lots in common, though there was great difference. Perhaps difference in position. They're alike now in that respect.



[I think the last sentence was mostly W.'s normal mind, for as he said it he looked up at me and smiled, momentarily losing his "absent" manner. When getting impressions he seems to be looking at nothing in particular, though he sometimes locates a spirit if it is specially clear. While waiting for impressions, he often puts his hand over his eyes, elbow on chair-arm.

Except that they were not "little" when I knew them—though they probably became more shrunken later—all this is exactly true of Henry Drayton and Robert P. Leather. They were brothers-in-law, great chums, and lived near each other. Mr. Drayton died in 1914, November 29th, aged eighty-nine; Mr. Leather died February 22nd, 1909, aged eighty-four. It is a rather notable thing that though Mr. Drayton had five daughters, the only one we have much of a link with is Mrs. Whitley, for her husband's uncle married my great-aunt. If Mr. Drayton were here, thinking about my family in general and his own daughters, it would be Mrs. Whitley he would think of more particularly; though this fact, and the connexion by marriage, did not occur to me until after the sitting.

The description of Mr. Drayton's salient points of character is excellent. He was rather impetuous and masterful; a good man, but certainly his position enabled him to have a great deal of "his own way."

Mr. Leather has been described and named as "Leather—perhaps Robert," by Mr. Wilkinson before, and at a sitting on December 14th, 1914, he told me, referring to an impression about

which he had written me from Bournemouth on November 18th, 1914, that he had felt that the man named Parrbury was waiting about for an old friend to pass over. Mr. Leather's name was Robert Parberry Leather, but few people knew his second name; I didn't, or I had forgotten it, and had to make inquiries. At the time of the medium's impression, Mr. Drayton was dying of senile decay, passing away eleven days afterwards. Mr. Leather was a "nice old man, jolly," as said; he was less well off than Mr. Drayton.]

[A. W. handles silver box again, trying hard, seeming to listen or feel interiorly very intently. Complete failure.]

J. A. H. : Better put it down; she'll come when she can. Try for some more from Robert and Henry.

[Pause.]

A. W. : Henry had a portrait of old Mr. Gladstone, the statesman. I think he must have had one in his house.

J. A. H. : Very likely.

A. W. : Robert has brought him. I think Henry has not manifested here before.

[Mr. Drayton was a Liberal M.P. for a good many years, retiring in 1892 owing to ill-health. He was a vigorous Gladstonian.

Correct that he had not manifested here before. Mr. Leather seems to wish to convince me of survival; he brought an "Elias Sidney" to my sitting of January 15th, 1915; to the best of my recollection I had never heard the name before, but after inquiries in various quarters I learned that "Elias Sidney" had lived a few miles away and had been a political crony of Mr. Leather's.

We have nothing in the house that could serve as psychometric link—no object that had belonged to either Mr. Leather or Mr. Drayton—and, of course, neither of them ever lived here.

As to the medium's normal knowledge of these two men, I have no reason to think that he knows anything except what I have told him; and this does not include anything about their characters or the exact shade of intimacy or relationship, which are hit off so well. Both were business men who retired young, both lost their wives early, and for half a century they were close chums, neither of them having any other friend anything near so intimate. Strictly speaking, the evidentiality of this part of the sitting is not high, because they were well-known men and because the medium knew something of Mr. Leather before. But it is worth mentioning that he said, after my remarks about them, that he had no previous knowledge of them—"certainly not of Mr. Drayton." He probably remembered dimly that the name Leather had appeared at an earlier sitting, for it was new to him as a name, and suggested only boots, etc. I do not think he connected the Robert of this sitting with the Leather of an earlier one. In fact, Mr. Leather seems to have purposely given different parts of his name on different occasions, for when he impressed the medium at Bournemouth he gave the first two names ("Parrbury" and perhaps "Robert"), and Wilkinson thought the Parrbury was a surname, and did not connect it with Mr. Leather.

However, the other incidents are evidentially stronger, being entirely new. Also Mr. Lewis was



a less well-known man, and I am sure I had never mentioned him to the medium.]

Things seemed to be tailing off, so I said, as encouragement :

J. A. H. : It was very good about those two old men. Robert is Robert Leather, whom you have named and described here before ; Henry is Henry Drayton, a close friend of his ; the woman called Whitley is his daughter.

A. W. : I saw those two old men so clearly that I could recognize their portraits if I saw them. Shan't remember them long ; shall have forgotten them to-morrow.

[Unfortunately, I had no portraits of them at hand, or I would have tried tests like Sir Oliver Lodge's with Mrs. Piper in the "waking stage." Probably, indeed, there was no portrait of Mr. Drayton in the house ; indeed, I do not think we have a photograph of either of them.]

Sitting ended. Talked about war again. W. very anxious, wondering whether to attest. He is about thirty-eight, but his sight will certainly exempt him. Left at 3.40 p.m. to catch 3.48 train. (He had arrived at 2.30.)

## SITTING 6

*Thursday, February 17th, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

The medium arrived at 2.25 p.m., and we talked about the weather, his recent tours, and the like. I mentioned no relatives or friends of mine. In about ten minutes he began to get impressions :

## PSYCHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

A. W.: I feel a bodily presence here, someone in the body, a big, tall man, who is coming to take leave of you. This is a presentiment. The man is very cheerful, not in trouble, not caring.

[Improbable: I know of no friend going away, unless a lieutenant friend is ordered abroad, in which case he might come to say good-bye. He is 6 ft. 2 in., and powerfully built.]

[Later: March 1st. A cousin called to say a cheerful good-bye last night. He joins his regiment to-day. He is tallish, but not very big-bodied.]

A. W.: There is a woman just behind you, pale, pinched, a bit drawn at the mouth, not very tall. Not an old woman, but over sixty, maybe. A delicate woman, very pale. Name, Mary. I have a feeling that she has been gone a long time—seventeen or eighteen years.

[My mother, Mary Hill, has been named and described before, with more correct details. She died twenty-nine years ago, aged fifty-four. She was pale, but not very delicate.]

A. W.: There is a young man, tall, about twenty years old, standing by your coat [hung on hook in Shannon cabinet]. No hair on his face, high forehead, long face. Not quite a man, about twenty. Rather dark, no colour. [Unrecognized.]

A. W.: Do you know any Driver?

J. A. H.: Yes. [Slightly, but no *deceased* Drivers.]

A. W.: That young man has not been gone long.

[Pause.]

A. W.: You may hear of a funeral of somebody soon; I see a funeral party. A woman, who will die soon; it is nearly up to you. Somebody old. There is a

man here with a round soft hat, a felt hat, like a parson ; grey ; been a parson. He is about here waiting for somebody. He is a bit vague ; seems to be looking through gauze or fog.

[This is good. A Mrs. Walkley, widow of a former local minister, died on February 15th, and the funeral is to-day, February 18th. She was eighty-two and has been sinking gradually. Mr. Walkley and family left here in 1900, and he died on November 16th of that year. He usually wore a soft, felt, clerical hat, as described. After his death his widow lived mostly in London, but for the last year or two she has lived with relatives about six miles from here, and twelve from where the medium lives. They are quiet-living people, not prominent in any way ; and they have no association with spiritualism. I feel sure that Mr. Wilkinson had no knowledge of them, for though he once got an impression that I "had known some people called Walker," which I said was true if the name were Walkley, I gave no details. See sitting of December 14th, 1914, and A. W.'s letter of October 1st, 1915, pp. 65, 77.]

A. W. : If I saw a photo of that young man I should know him. That old woman will die soon.

J. A. H. : She is dead now.

A. W. : Indeed ! It is somebody very old and feeble, over eighty ; been going gradually.

That young man, his mother was related to your mother. He hasn't been gone long. He has a woman with him, whose form is less ; age sixty or sixty-three, rather sparely built, hair smooth, oval face, rather fragile. Her dress shines. She has gone since him  
[Unrecognized.]



I wish I could get that young man's name. I am interested. He looks thoughtful. Not more than twenty. Have you known somebody who lived at Manchester ?

J. A. H. : I don't think so.

A. W. : I am taken to Manchester with some young man, to a suburban place outside Manchester, west of Manchester. Do you know anything of Hermiston ? [Sounded like that : the name is unknown to me.]

J. A. H. : No.

A. W. : There's somebody who must have lived at Manchester, but must have passed away.

I am mixed up with this young man with the woman with him. Was your mother's name Mary ?

J. A. H. : Yes.

A. W. : That young man is related to you through her.

There is a man with a red face—a big, fleshy man. He wore a kind of apron, a heavy apron, to cover his clothes. May have worn it at his work.

J. A. H. : That's right. Any name ?

A. W. [After pause] : That young man is nearer you. You must have known him. As he approaches you there are reddish lines reaching out to you from him. These perhaps indicate relationship. He has not been before.

[Pause.]

That young man's surname begins with H, but it isn't Hill. He seems to be making great efforts to tell me more, but I can't get it. Perhaps he will do better next time. He is a big, tall young man. Died perhaps of consumption. That woman that I saw, there is a tall old man with her ; eighty, I should think ; very old man. She is standing by him ; standing under

his arm so to speak. [Medium held his arm straight out sidewise.] There's a lot all together in a group. He looks weather-beaten in his face; looks hearty. Somebody belonging to her.

[My mother and her father, probably, both described and named before. He died at eighty-one, after a very healthy life. Was tall and ruddy-faced.]

You'll excuse me. [Goes over to my coat and sits on stool near it.]

The form of that young man was built up here. I wish I could get more from him. He died after a quick consumption. He belongs to your family.

Can't get any more. [Goes back to his chair.]

[Pause.]

There is some man here—sixty-five or sixty-six. He makes me feel big and corpulent. James, or Bannister, perhaps another name.

J. A. H.: Right for several folk.

[Medium has named Mary Bannister before—maiden name of paternal grandmother of my father, Bannister Hill, whose name also I think W. knows. Also a James Bannister has been mentioned as a remote ancestor, probably true, but I cannot verify. My father was stout in middle life.]

A. W.: Makes me feel weighty. Same man who had the apron on. He is rolling something over: pulling cloth over. Might be a tailor, looking cloth over. But tailors don't wear aprons. Did somebody pass away in 1897?

J. A. H.: Very nearly then, but not quite. I know who it is.

A. W.: I have a feeling of eighteen or nineteen years back.

J. A. H.: Right. I want to hear from him. Are they feeling all right and happy over there?

A. W.: I never get any other feeling from them. Never anything unpleasant or uncanny, except sometimes when I feel the disease they died of.

Have you had any intimation from the woman of the glove?

[See previous sittings.]

J. A. H.: No; I wish we could hear from her.

[Pause.]

[The red-faced, stout man with an "apron" on (really a "checker brat" or overall), is my father, Bannister Hill; and the pulling over of cloth is about the best possible identifying touch. As Wilkinson said this he made movements with his hands exactly reproducing the unmistakable hand and finger movements employed in throwing over the "flipes" of a piece of cloth when the taker-in is examining it for weaving-faults. He died in October, 1898, aged sixty-six.

See Sitting 4, November 19th, 1915, p. 80.]

A. W.: This big man with the full face must have known a man named Charlton, a younger man. This man is just waking up. He didn't quite believe he was dead. I feel that he would be an impulsive man. He would swear when things went wrong. Hot-headed. Middle life. A proud man. He has been wandering about a while. Been gone some time.

[Pause.]

His influence is very authoritative. Almost an arrogant man in some ways.

There's somebody in the body that he wants to approach—a woman. His object is to reach her.



J. A. H.: What does he want doing about her?

[No answer.]

A. W.: He had money. He has not manifested here before. He was one who would want to rush through fire and water to get at what he wanted.

He had a kind of knowledge of the surroundings.

[A Mr. Charlton, of this neighbourhood, died a few years ago. The description is correct, though "middle life" is perhaps a little too young. I think he would be about sixty; but he was spare and active until his last illness, and did not look his age. He was rather impulsive and on occasion profane; but a very good sort. His widow is left rather lonely. I never knew him "to speak to," but probably he knew me by sight, as I knew him.

He was younger than my father, and was known to him, as said.]

A. W.: Have you known someone named Edmund?

J. A. H.: Yes. [Thinking of Edmund Stott, local draper who died a few years ago.]

A. W.: Man of seventy or seventy-three, this Edmund. Did not die about here; I am taken away. He went to Morecambe. Might have lived at Morecambe. Might have lived or died there. Tall, fairly straight, full beard and on cheeks, big nose, well-dressed, black, very tidy. Name Edmund, biggish-bodied man, good physique.

[Would fit Edmund Stott, except that I feel sure he died at home.]

[Pause.]

A. W.: I smell a smell of brewing—beer. Malt, as if you were passing a brewery. A nice smell. But it's

quite different from those flowers. [Pointing to flowers on the table.] It's malt.

[W. looked puzzled, so I helped a little.]

J. A. H.: No brewers among my relatives, but there is a connexion between brewing and Mr. Charlton.

[He was associated with a brewery company.]

A. W.: That Charlton's influence won't leave me. He knew somebody called William. It is a bit fragmentary, but they did not just agree about something. There is a divergence of opinion. Whether it is religion, I don't know. He has a big, thick stick; not a walking-stick—it is too thick. He has a very light-coloured suit on, kind of sporting outfit. He is a new influence, not manifested here before. Very impulsive. [Clairvoyance ended here. I told him nothing as to how far he had been correct.]

[Mr. Charlton and a relative of mine named William knew each other rather well. I don't know of any disagreement between them, but in religion and politics they were perhaps rather far apart. Mr. Charlton liked very light-coloured suits for summer, usually light grey tweeds. The thick stick is unrecognized, though I have an impression that I have seen him with fishing tackle, so it may be a jointed rod, folded up. It is correct that this is his first appearance at a sitting of mine. I have no reason to think that Wilkinson had ever heard of him, for he lived a very retired life.]

Note: April 27th, 1916.—I have to-day asked my relative, and he says that Mr. Charlton and he never discussed politics or religion, and never disagreed about anything in conversation. He liked Mr. Charlton, and got on excellently with

him. But they met only casually, usually in tram-cars. See *ante*, pp. 30-33, for further comment.]

Note: March 7th, 1916.—To-night's local papers announce the death of Mr. Charlton's younger brother. He "had not been well for some time," and had been to London to see a specialist a week before his death. I knew of his existence, but had not heard he was ill; in fact, I had not heard him mentioned for some years. I did not know him, even by sight. He lived in another town, fifteen miles away, and twenty from where Wilkinson lives. I do not think the latter ever visits that particular small town, and I do not think he knew anything of either of the two brothers.

It looks as if Mr. Charlton had come to meet his brother, as Mr. Leather came to meet his friend Drayton, and as Mr. Walkley came to meet his widow.

Note: March 19th, 1916.—In the early part of this sitting there is a reference to some "Driver"; later, a description of an Edmund, which fits Edmund Stott, though the latter died at home. In my sitting of December 14th, 1914 [p. 66], there was said, "Some man named Driver here." (Unrecognized.)

Yesterday, March 18th, 1916, after re-reading these reports, I for the first time associated the Driver and the Edmund, and dimly thought the name was real. After reflection I felt almost, but not quite, sure that an Edmund Driver had tenanted a local hotel, leaving about twenty years ago. On inquiry I find that this is so; but I cannot ascertain where he died. Either his widow and family moved soon after his death, or they went before. I am making inquiry, also about his personal appearance, of which I remember nothing.

In those days there was a malt-kiln behind and belonging to that hotel, so the malt smell may refer



to Edmund, not to Mr. Charlton. The kiln has long been done away with, and there is now a laundry there.

Note: March 26th, 1916.—I have asked a friend to-day about Edmund Driver, whom he remembers well. He says the description fits E. D. much more closely than E. Stott. He could not be very sure about a specially large nose, but all the other details are markedly correct, except that he feels sure E. D. died at the hotel here, not at Morecambe. (See pp. 43-47 for further details.)

My informant says that in Driver's time the owners *brewed* in the adjoining building, which was afterwards a malt-kiln and is now a laundry. The smell of malt and brewing seems therefore specially applicable to Edmund Driver; he was associated with these things much more closely than Mr. Charlton was, the latter having no immediate personal touch with them.

## SITTING 7

*Wednesday, April 12th, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

W. arrived 2.25 p.m., and we talked about the war, the weather, and his influenza and neuralgia, which have kept him at home the last few weeks. He is still not looking well, and I rather thought the sitting was going to be a blank, for he got no clairvoyance till 2.55.

Then :

A. W.: There is a little old woman at the back of you. Now she comes by the bedside. She has a lace thing round her shoulders; black, a lacy thing.

There is also something on her head, something which comes down at the sides. A rather slim little woman; big nose. I can see her face plainly. No colour. A very old woman. The lace thing makes her look dressy. Something white at front of her neck.

[Good for my grandmother Hey, who has been described by A. W. before. I should hardly call her slim, though. But she was not stout—was spare and active, but average breadth of shoulder, I should say. The big nose and the cap with sides, and I think the black lace shawl, are exactly true.]

There is somebody called Jonas connected with her. She was a dainty woman in dress and manner; not fussy, but dainty. I have an impression of a Jonas connected with her. That thing about her head is silk; a good quality thing. A very old person, but not very drawn in features. Moves slowly at the side of the bed. She is some time back.

[All true. She had a brother Jonas, named and described before. She died in 1890, aged eighty-one.]

Have you known somebody named Jowett?

J. A. H.: Yes. I wish you could get something about a Jowett you saw here before. I can't quite make out who it was. [See sitting of January 15th, 1915, p. 69.]

[Pause.]

A. W.: There is some woman named Betty Tranter. Some Tranter connected with this Betty. Somebody connected with your family some years back. Betty Tranter. Biggish woman. Good way back.

Have you known anybody named Verity?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: I don't know whether it is a surname or

not. You may not have known him intimately. It is some way back. A tallish, biggish man. Betty is connected with him.

J. A. H.: Quite right. I knew a Verity Tranter. Betty is perhaps his wife. I don't know her name.

A. W.: He was a strong personality. Betty is connected with him, and I think they know your people. Verity is a funny name—I have never known or heard of anybody called that. I think he would leave some money and there was trouble about it. Perhaps litigation. Not lately, but there was trouble about something he left behind.

[Verity Tranter was a local butcher and farmer, who died about a dozen years ago. I called sometimes to order meat, but usually saw his wife. I doubt whether I ever had any talk with him, but I knew him well by sight, as he no doubt knew me; for he was probably often in the shop when I passed. He was a big, strong man. I think his wife is alive, but they have left this district and I do not know where they are, but will try to ascertain. I doubt whether he left much money. I know of no litigation or trouble, but will try to find out. See sitting of January 19th, 1916 (p. 84), for an apparent Tranter attempt.

Note: October 9th, 1916.—I find that there may be a slight family connexion; there was a Betty Tranter nearly a hundred years ago, and her sister married a Hey who was probably related to my mother. I find also that there is some relevance in the statement about money-disputes in relation to Verity Tranter.]

Did you ever know a woman with a wood leg? Tall, elderly; a wood foot or leg.



J. A. H.: I think I know who it is. Can you get her name? She has been before.

A. W. I could hear the thud on the floor. [W. here got up and limped about, thudding with his right foot.] You would know this woman with the leg when you were a boy. She has been gone on many years. I feel as if she takes me somewhere where she lived. It is a local connexion; I don't get far away.

[Probably Emma Steeton. See my sitting of January 15th, 1915, pp. 70, 73, 77. She lived about half a mile from here. It is about thirty years since she died, I should think.] Have you had a friend named Burroughs?

J. A. H.: No, I think not.

[Note: February 23rd, 1917.—But the name was familiar to me, and at a sitting held while these sheets were going through the press there were further developments indicating, though not yet very clearly, a family very well known to us.]

It isn't that woman's name, I think.

Somebody called Burns; I get a name Burns. These names come into my head.

J. A. H.: That may be right; I have known some Burnses.

A. W.: Burns and Burroughs.

This woman with the wood leg must have had a good voice and could sing. She is showing me some hymn-books; she was interested in hymn-books and music.

[No recollection, but possible enough. She was a widow, poor, lived alone in a cottage near our then home. She attended the Wesleyan Chapel a couple of hundred yards from her home.

The hymn-books may be a reference to that, rather than to music; as in the Moses Young incident in sitting of January 15th, 1915, pp. 68, 69.]

Have you ever known anybody called Helen Torrington?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: Somebody—a man—is in trouble.

She is a middle-aged woman, full figure. I call them middle-aged up to sixty or so; she might be sixty-four. Helen (emphasizing the aspirate). Begins with H. A man away from here is in trouble. She draws me in contact with some man away from here. He has a lot of care, and there is some cause for alarm. There is going to be trouble about this man in the body. Has this woman a son, away from here?

J. A. H.: Yes. He is a friend of mine.

A. W.: Is he in trouble?

J. A. H.: Well, trade is bad.

A. W.: He is intending doing something which he ought not to do. He is businesslike. There is something looming over him which is not good.

J. A. H.: Is there anything we can do?

A. W.: He should hold on; stick to it. He should hold on to whatever it is, tenaciously. There has been trouble in his mind. As if he was going to get quit of it. Wherever he is it is a very busy place; lots of work. An atmosphere that is exciting and busy. That woman thinks a great deal of this man. Thought a lot of him when living, too.

[Extremely appropriate to an old friend of mine, who has lived in America since 1901. His business has suffered owing to the war, and he has had great trouble—bereavement, etc.—during the

last few years. I have no reason to think that A. W. has any normally-acquired knowledge of him or his family. Mrs. Torrington was named, and said to be present, at my sitting of December 14th, 1914 (p. 62), but I said nothing except that I knew who it was. See also p. 80.

Later: I sent the message, and it is applicable. He was thinking of relinquishing certain business enterprises. I think he has now decided to "stick." The prediction of trouble looming over him was correct in another way, for, soon after the date of the sitting, his wife was seriously ill. Operation was proposed, but the doctors disagreed as to the ailment, so their advice was disregarded and the patient recovered. It may be that the advice to "hold on" was in reference to this.]

[Pause.]

I haven't seen that young man who came before.

[See last sitting, February 17th, 1916.]

J. A. H.: I wish he would come.

A. W.: Before I started off to come here I saw an apparition of a man, and he seemed to come in front of me. It was that man named Verity. I never heard of such a man before. Was he a Churchman?

J. A. H.: Probably, if he was anything.

Clairvoyance ended. I asked A. W. if the name "Hermiston" was known to him—see sitting of February 17th, 1916, p. 92—and he said, "No, but there is an Urmston near Manchester, between there and Warrington. I have never got off there, and know it only by seeing it from the train. A man lives there who used to live at Ovenden, near Halifax. . . ." Wilkinson gave me this gentleman's name, and the surname is the same as that of some of my relatives



on my mother's side. I doubt whether he can be a connexion, but, if he is, there is sense in the mention of Hermiston (for Urmston, which the medium no doubt said, but which, being unknown to me, was heard as Hermiston, this name—a fictitious one, I think—being familiar to me in Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston*).

After desultory talk, Wilkinson left at 3.35.

The foregoing was written on Thursday, April 13th, 1916; the report part being copied from my verbatim shorthand notes taken at the time.

## SITTING 8

*Wednesday, April 19th, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

Mr. Wilkinson arrived at 2.25 p.m. After preliminary remarks about the weather, he said:

Before I came, while I was writing a letter, I saw a medium-sized woman, with very white hair. An apparition, you know. She was carrying a very big book, heavily bound, with gilt edges; almost as heavy as she could carry. I couldn't see the lettering on it; it might be a Bible or a big history-book, or something like that. I couldn't tell who she was.

J. A. H.: Perhaps somebody who is coming here this afternoon, as in the case of that man last time.

A. W.: That's what I thought; that's why I mention it.

[But I don't know that it had any special appropriateness to any of those who were afterwards described.]

J. A. H. : Here is another glove which belonged to that friend of mine. [Giving it to him.]

A. W. [after handling it for about a minute]: I can see a chapel. There is a gallery; I feel I am in the gallery, looking down into the area. I can see the area; it is biggish, quite a large place. There is a man in the pulpit, a tallish man with a big nose and long face. He is preaching. It passes before me so plainly.

I am in the area of the chapel, at the back. Part of the gallery is over my head. This has come with the glove. There are lots of people in that place. Wherever can that be, I wonder?

[I did not speak, being busy getting it all down. Wilkinson had reeled this off at unusual speed and with great conviction.]

That man in the pulpit has a big nose. He isn't a big man, though fairly tall. Where this woman tries to take me is not far in from the door of the church. Some place where she usually sat.

[Mrs. Napier was a Churchwoman. I have no knowledge as to what part of the church she sat in. It is perhaps noteworthy that in the parcel which she had wrapped up for me a few weeks before her death, and from which I took this glove, there was the prayer-book which she had habitually used for some time, though Wilkinson did not see it. Whether it was psychometry or impressions from her own surviving mind, the vision of the church was appropriate. I will try to ascertain where she sat, and the appearance of the usual preacher or preachers.]

This person must have been delicate for a long time. Stomach bad. Could not take heavy foods.

[Very true; she practically starved to death, owing to some growth. Not even fluid food possible for weeks before the end.]

I feel I am going on a long road. I have come to a house. It is not raised up like this one; it is more on the level as I enter it. I can see a clock and a pier-glass, gilt with embellished frame. A heavy clock on the mantel.

I am going upstairs, into a bedroom. I see a picture on the wall; a picture of a tall or tallish woman.

How long have you had this glove?

J. A. H.: About five months. [Six, I afterwards reckoned up.]

A. W.: You don't know if this woman had a gold brooch, oblong shape, with a stone in it?

J. A. H.: I don't know.

A. W.: I am impressed to put my hand here [front of neck]. I feel a brooch with a hard stone. She would be rather partial to this brooch; would only wear it occasionally. She had a bad stomach.

That picture is not a painted picture; it is an engraving—steel engraving, I expect. It looks like a woman. Not so big a room as this. [Will try to ascertain about picture, etc.] She must have been a thin person. [Latterly, yes, but not when well.] Sharp, quick, nervy, somewhat impulsive manner. Whoever this person liked, she would like intensely. [True and characteristic.] She must have been very ill with the stomach.

J. A. H.: Yes, she was.

A. W.: Have you known a woman who kept a school? Middle-aged, or a bit over. Rather spare and lady-like. She had children to deal with.

J. A. H.: Yes, I have known several.



A. W.: She has a black dress—I think it is silk, trimmed with black and white figured stuff. Her hair is a little wiry, and sticks out at the sides. Have you known somebody named Hanson? She must have been at a school; she is holding up a book like a copy-book. Connected with a school.

J. A. H.: She has been before.

A. W.: Has she? I didn't remember that.

J. A. H.: I wish we could make out who she is. Apparently it is someone who has known me. I wonder *where* she was.

A. W.: She lived not far away from here, I think. I feel linked up locally. It may be that somebody belonging to her has been known to you.

Hannah or Annie Hanson. Some time back. It is some time since she died. She has nothing to do with this glove [which A. W. had put down and now picked up again]. Do you know if she has a daughter? [I *think* the glove-owner was meant.]

J. A. H.: No, she had no children.

A. W.: There is some young woman connected with this glove, twenty-two or twenty-three. Somebody very jolly and gay, cheerful.

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: I feel a cheerfulness. She is living, and was about this woman. She did something for her. She is a very nice, refined person. Tactful: the right person. Quite young: lot younger than me.

[Probably true or fairly so of Mrs. Napier's sister, who lived with her and did much for her in her illness. But she is a little more than twenty-three, I think: perhaps thirty. Wilkinson is thirty-eight.]

This woman had some kind of thing that she had worked, to put on her. Perhaps a dressing-gown. It

is white or nearly white, with fancy work, stitched. She made it with her own fingers, and would be sewing at it for some time. White flannel or some fine material, not cotton or linen, I think. All the front is worked very prettily.

I feel that she had found something before she was very ill, something that had made her very pleased and gratified, as if something had happened, quite unusual, very pleasant to her, and it had continued with her, continued to be a pleasure to her. Perhaps she had some money left, but I am only guessing that, from the feeling.

[And he said it hesitatingly, as if he had a feeling that it was a wrong guess. It is true that she had a good income left by her husband, but I doubt whether this is what was meant. I am not sure, but I think she may be meaning the knowledge of psychical matters and literature, which she obtained from 1905 onwards, and which I know was a great help and comfort and pleasure to her, explaining certain experiences of her own. I know nothing of the fancy-work thing, but will inquire.]

This lady who was ill was very fond of this young woman. Perhaps the white thing was something she gave her. Perhaps some under-garment.

There is a man called Joseph across the room there—a faint outline. A very big man, corpulent, broad, full features, a little beard on the chin, not much on the cheeks. Fresh colour. Not bald, but hair thin and grey. A very healthy man. Grey clothes. I can see his nose and the colour in his face. About sixty or sixty-two.

[Unrecognized: but see later.]

Have you known somebody called Yewton? I am in a square yard. I can smell hay. Yewton.

J. A. H.: Yewton is a farm. [Here I remembered that a Joseph West once lived there, before my time. Will inquire about his appearance.]

A. W.: Indeed. I once knew a Mr. Yewton, but I never heard of a place of that name.

[He has, but has probably forgotten; for he got the name before, at my sitting of January 15th, 1915, and I told him it was a farm. It has not been mentioned since. See pp. 72, 73.]

The stout man has brought that farm. He looks like a farmer. His cheeks were as red as an apple. They quite shone.

I have a feeling I might write [i.e. automatically; takes paper and pencil].

You don't know anybody called John Thomas Hanson? [Writes something, afterwards found to be this name. The John is quite different from Wilkinson's writing; the Thomas is a mixture; and Hanson is in his own hand.]

J. A. H.: No, I don't remember.

A. W.: He must be somebody connected with that woman Hanson.

Do you know if something tragic happened at Yewton? A long time back.

J. A. H.: I don't know, but I can find out.

A. W.: I think something happened there a long time back.

A lot of names come into my mind, and they may mean nothing.

J. A. H.: Tell me anything that comes, because sometimes it turns out right, though I may not recognize it at the time.



A. W.: Well, there seems to be somebody called Armitage. Tallish, young. I can't see his head or face, but he seems tall. About thirty.

J. A. H.: I think he has been before.

A. W.: I smell something—wool, oily stuff. He might work among wool.

[I thought at first of Arthur Armitage, whom Wilkinson named at sitting of July 21st, 1914, and whom I knew slightly. He died about 1902. But I think he worked mostly in his father's shop, though I believe he worked in a weaving or spinning mill occasionally. See p. 60.]

Have you had something to do with a man in middle life, a good-looking man, called Lethbridge?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: This man is in the body. You might be having a money transaction with him.

J. A. H.: Very likely.

A. W.: A man all about money; well-dressed; been in his business a long time.

J. A. H.: I know him. Who has come connected with him?

A. W.: Have you been about him lately?

J. A. H.: No. It may be a prediction.

A. W.: I think he studies finance a lot. There is somebody belonging to you that knows him better than you do, perhaps. Has this man been married twice?

J. A. H.: Yes. Has his first wife come?

A. W.: I don't know.

[A Mr. Lethbridge is a bank manager, and has had that position for many years—twenty or more. I anticipate no direct financial transaction with him, but I have recently been indirectly associated with him, for the first time, in a matter concerning

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finance. His first wife knew me slightly, as does also his second. I have no reason to believe that the medium has ever heard of him.]

It's very funny—I can't get away from that school.

At that farm place, a very long time since, some man lost his life. They are trying to show me something. Some old person would be required to tell about this. I dare say if I were at the place I could tell more.

J. A. H.: I can get to know.

A. W.: I can see a man very plainly; tall; like a man who would work at a quarry, by the clothes he wears. Prime of life—forty-eight or fifty. His name was Jim Hey. He must have died very suddenly. Something happened and he died very suddenly. I am inclined to think something happened to him.

J. A. H.: Murder, do you think?

A. W.: No; accident, I should say. Jim Hey. A strong, healthy man. Either a carter or a quarryman.

[Pause.]

Is there a place called Levensley? This man was associated with Levensley.

J. A. H.: Yes, I know such a place.

A. W.: Was there a Joe Robinson?

J. A. H.: Not that I remember.

A. W.: Is Levensley a farm?

J. A. H.: Both a farm and a house.

A. W.: Levensley is connected with Jim Hey, I think. He probably had some accident.

[I know no Jim Hey, but will inquire. My maternal grandfather's name was Hey, but I think he had no brother. Still, there are other local Heys, unrelated or very distantly related. Levensley is, like Yewton—but in quite a different

locality—an outlying farm with a very good house. There are perhaps also a few cottages called Levensley in a general way. It is unlikely that the medium knew the name; I have never mentioned it to him, and it is a long way from the main road, and not near any public road. It is about a mile from here. I doubt whether Wilkinson has ever been near it.]

[April 23rd, 1916.—A friend tells me to-day that a Jim Hey, known as “Deaf Jim,” a publican and horse-dealer, once lived at the Junction Inn, near Yewton, but that is all he knows. Later: See Sitting 9, June 5th, 1916.]

There is somebody here called Bannister—William Bannister. Such a big man; a long way back, before you were born. He knows about Jim Hey.

[The Bannisters — my grandfather Hill’s mother’s people—lived at Kildwick, ten miles away. There was a William, I find, but I cannot ascertain much about him.]

I see big draught horses. This William Bannister has been dead a long time. He would be oldish but not old, and he had either got lamed or walked lame because of some ailment, not because of age. He had to use a stick, couldn’t walk very well. Rather strange, I have the impression that William Bannister had something to do with your grandfather on your father’s side. He is a member of your grandfather’s family on your father’s side.

[He might be an uncle of my grandfather Hill, whose mother’s maiden name was Bannister. I will try to ascertain, but it will be difficult. We have lost sight of them, if any are left.]  
Had your mother a cousin named Ishmael?



J. A. H.: She had an *uncle* of that name.

A. W.: I have a feeling that he was a cousin of your mother's; long dead. There was some little variance between this man's family and hers. Some little disagreement. He was a cousin, I think.

[Rather indefinite, but there was an Ishmael, not a first cousin, who was related to my mother. But it is all too vague to be evidential.]

Was your grandmother named Mary?

J. A. H.: Yes. [Named and described before, if mother's mother.]

A. W.: She must have lived to be very old, and had a lot of children.

[About eighty-one, but only five children, I think.]

Do you know if somebody has a long case clock belonging to her?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: A curious thing, this woman makes me feel I want to say, "I never had a headache in my life." [Medium laughs, repeating it. She certainly was a remarkably healthy woman, so far as we remember; very active and wiry. I don't remember that she was ever ill until she died of old age.]

J. A. H.: That sounds like her.

[Note: April 21st, 1916.—I am told by relatives who knew her in earlier days that she *had* "sick headaches" up to the age of fifty.]

A. W.: I see a letter dropping down on you. There is a letter coming to you from some man—probably London. It will not exactly disquiet you, but it will cause you to feel anxious.

Have you a friend in London who is not well?

J. A. H.: Yes. [Thinking of a Mrs. Arnold.]

A. W.: You might write. It would be a good thing to write to the friend.

Somebody living in London, I think. I feel a woman's hand on my head—I feel the ring. It is someone on the other side. This man in the body—no doubt connected with her—is either ill or in trouble.

I shall be very surprised if you don't hear from some man in London. He is either there now or going to be there.

Have you had an idea or suggestion to lend somebody some money?

J. A. H.: No; no idea of anything of the kind.

A. W.: I don't think I should do it. It would not be effectual in what it was meant to do. It would not prove effective.

There are a lot of phantom forms about.

There is some woman called Elizabeth. She couldn't swallow very well, I think she has to do with that old lady who never had a headache in her life. Not so old as Mary. Black dress, black bonnet. Elizabeth. Belongs to the old lady. A long time ill. She couldn't swallow. Might have choked. Related to the old woman, I think.

[No relative Elizabeth known to us. But see later.]

I do feel baffled about that woman who had to do with a school. She ought to be able to tell where she was.

J. A. H.: I will make inquiries. I know the head teachers of the Thornton schools for a long way back, but not the names of all the assistants. And I can't remember ever knowing a woman named Hanson. But we shall see.

Clairvoyance ended. The medium seemed to have

been in particularly good form, physically and psychically; had said he was feeling much better in health. He went on so fast that I had difficulty in keeping up with him, but just managed it. There are pauses between the bursts, which enable me to overtake him if I get a few words behind. After five minutes of general talk, he left at 3.45 to walk to Causeway Foot, as it was fine.

I know of no man friend in London who is likely to be ill or in trouble, and it is very unlikely that anyone will try to borrow money from me. Yet Wilkinson seemed very sure of the letter from the London friend who is ill or in trouble, and I took it that he is to be the would-be borrower.

The foregoing was written out to-day, Thursday, April 20th, 1916. The medium's statements, and my remarks to him, are copied from verbatim notes taken at the time.

Note: May 4th, 1916.—I hear to-day from Mrs. Napier's sister, who informs me as follows:

They (Mrs. N. and sister) always sat at the back of the church, both at Bromwell, where they lived for the last few years, and at Maesbury, where they lived previously. At the latter place there was no gallery

[Wilkinson's insistence on the gallery—feeling himself in it, etc.—may have been purposed, to show that the Bromwell church was meant.]

The vicar at the Bromwell church has "a very prominent nose and long face." He visited Mrs. Napier during her last illness.

Mrs. Napier's house was in Victoria Road, which is "not very" long. The ground floor is nearly on a level with the road, only two steps at the front door, after a path or drive. It is thus true that it is "not



raised up like this one," for we have fifteen steps, in different places, and a slope-up garden path. I have never seen Mrs. Napier's Bromwell house, nor any photograph of it; and I do not remember hearing any description of its elevation from the road. There was a pier-glass in the drawing-room and a heavy clock in the dining-room. But these are certainties in nearly any house. The pier-glass was in the dining-room at one time.

On the wall of Mrs. Napier's bedroom there was a small photograph of herself. She was tall—5 ft. 10½ in. No engraving. The room seems to have been smaller than this one—i.e. than the room in which the sitting took place—for I am told it was "rather small," and had no bay-window. The room in which the sitting took place is over fifteen feet square, without reckoning a large bay-window.

Nothing known about the brooch.

The sister is a very cheerful young lady, usually; a very suitable companion for Mrs. Napier, who was very fond of her.

Nothing known about the worked garment. Mrs. Napier did very little fancy work. My sister once knitted and gave her a white wool waistcoat, with pink or blue ribbons—very pretty. Just possibly she was referring to this, and the medium misunderstood. But of course I do not lay stress on this. The incident must be regarded as non-evidential.

As to the Elizabeth connected with my grandmother Hey, a Purcell cousin of mine remembers quite well an Elizabeth Ogden who was some relative of our grandmother Hey's—perhaps cousin—and with whom she was friendly. He feels almost sure that this Elizabeth had something the matter with her throat; but we

cannot ascertain. She lived a distance away, and we are not in touch with surviving members of the family.

Note: May 3rd, 1916.—I have asked a local friend and former teacher whether she has ever known a woman named Hanson connected with a school, and she informs me that a Mr. and Mrs. Hanson were at one time caretakers of the school at which she (my informant) then taught, and at which a son of the Hansons also taught. She did not know them well, and never knew their Christian names. Mrs. Hanson became ill, and they left this locality some years ago. She has heard that Mrs. Hanson is now dead, but does not know where they went or where the surviving members of the family now are.

Sunday, May 7th, 1916.—To-day I have seen another teacher who is still at that school. She says that Mrs. Hanson was of medium height, and had grey hair which stuck out at the sides; was probably nice-looking when younger and in good health (see Sitting, Jan. 15, 1915, pp. 70, 73). Never saw her "dressed up," so cannot say about the black silk dress and ladylike appearance. Thinks she was fairly plump when they came here, but she became spare. Was middle-aged to elderly. Left this part about six years ago; they were not local people, and were not here long. Knows no Christian names, but will try to ascertain or will try to learn where they went; somewhere in Yorkshire, she thinks, not very far away.

I never knew any of these Hansons, even by sight, and it is unlikely—though possible—that they knew me, though they probably knew of me; particularly the teacher son, who would meet daily several people who know our family well. The school and the cottage where the Hansons lived are a few hundred yards

from here, but not on the main road. It is in fact a private road.

Note: Sunday, May 21st, 1916.—To-day I hear that the names of Mr. and Mrs. Hanson were John and Martha; so the "Hannah or Annie" seems wrong. But it is a curious thing that the man of whom inquiry was made said first: "Let me see; I forget Mrs. Hanson's name. Some ordinary name—perhaps Hannah. No, I think not Hannah." Apparently he now finds it to have been Martha, but it is queer that, without any suggestion, he first thought it was Hannah, for he was told nothing whatever of my sittings, and did not know why his questioner wanted the name. It seems possible that Mrs. Hanson may have had two names, one of them Hannah; but I doubt whether I can ascertain. I do not know where her body is buried, or **where** she died. So the name must be counted as **wrong**, though the surname and description are correct enough to suggest irresistibly a certain woman whom I had never heard of, and who, so far as my belief goes, was equally unknown to the medium. It is noteworthy that it was never said that she was a teacher, though I jumped to that conclusion, quite wrongly and unjustifiably. She was "connected with a school," "kept a school," "had to do with children," etc., all of which are true; and these inevitably suggest a teacher; yet though this must almost certainly have been the inference of Mr. Wilkinson's normal mind, he consistently avoided the mistake. This seems a slight but noteworthy indication of the probability of some genuinely external mind being in operation, and giving him the impressions.

The prediction about the London letter and borrower has not been fulfilled, I am glad to say.



SITTING 9

*Monday, June 5th, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

Medium arrived 2.30 p.m., and after preliminary conversation about his recent tours, I handed him the same glove of Mrs. Napier's as before.

A. W.: This person ought to be able to come by this time.

J. A. H.: Yes, it looks so.

A. W.: Some of these people seem able to come without effort, and others make great efforts and cannot manifest.

There is an influence about you of a woman, middle-aged, rather tall and pale, dark. Not old. She has a dress that shines, like silk. I am impressed that her name was Ingham, or that somebody belonging to her was called Ingham. She is not lately dead; she has been gone some time. Her name would be Ingham. Do you know somebody of that name who used to be a good singer? I hear singing. It isn't this woman, but I am brought into an atmosphere of singing. There is somebody still living, connected with her, who is a good singer. You may come across them.

J. A. H.: I don't remember anybody at the moment.

A. W.: Some lady has come with her—an old lady called Walker.

[Here I thought of the Mrs. Walkley, of sitting of February 17th, 1916, p. 91.]

Quite an old person, with head bent forward, a lace thing about her shoulders and a white cap on her head.

[Correct for Mrs. Walkley.]

These two have come together, as if they knew

each other. There is something mixed up between them.

[Mrs. Ingham unrecognized, but I found two hours afterwards, on reading the report to my sister, that she formerly knew a Mrs. Ingham, who was more or less a friend of Mrs. Walkley's. The description seems to be not very good, for my sister remembers Mrs. Ingham as a fine-looking woman with good colour. But it is long since she died, and memory is uncertain.]

There is a man here called James Hill, a big man, stout, standing by that chair, quite a solid form. Fair complexion, a bit sandy. I am impressed that his name is James Hill. It isn't that I am influenced by thinking of your name; the impression is quite clear. This man seems to me a heavy man; corpulent, not a good walker; not infirm exactly, but would be rather heavy on his feet. Fresh colour in face. His clothes are coloured, not black. Trousers are a different colour from coat and vest. Grey jacket and vest, brown trousers. That man used to have a horse and trap; not a big vehicle, horse not a heavy horse. That is a good way back, somebody elderly when you were young. He is brought here by somebody belonging to you.

[A distant relative named James Hill died a few weeks ago. He lived and died some miles from here, and not in the medium's direction. I never knew him, but my brother and sister did; they say he was tall and large-framed, but certainly not stout. He was a little over eighty, but thus was hardly elderly when I was young, unless "young" means up to thirty or so. Nothing known about a horse and trap, though this may just possibly be correct. But on the whole the

description does not fit. Perhaps it is an ancestor or collateral farther back.]

That woman comes back—that woman called Ingham. She has once lived about you; but not at the time of her death. She died away from here. She is beckoning me. I feel that she knew your mother. I am impressed to say that.

[True.]

[Wilkinson had been handling the glove off and on from the beginning, but nothing relevant to the owner had appeared, so I now said: "Better put that glove down; we seem on another tack." He accordingly did so.]

This woman in question, it is not a great way off where she has lived. It isn't just about here. I can see lots of people sitting together in a seat as if in a church. That makes me wonder if this woman had gone to the same church as your mother. That is my own assumption.

[It is true of Mrs. Ingham; she sat three pews behind us.]

There is a young man here. He is tall—very tall, fairly fine build, not really thin. A young man. He died very suddenly. He might have had his head bad. Something happened to him very suddenly. He has a grey suit on, and is very smart. A very tall young man. Do you know, I have an impression that this young man was not just balanced before he died? Perhaps an illness brought it on. I feel as if something of an untoward nature had overtaken him, and he had gone suddenly. I shouldn't wonder if this man did something that he shouldn't have done. I have a sensation of violence; it is very unpleasant. I don't think I have seen that young man here before.



J. A. H. : I wish we could get his name.

A. W. : I feel that his death was unusual—almost tragic. This is not something that has happened lately. He has been gone some time ; I can't tell how long, but it is not beyond your time of recollection. A few years back, maybe.

J. A. H. : I think I know who it is.

[A distant relative came to a tragic end about six years ago. He would be in the twenties. He dressed well but not excessively so. Height about 5 ft. 8 in., which is not "very tall." But Wilkinson is very short, and often seems to describe spirits as taller than they really were. Comparing with himself, 5 ft. 8 in. is tall.]

I am interested in this woman with a cap on. One is Mrs. Walker, and the other is Mrs. Ingham, I think. This Mrs. Walker would be a nice, mild-mannered woman ; refined, ladylike, by her appearance. She has not been dead very long. It seems kind of new to her.

[True of Mrs. Walkley. She had an exceptionally gentle manner. Died February 15th, 1916. See sitting of February 17th, 1916, p. 91.]

There is a young woman named Sarah Ann Hey, or Sarah Hey. She would pass away many years ago, twenty-four or twenty-five years old. There is an old lady with her named Mary, as if they knew each other well. The young woman's dress is very old-fashioned—pleated in the skirt, frilled. She is taller than the old woman. The latter is very old but very active. The young one has been passed on farther back than you will remember, judging by the style of her dress. She is connected with the old woman, whoever she is.

[Unrecognized. But the active old woman is probably my grandmother, Mary Hey—named and described before—who was exceptionally active until about eighty. There have been several Sarah Heys in our family, and one Sarah Ann Hey not closely connected, who died about the age mentioned. But the description is not exact enough for certainty.]

[Pause.]

That young man set off on the train to some place. I feel as if I were about a train. This is the young man that something happened to. Whether he went away I don't know; but something happened to him, away from his home. You won't let this worry you? I don't want to say anything that would worry you.

J. A. H.: No; it will not worry me at all. I think I know who it is.

[My distant relative mentioned was killed on the railway, a few miles from his home.]

A. W.: This young woman has been gone so long that you may need to make inquiries to find out who she is. But she is connected up with your family.

Did you know anything about that man with the horse and trap?

J. A. H.: I don't remember just now, but it may be all right.

A. W.: I am impressed that that *young* man will come again. As if somebody had brought him. I can't get any more about him.

That man with the horse and cart must have belonged to your mother. He was connected with your mother. He had been a farmer, I think; his appearance looks like that.

[Certainly wrong, I think, and a curious example of confusion, for Wilkinson had given the name as James Hill, which obviously places him on my father's side. My mother had no Hill relatives that I know of, except through my father.]

That young woman—I think you have got a picture of her, with a “bustle” on. It looks like a miniature. She is of your family, and she comes with the old woman called Mary. It is your mother's side of the family that she belongs to.

[True, if it does turn out to be anybody. Will look up old photographs. But the “bustle” days are within my recollection, and I think no Sarah Hey that we know of has died so recently; moreover, in the earlier part of the sitting Wilkinson thought the dress indicated a period before my time.]

Have you had somebody here just lately, very lively? I feel somebody's presence, and as if they had been talking a lot and laughing. I feel very lively; not frivolous, but full of talk and fun. It was a man.

J. A. H.: I don't remember anybody of the sort lately. My brother called on Saturday, but there was no special liveliness: all cheerful, but no laughing that I remember.

A. W.: Does he often call?

J. A. H.: Yes, pretty often.

A. W.: It is somebody who is *not* a frequent caller. Perhaps somebody who is coming.

Has your brother two names?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: Has he lost somebody lately?

J. A. H.: Not by death, but a daughter of his has got married lately.



A. W.: Oh! is that all? Well, she isn't lost. But I see over your head a big 3. This 3 is in a kind of discoloured light. It is shaped like an egg, and there is speckled greyish matter round. Something to do with you, and the colour does not lend any enchantment. It is not an omen of danger, but more of a warning. Perhaps in three days or three weeks you ought to be specially careful about something.

You don't know if there was somebody born in 1861?

J. A. H.: No; nobody that I know of. My brother was born in 1858; that's the nearest I can think of.

A. W.: I see May, 1861. Something happened then—something rather important in your family. That was before you were born?

J. A. H.: Yes; a fair while before.

A. W.: Oh! I've something to tell you. You remember when I was here before, I got the name of a farm—I forget what it was. Well, when I was walking home from here I saw a bill stuck up [on the end of a public-house up the road, I think he said, but I missed getting that down] advertising the sale of cattle, etc., at a farm of that same name. I had never heard of it before.

J. A. H.: Was it Levensley?

A. W.: I don't remember. But I know the name on the bill was the name I had got here, and I thought it was perhaps just a prediction of something I was going to see.

[At the sitting of April 19th he got a Jim Hey and a Joe Robinson associated with Levensley both names unknown to me. But when he mentioned the poster I remembered that a Levensley farm, with stock, was recently sold, the owner, Thomas Robinson, having died. So the Joe

Robinson may have meaning. There are two farms at Levensley, and I was thinking of the other one, which I know best; hence my failure to see the appropriateness of the name Robinson.

Later, October 31st, 1916.—I find that Thomas Robinson's father was named Joseph, and was known as Joe; and he lived at that same farm, dying many years ago. So the medium was right. Probably both knew me by sight, but I did not know them. See p. 111.]

A. W.: Have you known somebody called Purcell?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W.: A young man of that name died. I am impressed that there was some young man. I am taken somewhere outside, to somebody who would know him. Near by. Purcell—that is the name. Is there somebody called Jabez Purcell?

J. A. H.: There was.

A. W.: Has he passed away

J. A. H.: Yes.

[This house was owned and occupied, some years ago—not immediately before our tenancy—by a Mr. Purcell. His father, who died about thirty years ago (in 1881, I find), was Jabez Purcell. The young man is probably Harry Purcell—grandson of Jabez—who died a few years ago, aged about twenty-eight. I hardly knew him; he lived in another town a few miles away. But the medium's impression that there was someone near who would know him is correct, for an uncle and two cousins of Harry Purcell's live within half a mile from here. I know them all fairly intimately. Harry Purcell used to visit this house occasionally, when his uncle lived here.]

You don't know if there has been somebody called Lewis who lived in this house ?

J. A. H.: No; but I once knew somebody of that name.

A. W.: There is somebody called Lewis, living somewhere away from here, and you will hear something that will interest you. It is somebody in the body.

[Mrs. Lewis, no doubt. There was a good deal about them in my sitting of January 19th, 1916, pp. 82-84.]

I can see that 3 again. It isn't so murky as it was.

Have you a family record of births ?

J. A. H.: Yes, but it doesn't go very far back.

A. W.: Somebody was born May 7th or 17th, 1861. It is mixed up, but I can't help it.

Did any of your mother's people live at Denholme ?

J. A. H.: I don't think so.

A. W.: I have a vision of a man, and I feel to be taken up that road, to Denholme. I come at a place almost by itself. It looks like a bit of a farm, but not much of one. I feel to get there, and I can't get any farther. It seems towards Denholme. It seems of your mother's family, though I don't see your mother.

[My mother's father, and she herself before marriage, lived for a time on a small and rather lonely farm, up the road indicated. It is not in Denholme, but it is in that direction, and is pretty near Denholme's boundary.]

Clairvoyance ended. Wilkinson had a cold and was not in very good form. Things seemed more vague and mixed up than usual. He left at 3.30 p.m.

Note: June 27th, 1916.—Three weeks have now passed since the sitting, and nothing has happened



that can with certainty be fitted in with the 3 which seemed to be a warning to be careful about something in three days or three weeks. One thing, however, is worth noting. It happened that on the 7th inst.—the third day if we count the day of the sitting as one—there called a man who had not called for some years, and who was somewhat insistent on seeing me. He is well-intentioned, but rather vehement and dogmatic. On the occasion of a previous visit, when the worthy gentleman had offered doctrinal consolations of an unfortunately unacceptable character, I foolishly allowed myself to argue some points; and argument is not good for anyone with a wrenched heart, as I soon found out. So I thought it better not to see him when he called on the 7th. Perhaps the 3 was a warning of his approaching call, and a suggestion that I had better not see him. He said he had been contemplating the call for some days, and it may be that some friend of mine on the other side became aware of the fact and showed Wilkinson the murky 3, impressing him that I was to be careful on the third day.

### SITTING 10

*Wednesday, August 2nd, 1916. Present, J. A. H., the medium, and—for part of the time—my sister M. H., and Mr. Percy Lund.*

On the morning of August 2nd I received a postcard from my friend, Mr. Lund, saying that he would be coming up in the afternoon. He had never met Mr. Wilkinson, nor had I ever mentioned him to the latter, so, as I had a sitting booked for this date (August 2nd),

I telephoned P. L. to be here at 2.30 p.m., in order to take part. I have no reason to believe that Wilkinson knew or had ever heard of him.

The medium arrived at 2.10 p.m. My sister brought him in, and the three of us talked about W.'s walk over, for there are various ways, and he had got lost. At 2.20 my sister (M. H.) went out, saying to me: "Shall I show Mr. Lund in when he comes?" This gave away the name, as she realized a second too late. However, it did not matter much, as the sitting yielded little that was evidential in regard to him. I proceeded to explain to the medium that I expected a friend of mine who was interested in the subject, etc., but at 2.35 I said I thought he must have been prevented, and Wilkinson settled himself to try to get clairvoyance for me in the usual way. After a few minutes he began to get impressions.

A. W.: I see behind you a reservoir and a farm. I see an old man and woman from this farm, and I see a picture of a reservoir. The man is tall, fairly big, and leans a bit. He looks like a farmer. His name is Thomas. I have a strong impression that the woman's name is Betty. I can't tell where this water is, but it is still, not running. It is a reservoir. It was a very clear picture. My impression was of a Thomas and Betty, as if it were a man and his wife, both old people.

[My father had an uncle named Thomas Lee, and his wife was Betty Lee. They were farmers, and lived about a mile from here. Thomas was over eighty when he died, about fourteen years ago. I knew him only slightly. His wife predeceased him. There is no reservoir within a mile or so of the farm, and the water of the one

at that distance is not visible from the farm (being higher up), though its embankment may be. I do not think Thomas was tall; he was about average. But Wilkinson nearly always describes spirit people as taller than they actually were. He himself is very short.]

If that man [Lund] doesn't come, I should like your sister to come in. Ask your sister to come in, if she is staying in the house.

[I rang, and my sister came.]

J. A. H. to M. H.: Lund doesn't seem to be coming, so will you come in? [M. H. came in.]

A. W.: There is some old woman, a very old woman, over eighty. Yes, evidently you were wanted [to M. H.]. She would be eighty-four or eighty-five. Rather an old-fashioned dress on, kind of pleated or puffed. Name, Amelia. That would be her name. People might call her Millie. A very old woman; seems to have gone down with age. I don't think she has been deceased long; she hasn't got clear away from here. I think there was somebody connected with this woman—a youngish man; thirty-three or thirty-four. He stands up by her. He has been gone longer than her. They seem to know each other. He predeceased her. I am strongly impressed with the name Amelia. It isn't a very common name.

M. H.: No.

A. W.: That lady's husband was John. He predeceased her. He would be much younger at death than she was when she died. Been gone some time. John and Amelia. You don't often hear that name now.

[I recognized none of this, but after the departure of the medium my sister reminded me



of John Holden and his wife Amelia, whom the description certainly fits. They lived in our neighbourhood. John Holden was my maternal grandfather's cousin, but I think few people knew of the relationship. He died a long time ago—perhaps thirty years. His wife, whom my grandmother called Millie, died about ten years ago (1910, I find), aged over eighty—probably eighty-four or eighty-five. I dimly remember or seem to remember that a son of theirs died when youngish, say thirty or so, but my sister remembers nothing of this. She knew the old lady Amelia well, much better than I did. Hence perhaps Wilkinson's strong impression that M. H. was wanted in the room, Mrs. Holden being thus helped to manifest.

[Later, September 16th, 1916: I find after much inquiry that the son died in 1889, aged thirty-one, and his father in 1888, aged sixty-five.]

A. W. to J. A. H.: There seem to be a lot of farmers about you. Somebody died at a farm. But you are not farmers?

J. A. H.: No; but some of our folk may have been, a long way back. [At this point Lund arrived. M. H. brought him in, and I introduced him without name as a friend interested in these things.]

A. W.: There's somebody connected with Betty, called Clapham or Clapton. I don't know, but I think Betty might be a Wesleyan. It would make one think they still have clings to the church they went to.

[No Clapton or Clapham known, but will inquire about Betty's maiden name, etc. She was a Wesleyan.]

A. W. to P. L.: You might sit over there ; the sun is on you.

[P. L. moved to couch.]

This Thomas and Betty kept a farm, and not very far away was a sheet of water. That is vividly impressed on me.

There is some man here who might have been a schoolmaster ; there is something over his shoulders like a gown. A scholar. Middle-aged ; about sixty, rather tall. Did you ever know somebody called Waldron—W-A-L-D-R-O-N ? [to M. H.].

M. H.: Yes.

A. W.: Thomas Waldron. I think it is Waldron. Probably this man had been a professor or schoolmaster. He has a lot of books with him. He is "well up." A classical man, good at Latin. I see books, which I should call Latin. He is just by that bookcase [south-east corner of room]. He has been deceased about twelve years, I should think ; probably more.

[Pause.]

J. A. H.: All that is very good.

A. W.: This man was very fond of boys—teaching boys. He was a bit Churchy ; I should not think he was a Dissenter—more Churchy. The letters on those big books are red and black. I can see they are Latin. He has a big book with H O M E R on it. Would that be the name of the writer, perhaps ?

P. L.: Very likely.

A. W.: Big leather binding. Homer is the name of the writer. The man would be about sixty when he died, and he was not ill long. Very fond of books ; a very interesting man.

This man has been gone longer than I said. He is telling me something. How long did I say ?

M. H. : Twelve years.

A. W. : It is longer than that.

[Thomas Waldron was headmaster of Thornton Grammar School from about 1875 to 1898, in which latter year he died very suddenly—cerebral hæmorrhage—without having been in bed ill at all. I was at the school from 1878 to 1886. Pope's translation of Homer was in the school library, and I remember fairly revelling in the *Iliad*. I do not remember that Mr. Waldron knew anything about that, for the boys took home what books they liked; but no doubt he would look at the librarian's book sometimes, to see what we mostly read. Or he may have questioned us. I don't remember. Mr. Waldron was a classical man, specially good at Latin. He wore a gown in school. He was a Churchman, and took Orders about two years before his death, probably with the idea of a curacy. His age at death was between fifty-nine and sixty. He was not tall, however; here Wilkinson makes his usual mistake.]

A. W. to P. L. : I am taken to Pudsey with you by tram. I never was in Pudsey myself. There is a man, rather stout, fresh complexion, not very old. He has a very enthusiastic manner; a bit fussy. Seems as if he has impressed me to go to Pudsey. You had better make yourself better acquainted with somebody at Pudsey. I think this man is living, in the body, but I cannot be certain. I shall be very much surprised if you do not have some association with Pudsey, if you have not had some already. There is something that links you up with Pudsey—something to do with a chapel there—a big chapel.

You have brought someone with you, a young



man who died very suddenly. Rather tall, moderately well built, age twenty-six or twenty-seven, rather fair moustache, not very heavy, well-dressed. Died very suddenly. Makes me feel that his death was the result of some untoward happening, not a natural decease. He is a very real presence to me—appears quite objective. As if he had come with you [P. L.].

[Mr. Lund has no special associations with Pudsey. But the young man seems to be probably the young man who was described at my Sitting of June 5th, pp. 121–123, and who, Wilkinson then felt, would come again. He was a very distant relative of mine, who did not live about here, and he died suddenly and tragically. It happens that though he was related to me and not to Mr. Lund, the latter had known him personally, and I had not. This, perhaps, explains Wilkinson's remark that the spirit seemed to be with P. L.]

A. W. [still to P. L.]: There is a very funny smell where you have been. Something very fusty; I don't know what to liken it to—perhaps a bit like tallow. Like a shut-up room. Have you had those clothes on all day?

P. L.: Yes, to-day and yesterday.

A. W.: I don't think it has anything to do with that young man. Did you know him? Fairly long features, good nose, straight.

P. L.: I'm not sure. It might do for two or three.

A. W. [to M. H.]: That old lady doesn't leave you. Do you know her?

M. H.: I have an idea.

A. W.: You might find out that this lady lost a young man. [To P. L.] I am interested in the smell I get from you.

J. A. H. to P. L. : Isn't that correct ?

P. L. : I can't think of anything. Tobacco ?

A. W. : No ; it seems continual, in the atmosphere, impregnated with it. Have you ever known a man at Pudsey named Joseph ?

P. L. : My associations with Pudsey were long ago, and very slight.

A. W. : This might be remote. Man named Joseph, went to a big chapel. He was a prominent man at the chapel. I think it will be worth your while to put it down.

[To M. H.] : You remember me speaking about Thomas Waldron ? There is some woman connected with this man ; she is in the body, about seventy years of age. You may hear of her soon. Some circumstances linked up with this man.

[Mr. Waldron's widow is living, about forty miles away. She left this district about 1901, and neither he nor she had or have any relatives about here. The age is about right. She is a little over seventy.]

The smell associated with P. L. I thought was perhaps printers' ink, indicating the nature of his business, in which, however, he does not now take a very active part. Wilkinson sometimes gets the former earth-occupations of spirits by a psychical smell-perception, as when he smelt brewing after describing Edmund Driver, the hotel-keeper, in my sitting of February 17th, 1916.]

A. W. to P. L. : There is a very strong orthodoxy about you. You are a bit narrow in your views, religiously.

[Laughter on part of sitters, for P. L. is not narrow theologically. But there is a sort of truth in it, for he dislikes psychical research.]

It is a kind of atmosphere. I feel limited. You can't go beyond it. It may be due to your associations.

J. A. H. to A. W. : All this is a bit rough on him.

A. W. : It is due sometimes to those who come about people. It may be somebody on the other side. [To P. L.] : I shall be surprised if you don't discover something about a man who lived and died at Pudsey a long time since. [To J. A. H.] : You remember me seeing an old man here a time or two—a man with a funny name ?

J. A. H. : Yes ; Leather, perhaps.

A. W. : That's it. He is here. He has a lady with him ; very young, beside him. Quite youthful. I know the man's face well ; I have seen him before. [To M. H.] : The lady is about your age. They are together. Her name was Sarah. She might be some relation to the man. However, her name was Sarah.

[Mr. Leather's wife's name was Sarah. She died December 14th, 1866, aged thirty-eight. This is the first time she has been mentioned at my sittings. The Leather tombstone is in an almost inaccessible part of a private cemetery, away from the path, and the lettering is unreadable except at close range. I once asked Wilkinson whether he had ever been in that cemetery (after he had got Mr. Leather's full name), and he said he had never been in any local cemetery. *See p. 17.*]

A. W. to P. L. : Have you some lady belonging to you who is not well, troubled with her heart ? She has a weak heart : liable to heart failure. I feel a faint come over me. It seems a continual thing ; keeps happening. She should not go away from home ; not to the seaside—I feel like that ; just take it for what it is worth. [Not specially applicable.] To go



away from home would be unwise just now. I don't mean just going out of doors; I mean going away. She is better at home.

[P. L.'s wife has occasional trouble with a weak heart if she does too much, but she lives a normal life, goes away a good deal, is active in philanthropic work, and has been quite up to par lately.]

A. W. to M. H. : Have you had some friend once named Downs ?

M. H. : No ; but it is a fairly common name.

[We know several people of that name, alive and dead.]

A. W. : That young man who died suddenly—it would be a shock to his people. Quite a consternation brought about by his death.

P. L. : Can you get his name ?

A. W. : I'm trying. Perhaps the exciting circumstances of his passing, and this being the first time he has come, it may be difficult for him to get his name through.

J. A. H. : I think he has been before.

A. W. : I don't remember that he has.

[Medium looked at me in a very puzzled way, evidently thinking that the spirit belonged to Mr. Lund, and therefore would not have been before. The explanation probably is, as already said, that, though the young man was a distant relative of my own, I had never known him, while P. L. had.] That man that's a schoolmaster is looking at all the books. He has not been here before.

[True, and I am quite sure I have never mentioned him to the medium.]

J. A. H. : Glad to hear of him ; we hope he will come again.

A. W. : You will hear something as a sequel to this man coming. A very scholarly man. Bit churchy. They make you feel creepy, these Churchmen !

J. A. H. : But Mr. Waldron was an excellent sort.

[Wilkinson once was reprimanded for his spiritualism by a vigorously dogmatic and rather ill-mannered vicar ; and, being no match for his assailant in argument, he not unnaturally rather dreads a clergyman.]

A. W. to P. L. : Have you ever sat at a table to get movements ?

P. L. : Yes ; a long time since.

A. W. : How long since ?

P. L. : About fifteen years.

A. W. : Lot of people about you, but it's all moidered up. All chapel folks, very orthodox atmosphere, very conservative in their views.

[P. L. considers this untrue as to his immediate ancestors and relatives generally.]

I wish I could come in contact mentally with that young man, but all is chaos about my head. Can't get anything clear. This won't worry you ?

P. L. : No, not at all.

[The young man had been ill for some months before his death.]

A. W. : It would be good if that schoolmaster could get something through.

J. A. H. : I wish he could spell something out in Latin.

[Medium wrote automatically a word or two, but it turned out to be only "Waldron, Thomas."]

M. H. : He hasn't said who brought him ?

A. W. : No.

J. A. H. : That would be interesting.

[He and Mr. Leather were intimate friends ; probably the latter brought him, as he has brought others.]

A. W. : He would have been a very old man if he had been living now.

[Not very ; he would have been seventy-eight, but used to look older than his years.]

I can go back to that farm that I saw at first. There's somebody living, belonging to that old couple. You might discover somebody called Clapham. She would be a Wesleyan. That is vividly impressed on me.

[To P. L.] : I can't understand about that funny smell with you. Just as if it was brought in wafts. You have been quite well lately ?

P. L. : Yes, except for hay fever.

A. W. : You have been in some place which is not altogether congenial to you. That is the idea, whatever it is. [To M. H.] : There is a lady beside you, shorter than you, hair smooth, no colour, delicate-looking. I should call her about sixty. Black dress, lace about neck ; brooch. Plain dress ; good. Thin, pale fingers. She must have been delicate, something with the chest. Ailing a while. She knows you [i.e. M. H.]. Name, Mary. Looks into your face as if she knew you. Been deceased many years. Not so tall as you. The woman I saw before—Millie—must have known her ; they seem to recognize each other.

[My mother ; cancer of breast ; died 1886. Not evidential, because given before. The statement that she knew Millie, however, is new and true. Millie has not appeared or been mentioned at any previous sitting.]

A. W. [to nobody in particular] : I wish I could get that young man to say his name. The circumstances



of his passing make it difficult for him to reach me mentally. These are quick flashes.

[To M. H.]: That lady that I have just seen with you, there's an old man with her, eighty years old, biggish, quite grey, fairly good features, white shirt. He builds up by her. He is some close relation to her—resemblance in features.

[Mother's father, described often before. Died 1889. White shirt very characteristic.]

A. W. to P. L.: If you sat at a table you might get some automatism. I feel a helpful emanation. It doesn't matter about not believing, if only one is not prejudiced. Whatever it is where you have been, it is not very healthy for you. You have been puzzling something out, and you are tired and closed up.

P. L.: Yes, I have been puzzling something out, that's true.

A. W.: The smell is dying away.

[P. L. isn't much in the printing works. The smell was entirely psychic, I think. He never brings *me* any smell of ink or anything else.]

J. A. H.: I wish that schoolmaster would spell some Latin out.

A. W.: Perhaps he will next time. Funny name he had—never heard it before. W-A-L-D-R-O-N.

J. A. H.: Right.

A. W.: Did he belong to the Church of England?

J. A. H.: Yes.

A. W. to P. L.: I feel as if I could preach or lecture to you. You have somebody, or will have somebody, who is enthusiastic in their beliefs. Must have served them well in life, as they stick to them. [Chuckles.] Have you had some relation who was a

“local preacher” ? I feel as if I could lecture you, about what you believe.

P. L. : No.

[The impression I got was that some deceased relative of P. L.'s felt like castigating him for his heresies. But the evidentiality of what was said to him was almost *nil*, the lady's weak heart, etc., being almost the only correct thing, unless something comes of the Pudsey Joseph. Mr. Lund's father was thus named, but he had no Pudsey associations so far as P. L. knows.]

Wilkinson left at 4.30. I had taken verbatim shorthand notes, which are copied word for word in the foregoing account. Written out Thursday and Friday, August 3rd and 4th, 1916.

Later, January 24th, 1917: I have now ascertained, from one of the very few people living who could tell it, that my great-aunt Betty Lee, before her marriage—i.e. about sixty years ago—lived at a house overlooking a reservoir, some miles from here. Also that her most intimate friends were named Clapham. The medium's statements thus turn out correct, and are in this instance particularly impressive. Whatever the explanation, it is not normally-acquired knowledge or telepathy from me. I have now so often found Wilkinson's statements true, after much painstaking inquiry, that I am inclined to believe that the few things which I have not been able to verify about remote ancestors, etc., are probably true also.

## SITTING 11

*Monday, September 11th, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. Tom Tyrrell).*

This sitting was arranged by post some weeks ago, when I wrote saying that I had heard remarkable things about Mr. Tyrrell's clairvoyance, and that I should like to see him if he ever came into this neighbourhood. He replied that he was addressing a Spiritualist Society at Halifax on September 10th, and would come on the afternoon of the 11th. I told him nothing about myself except that I was invalided with an old heart strain.

Accordingly, he arrived by the 2.17 train, and my sister met him on the road. He came into my room at once, and we chatted. He said he had never heard of me until I wrote to him, and knew nothing about me; had never been in Thornton before, and in Bradford only once. Told about his wife, her milliner's shop, and how he went to the mill (weaver) until nine years ago, but has been a spiritualist platform speaker and clairvoyant for over thirty years. His platform clairvoyance is normal, though assisted by a spirit named Billy Matthews—"Owd Billy"—whom he sometimes hears giving him names. This Billy has been his principal guide for a long time, and was at first unknown to him; but eventually he came across a woman, not a spiritualist, who turned out to be Billy Matthews's daughter, and the identification was established by many details. So says Tyrrell; but this, of course, isn't evidence.

In the course of half an hour, Tyrrell became quiet, breathed rather heavily for two minutes, and "Billy"



appeared. Medium's eyes almost closed, and eyeballs apparently rolled up as usual in trance.

BILLY : Good afternoon, lad. [Leans forward and shakes hands.] We are sorry to see you're poorly, but perhaps you don't like too much sympathy. Now I'm only an uneducated man—I'm Owd Billy—and I can only talk Lancashire dialect, an' tha mayn't understand it.

J. A. H. : Oh, yes, I shall.

B. [after a minute's silence] : There's a very old man across yonder [indicating a point near the window, three or four yards away]; he would be eighty-five or eighty-six. He seems a very eccentric man. I don't see any relationship between you. Grey moustache and beard. Black clothes. He would talk very loud, would want to be heard. He is showing us a board—a chess-board. He would be fond of chess. Seems as if he knew tha, lad. Name of James Brearley. He lived in No. 7 Ford Street—somewhere about here, we expect. Talking very loud; likes to be heard.

[Pause.]

J. A. H. : I believe that's very good.

B. : He's surprised to find that he can come back. Very fond of playing at chess. Showing chess-board. Also something about golf or bowling.

We can't hold them long, only twelve or sixteen seconds. Well, he seems to know tha, lad.

[The description recalled nothing until the name was given. James Brearley was a superior sort of working-man, employed in a local mill. He was an original character, quite out of the ordinary run, and "eccentric" is applicable. He used to live at Hillhead, a remote outlying part of the village, and we lived not far away, from 1878 to

1897. I saw him often when I was a boy, playing about when he was going to or from the mill. I don't remember ever speaking to him, but he would know me well enough as the son of my father, whom he would know and who knew him and his family. Also his son was a schoolfellow of mine, and we chummed a little at one time. After 1897 I doubt whether I ever saw old James, but I occasionally heard of him as going nearly every evening, with another veteran of over eighty, to a local Liberal Club. These two were apparently a regular evening feature of the club until Brearley's last illness. He died two and a half years ago, aged eighty-three or eighty-four. I think he moved from Hillhead; I have no knowledge of his later address, but will inquire. There is a local Ford Street, and it is likely enough that he lived there, for I know that his friend lives in that street and has lived there twenty years or more.

I rather think there may be an explanation of his appearance, for though I should not have expected him on his own account, it happens that a club frequenter named Townley, whom I knew well and greatly liked when we were youths and who is often in my thoughts, died a few months ago, and may have brought the old man. Townley was a good chess-player, also an excellent amateur photographer; and he once photographed the two ancients over a chess-table at the club, though I doubt whether Brearley was much of a player.

As to the description, it strikes me as correct except that I am uncertain about a beard. I rather think he had only a grey moustache when I knew him, but I am not sure.

Later, September 14th, 1916: I have interviewed a man who knew Brearley well, and he says that the beard is correct and the description strikingly true, particularly the loud talking and liking to be heard. I did not know this.]

B.: There's a man here, very bright. I can hardly look at him. About fifty; been passed away some time. Dressed beautifully. Black coat. If everything was not straight he would be very much put out. Very intellectual. He is watching you writing it all down, and is very interested. Doctor Richard Hodgson; passed away in America. We hardly expect you to know him, as he passed away in America. He is showing us three books. I can see one of 'em plain: "Religion and Modern Psychology," "New Evidences in Psychical" [*sic*], and the other "Survival Evidence," or something like that. He is holding these out to tha. He is opening one of 'em. [I think it was said to be the first-named, but did not get that down.] Why, it has thy name in! He seems—— Has ta been writin' a book, lad?

J. A. H.: Yes.

B.: He seems to be congratulating tha.

J. A. H.: Thanks.

B.: He says: "I've brought my old friend, Henry Sidgwick, with me." I can't see him. But tha knows, lad, tha'rt surrahnded with a beautiful halo of light. Tha'rt very intellectual. Tha'rt a good judge of character; it doesn't tak' tha long to reckon folk up.

There's a beautiful lady here; been passed away a long, long time. If ever a lady lived good, this lady did. She has spirit robes on, and she throws her mantle over you as if to protect you. Name, Elizabeth



Hill. She's brought John with her. We don't know who it is. We can only say what we see.

[An Elizabeth Hill did exist—but not a direct ancestor, I think—about a century ago. But the name is common. John, perhaps grandfather.]

Are ta fond of parsons, lad ?

J. A. H. : Not particularly.

B. : Well, there's a parson here ; seems interested. He wants you to take it all down. About seventy-six ; well-built man, grey moustache and beard. A good man. Name, Reverend George Edmondson. He holds up a book ; Manchester Road Baptists ; probably in Bradford. The book has it on. He lived in some Marshfield Street ; been passed away a bit ; can't tell how long. It's a funny thing—he is more anxious about a lad he is bringing than about himself. There's been a bit of sorrow about this lad ; he is a cripple—poor twisted body ! He would be a shoeblack, and would sell newspapers. His name is Micky Scanlon, or something like that. A bright, intelligent lad. Lived in Sun Street. Parson seems to be helping this lad. Does ta know who it is ?

J. A. H. : I don't remember that I do.

B. : This lad was very well respected. The parson says Father O'Shaughnessy would know him. Nice, intelligent lad.

[This about Mr. Edmondson, Micky, and Father O'S. is meaningless to me. There is a Manchester Road in Bradford, but I know of no Baptist chapel there, though there may be one. I will inquire.]

There's a dog comes here. Are ta fond of dogs ?

J. A. H. : Not very specially.

B. : It's a beautiful collie.

J. A. H. : What is its name ? [Thinking of a fine

collie named Nip, which used to live next door, dying a few months ago.]

B. : Name, Victor. Is there somebody called Dudley belonging to you ?

J. A. H. : Not that I know of.

B. : The lower brute creation passes into spirit life, same as us. There's a woman comes, and the dog appears again. A beautiful woman, about sixty-seven, very ladylike ; a very religious lady, I believe. She is showing me a photograph, not exactly a photograph, but a small picture. It has this dog on it, sitting on its haunches. On the bottom of the picture there are the words, " Save us." Underneath there is " Frances Power Cobbe." A woman very fond of dogs. She comes with the picture and shows the dog.

[Perhaps this is out of the medium's own memory, for it must be assumed that he knows, as most people know, about Miss Cobbe's anti-vivisection activities. It is, however, noteworthy that I have had Miss Cobbe in mind a good deal lately, for I have been trying to get hold of her collection of " Peak in Darien " cases, mentioned by Myers in " Human Personality." I wrote to the L.S.A. Library and to several book dealers, but it seems unobtainable.]

Is there something that's puzzling tha at present ?

J. A. H. : No ; nothing special that I know of.

B. : There's a lady comes, not a relation, we think. Very frail, about sixty-one or sixty-two. Surrounded with foreign influences. Had something to do with spiritualism. She is showing us *The Two Worlds*. Alice Nicholson. Lived at Rothery Terrace, Bradford. She seems surrounded with foreign influences. No. 12 Rothery Terrace, Bradford.

J. A. H. : I don't know her. [But will inquire. No Rothery Terrace known to me at present, and no Nicholsons.]

B. : Does ta know somebody called Gurney ?

J. A. H. : Yes.

B. : Seems a man fond of writing ; surrounded a good deal with intellectual men. Now there's a beautiful man of seventy-five, very white hair, clean-shaved, very spiritual, holding a volume towards you. On this book is "Art Journal"; underneath "Samuel Carter Hall." A very beautiful gentleman. Very much interested. Are ta fond of pictures ?

J. A. H. : Yes.

B. : He was a very good, religious man.

J. A. H. : I have heard of him.

B. : He seems to be encouraging you to write something, to keep on writing, not to overdo it, but to keep on. They are helping you.

J. A. H. : I am much obliged to them.

B. : Give way to the impressions.

[All this about Gurney and S. C. Hall may be accountable to the medium's own memory stores. But it is curious that there was no mention of Myers, who is almost sure to be more prominently in a spiritualist's thoughts than Sidgwick, or Gurney, or even Hodgson. And it is noteworthy that at my last sitting with a *trance* medium [Peters, March 3rd, 1916: reported later] the S.P.R. group appeared, Myers included. Hodgson knew of my existence, for a few letters passed between us just before his death in America in 1905. His age was fifty, as said. My books have been published since his death.]

Are ta fond of studying different religions ?



J. A. H. : Yes.

B. : Tha'rt trying to get the best out of all of 'em. Are ta fond of reading Indian religion, Eastern ?

J. A. H. : Yes.

B. : There seems to be an Indian priest in the surroundings. He is showing us a book, but I can't make head or tail of it. Seems to be something about India or Indian religion. Man has a very black skin, black moustache, long, flowing robes, and a turban with diamonds at the front. Seems to come in your surroundings. Mohammedan religion. He is going like this [bowing and making three hand-sweeps downward in front of him], and saying : " Illah Allah Illah " —something like that, and bowing three times. He is impressing you on ancient religion.

[Mohammedanism seems an unfortunate selection for an " ancient " religion !]

Are ta fond of old castles ?

J. A. H. : Not specially.

B. : I'm sorry we haven't done better ; we have to do the best we can.

J. A. H. : You've done all right, and I thank you.

B. : Well, we've got all we can for to-day. This lad here [medium] isn't in the best of trim after his work yesterday. Good-bye, now, and God bless you. [Shakes hands.]

J. A. H. : Good-bye, and God bless you, too.

Medium was himself again in about two minutes, after muttering a good deal of a language unknown to me (or gibberish). I asked about this when he was normal, and he said he had an African control who helped Old Billy when the latter had difficulty in getting in or out. On this occasion, medium said he felt as if he had been very deep. Knows nothing of

what has been said during trance. I told him Dr. Richard Hodgson had been, and asked if he knew the name. He replied: "Wasn't it a Dr. Hodgson who sat with Mrs. Piper so much? But I didn't remember his first name."

In the report I have not reproduced the dialect carefully. Sometimes when "tha" was said (for "thou" or "thee") I wrote the shorthand logogram for "you" for speed's sake. Also I wrote "she" when Billy used the Lancashire equivalent "hoo." But I have not edited the report itself. I have copied it verbatim, to-day, September 12th, 1916.

The medium in his normal state speaks quite good English, though he is almost entirely self-educated. He is keenly interested in botany of a general kind—trees and flowers in an amateur way—and says he thinks he could name and tell something about any tree that grows in England. But he has a modest and pleasant manner, and I fully believe that he is entirely honest and veracious, and a quite excellent man all round.

After a cup of tea he left at 4.15 on his way home to Blackburn.

Note: September 13th, 1916.—This morning I received from Mr. Tyrrell a letter of which the following is a copy:

54 Whalley Banks,  
King Street, Blackburn.  
*September 12th, 1916.*

DEAR MR. HILL,

I arrived home last night at 10.30, feeling rather tired. But the reason I am writing you is because I had a very strange influence hovering about, which I could not understand. A feeling of dis-

appointment, as if someone had wanted to manifest their presence but had not been able to do so. I felt very uneasy all the way coming home on the train. I could neither read nor think; the peculiar influence seemed to dominate my whole being. So on reaching home I casually mentioned the matter to my wife, how uneasy I felt. So we suggested having a private sitting and let Billy Matthews come and see if he could enlighten us. So having had a very light supper, we sat after 11 o'clock till nearly midnight, and this is what we got. Billy told my wife that two spirit forms had followed me home; they had tried to manifest their presence at your home, but Billy was not able to get in rapport with them, because the other influences were stronger, and he said I was rather nervous, which prevented him from using me to the best advantage, and I am afraid if I had known and read your articles in *Light* and *The Two Worlds* I should have been more nervous still.

[In questioning him as to whether he had ever heard of me, I asked if he saw *Light* and *The Two Worlds*, where my name often occurs. He said he rarely sees *Light*, but has taken *The Two Worlds* for many years. However, my name has not been prominent in it—I have written only one article for it, and though long reviews of my books appeared, that is a few years ago—and it is not surprising that my name recalled nothing to Mr. Tyrrell.]

I enjoyed reading the article in *Light* on prayer and telepathy, culled from *Bibby's Annual*. It took me a while to find the article in *The Two Worlds*, as I kept looking for your signature along with the article. But there wasn't any name attached to article which presume must be yours, the one called "Spiritualism the



Comforter." Let me say I read it before. But thought it was Mr. Morse's article. There wasn't any name to it.

[He got the wrong one: mine was headed by my name.]

I take it from the article that you must be a member of the Psychical Research Society, and, candidly, I have always had a natural antipathy to psychical researchers. I read one of their books, over twenty years ago, and I thought they were too cold and critical, and had not much sympathy for mediums. They don't give sensitives much help, their feelings are too acrid and that feeling causes more difficulty in getting along. A medium is better when he feels comfortable and gets used to the sitter. Well now, about the two spirit forms: the one was a lady, who came with a gentleman, and Billy says judging from the magnetic link there were strong links of relationship, probably man and wife, but we don't know. The lady was about fifty-four years of age and very beautiful, with slight wavy hair and very pale in features. She came in her beautiful spirit robe. The control said the gentleman appeared to be about sixty-six years of age. Billy did not describe him, as the brightness of the lady seemed to overshadow him. Billy thinks they must have been passed into spirit life a long time, because they had thrown off all earth's conditions, and appeared very bright. They gave Billy their names as Bannister Hill and Mary Hill. They wished their love to be conveyed to you and your sister, and they wish it to be understood they are helping you both when they can. Of course I send you this for what it is worth, we do not guarantee anything. Well, now let me say that I have enjoyed reading your articles, and

now don't [think] you were very dreadful and I may think a wee bit better of psychical researchers. I don't know all you got yesterday, only what you choose to tell me. But somehow or other I feel a little bit sick at taking your money, as you may think I am like the rest of mediums, that I am after all I can get. But it is not quite true. I could have coined money this last thirty years but have steadfastly refused it, yet hundreds of times I have been in want of a shilling. What a good ride it is from Thornton for 2d. We have to pay a penny for every ride in Blackburn. Let me say I quite enjoyed the tea with your sister. Kindly thank her for making [me] feel so comfortable and accept all good wishes yourself, from yours in the cause. But don't ask me to sit for any more psychical Researchers, they generally give me a fright.

T. TYRRELL.

My father was Bannister Hill, and he died October 22nd, 1898, aged sixty-six. His name has not appeared in any of my former writings, nor his age, nor date of death. Mr. Tyrrell could not have normally known these facts unless he had found our vault in one of the half-dozen cemeteries in Thornton (a private one belonging to a chapel), and this would not have been a very easy matter.

My mother, Mary Hill, died November 19th, 1886, aged fifty-four. She was pale, had been good-looking in youth, though perhaps hardly beautiful, except as regards her eyes. Tyrrell's use of the word might, however, refer to her spiritual appearance. She was certainly a beautiful soul. As to evidentiality, it is to be noted that her name and age appeared in my book, "New Evidences," in a report of a sitting with Wilkinson; and though Tyrrell says he had never

heard of me or my books (and I believe in his supraliminal honesty), we cannot accept as *strongly* evidential anything that has appeared in print, especially if it appeared in a book likely to be read by many spiritualists. Mediums may hear such books quoted and discussed, even if they do not read them; and we must allow for subliminal memory.

On the other hand, I think it improbable to the point of incredibility that Tyrrell had ever heard of my father or of James Brearley, so I do not accept the subliminal memory theory of the Mary Hill episode. I provisionally accept the spirit-theory in all three cases as being the most probable.

Note: September 15th, 1916.—I have now looked up S. C. Hall in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, and find that the full name is Samuel Carter Hall, as stated. He was born in 1800, died 1889; founded and edited *The Art Journal* (1839–1880), and did much other literary work. He was a prominent spiritualist, and was the first chairman of the British National Association of Spiritualists, in 1874 (*see* Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism," ii., p. 169). I knew the name only as that of a man who had sat with D. D. Home. I know nothing of his personal appearance. It seems correct that he was a particularly good and philanthropic man. But of course all such details must be assumed to be known (subliminally, even if "forgotten") to mediums, and to spiritualists generally, so they cannot be regarded as evidential.

Note: September 16th, 1916.—I learn to-day that James Brearley lived and died in Ford Street, but have not yet ascertained the number. His age was eighty-three or eighty-four.

Note: September 19th, 1916.—I learn to-day that



the Rev. George Edmondson was minister for some years at Manchester Road Baptist Church, now called Marshfield Baptist Church. Also that a hunchback named Mickey (surname not yet ascertained) sold newspapers in Market Street, Bradford, dying two or three years ago. My informant knew him personally. Also that an Alice Nicholson was a member of the Milton Spiritualists' Church, Manningham, Bradford. She did platform work for various Spiritualist Societies, so Tyrrell probably knew her or knew of her. Am seeking further details about all three.

Note: September 22nd, 1916.—After further inquiry I find to-day that the house in Ford Street in which James Brearley lived and died is No. 7. Ford Street is not on or near the route which the medium traversed on his way here from the station; though, even if it had been, it would not have given him the name and description of James Brearley. No relative of the latter is now living at No. 7 or in the street.

The beard is corroborated to-day by two other people who knew him well, thus confirming the medium's statement, which at the time I doubted.

Thus every fact given about James Brearley, whom I have no reason to believe the medium had ever heard of, turns out true; except the chess-playing. This was the medium's own inference from the chess-board which the spirit was showing; the fact seems to be that neither Brearley nor his friend played chess, but that my friend Townley, wanting to photograph the two friends, posed them at a chess-table and produced a particularly good picture, a copy of which hangs in the club. This club, it is necessary to state, is not on or near the route covered by the medium in coming here, and it is not on a public road or prominent in

any way. It is a village club; all the members know each other, and any stranger coming and making inquiries would be suspected and discouraged. I am sure the medium did not get his information there.

Note: September 25th, 1916.—I have now obtained copies of some newspaper issues, and append cuttings:

*Bradford Daily Telegraph* (Wednesday, January 14th, 1914):

“LITTLE MICKEY” DEAD  
KING OF BRADFORD NEWSBOYS

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*Popular Figure Removed*

Michael Scannon, better known in the newsboys' fraternity as “Little Mickey,” the King of the Bradford newsboys, has just died at his home at 22 Sun Street.

“Mickey” had for years taken up his stand near the Midland Railway Station and the Exchange, and was undoubtedly the best known of all the newsboys. Though a cripple from birth, suffering from a spinal curvature, his genial disposition won for him a large circle of friends amongst Bradford business gentlemen.

He was the most prominent figure in the annual newsboys' trip to Cleethorpes, and he was quite as well known at that seaside resort as in his native city. “Mickey” always led the procession, playing a small kettledrum, and he always entertained his comrades after dinner with songs and whistling selections.

The members of the Bradford Newsboys' Trip Committee are making arrangements for the funeral, which will probably be the biggest any newsboy has yet received, for “Little Mickey” was the most popular of all our paper sellers.

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*Bradford Daily Telegraph* (Wednesday, January 14th, 1914):

EDMONDSON.—Jan. 12th, 1914, at 25 Marshfield Street, the Revd. George Edmondson, aged 76 years. Funeral will leave the house on Friday, the 16th inst., at 1.15, for

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service in Marshfield Baptist Chapel. Interment at Bowling Cemetery. Friends please accept this intimation.

*Bradford Weekly Telegraph* (Friday, January 23rd, 1914) :

### REV. G. EDMONDSON

The funeral took place on Friday, from his residence at Marshfield Street, Manchester Road, Bradford, of the Rev. George Edmondson, pastor of the Marshfield Baptist Chapel. Mr. Edmondson, who was 76 years of age, came to Bradford from Horsforth 47 years ago, to take up the pastorate of Ebenezer Chapel, a position which he held for very many years. When the Marshfield Chapel branched off in 1903 he became minister there, and he filled the position with much acceptance. Though never a prominent public man, he had a wide circle of close personal friends by whom he was most highly esteemed. . . .

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### BRADFORD NEWSBOY'S FUNERAL

Once again "Little Mickey" has joined in the procession of newsboys and shoeblacks—once again, but for the last time, alas! Never more when the boys have their annual trip to Cleethorpes and go merrily marching along the street will "Mickey" lead them. Never again when they cross the Midland Station yard will the many Bradford business men who were his friends spare a willing copper for the poor, brave, little twisted figure with the wan, but smiling face. And never more will his pals in the streets gather around him to hear him sing and whistle, for on Saturday there was no little fellow to lead the procession, but a poor little coffin was carried high in the midst of it.

After twenty-two years of pain, Michael Scannon, a cripple from birth, has finished his fight, and with the kindly thoughts of those who knew him best, those who lived with him, those who tended him in his sufferings, and knew his patient and cheerful spirit, and those who befriended him he has passed where he will know no more earthly pain or trouble.

"Little Mickey" was the friend of all, and on Saturday many who had known him gathered to bid the last farewell



as he passed on his final journey. By noon Sun Street, North Wing, where he lived, was filled with neighbours and friends and as the little coffin was carried down the street to the hearse by some of his comrades, there were many signs of mourning. The procession, which was headed by about forty or fifty newsboys and shoeblacks, and joined by many friends, passed along Captain Street, Barkerend Road, and Otley Road to Undercliffe Cemetery, and all the way there were those who knew him to watch him go. At the cemetery, also, where a service was conducted at the graveside by Father O'Shaughnessy, of St. Mary's, East Parade, there were many friends gathered. . . .

The foregoing extracts make it clear that in the cases of the Rev. George Edmondson and Mickey Scannon the evidence for their spiritual agency is not much stronger than in the case of S. C. Hall, Miss Cobbe, and the S.P.R. men named, for they were well known, and their deaths and funerals were recorded rather fully in the local newspapers. If Mr. Tyrrell happened to see the *Bradford Weekly Telegraph* of January 23rd, 1914, we must assume that any of its contents might remain in his subliminal memory, and facts such as the names of Mr. Edmondson and Mickey Scannon, with their addresses and occupations, may be thus accounted for. Moreover, in the weekly paper just mentioned, the account of Mr. Edmondson's funeral is immediately above that of Mickey's, and in this latter there occurs the phrase, "poor, brave, little twisted figure," which seems suspiciously like the probable source of Billy's phrase "poor twisted body." On the other hand, Billy *described* Mr. Edmondson's personal appearance, and this counts for evidence if it is correct, for I have found no description of him in the newspaper notices. I am making further inquiries.

To guard against misapprehension, I must make it clear that I am not imputing conscious deceit to Mr. Tyrrell. I believe in his absolute honesty and veracity. I have asked him whether he knows the names of the Rev. George Edmondson, Mickey Scannon, or some such name, and Alice Nicholson, and he replies that the first two are quite new to him, though he has a dim recollection of having heard the third. I accept this, as regards his conscious recollection; but unfortunately we have to allow for subconscious memories also, and it is certain that we subconsciously know many things which we have "forgotten." And, since it seems that a trance-control cannot always distinguish between the medium's memory stores and messages really from "the other side," we cannot safely take as spirit-evidence anything that the medium is at all likely to have known. And though it hardly seems likely that Mr. Tyrrell, living forty miles away at Blackburn, would happen to see a local paper of a town in which he has no special interest, the possibility is still just sufficient to weaken somewhat the spiritistic theory in the case of the two men in question.

October 4th, 1916.—I wrote to Mr. Tyrrell, asking whether he ever sees any Bradford newspapers, and he replies that he does not. He thinks a local Blackburn library takes the *Yorkshire Post*, but he never reads it, for he has no particular interest in Yorkshire news. He further states that he had been in Bradford only once before his visit to me; on that occasion, which was in July, 1915, he arrived in the town at noon on a Sunday, spoke at a spiritualist meeting in the evening, caught an early train home on Monday morning, and saw no newspaper during the time of his short stay in Bradford.

It seems, therefore, unlikely that subliminal memory is the correct explanation of the Edmondson and Mickey incidents; particularly in view of the fact that no such explanation could account for the appearance of James Brearley and my father. Perhaps Mr. Edmondson and Mickey made friends with each other because they went over almost at the same time. It does not seem an unreasonable supposition. But readers will form their own judgment from the facts, which I have given as fully as possible.

Note: October 4th, 1916.—To-day I learn that (Mrs.) Alice Nicholson lived at 12 Rothesay Terrace, Bradford; evidently the control made a small mistake in getting it "Rothery Terrace." In *The Two Worlds* for September 15th, 1916—four days *after* my sitting—there appeared the following notice:

#### IN MEMORIAM

NICHOLSON.—In loving remembrance of a dear wife and mother, Alice Nicholson, 12 Rothesay Terrace, Bradford, who passed on September 18th, 1913.—ALBERT NICHOLSON AND FAMILY.

No doubt her death was notified in the same paper, which Mr. Tyrrell sees regularly; and, though he remembers hardly anything about Mrs. Nicholson, a subliminal memory explanation is not impossible. But I think it fair to add that subliminal memory theories have been greatly overworked, and that the spiritistic view is at least as likely, particularly when supported by incidents such as those about my father and James Brearley, which cannot be reasonably explained by subliminal memory. Moreover, I have ascertained to-day that the description of the personal appearance of both Mr. Edmondson and Mrs. Nicholson



is absolutely exact; and this seems to require an explanation beyond the newspaper notices.

Note: October 10th, 1916.—I now find that the photograph of the two old men was reproduced in the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* of January 10th, 1914, with a paragraph—on another page—in which Brearley's strong voice is mentioned, and eccentricity hinted at. His address is given also. Consequently, considered strictly, the evidentiality of the Brearley incident disappears. Lapsed memory will account for it, as well as for the Mr. Edmondson and Mickey incidents; that is, if we assume that Tyrrell had at some time seen these various newspaper accounts. There remains the description of Mr. Edmondson, and my father's name and age; and if these were from the other side so may the others be. Suspense of judgment seems the correct attitude.

Note: October 20th, 1916.—James Brearley's club crony died this morning. This perhaps lends a little weight to the spiritistic interpretation of the incident. Brearley may have been waiting about for his friend, and may have really been present at my sitting. The case, on this view, is a parallel of the Leather—Drayton, Mr. and Mrs. Walkley, and Charlton—Charlton meeting cases already described.

December 11th, 1916.—I have lately got into touch with an able and experienced investigator, Dr. F. H. Wood, of Blackburn, who has had many sittings with Mr. Tyrrell, and is therefore more competent to estimate his powers than I am. Dr. Wood is quite sure that "Billy" does not use the medium's memory-stores, either consciously or unconsciously; and that the information said to come from spirits does really come from the other side. He kindly allows me to

quote the following piece of evidence from one of his own sittings. I have disguised the names, lest the child's mother should be caused pain.

"On May 13th, 1915, Mr. Tyrrell described to us the spirit form of a lady who brought with her a little boy, aged five. Her name was not given, but the boy was said to be 'the child of . . . '—here the clairvoyant listened, and said, 'It sounds like Samuel Browning, but I'm not quite sure. At any rate, he is a policeman, and he lives at No. 6, Henry Street, Leyton [a small town a hundred miles away]. The mother of the child is grieving sadly. He died of pneumonia. Will someone tell her that he is not "dead" at all, in the sense she thinks he is? He is *here*, and we are looking after him. She mustn't grieve so much.'

"On July 19th, 1915, I visited Leyton, and found that there was a Henry Street. I went to No. 6, but no one was at home. I tried next door, and the neighbour gave me the following information. The people at No. 6 are named Brownlow. The father is a constable. His name is Stanley. (The medium seems to have misheard Samuel Browning for Stanley Brownlow, but he got the address correctly.) I asked for information about the mother. 'She has gone away,' the neighbour said; 'health completely broken down since her little boy died, six months ago, of pneumonia. He was only five.' She went on to say, quite spontaneously and without any suggestion from me: 'I have often been to the cemetery with Mrs. Brownlow, and it was pitiful to see the way she cried and fretted over the little grave. He was her only boy.' The rest of the story as to how I tried to bring comfort to the poor mother's heart need not be told here, but

it may be pointed out, on the evidential side, that none of the sitters knew of the existence of the Brownlow family, and that to the best of my belief the medium shared their ignorance and had never been in that town. I am quite sure about this last point.

“The question arises: ‘Why did the message come through to me?’ I think there is a sort of link. It happens that my boyhood was spent at Leyton, though I have no reason to think the medium knew that. No one belonging to my family has lived there since 1904. Two of my brothers are buried in the same cemetery as the child. It seems as if perhaps one of my loved ones, witnessing the mother’s grief at an adjoining grave, interested himself with the object of obtaining some consolation for her.—F. H. WOOD (Mus. Doc.).”

This seems to me a good case, and Dr. Wood has kindly allowed me to see records of others almost equally striking. I have also heard details recently of other successfully - evidential incidents through Tyrrell’s mediumship, and on the whole I am now disposed to put a spiritistic interpretation on the results of my own sitting with him. If he ever reads this, I hope he will not feel it to be a lukewarm judgment. I merely follow the facts, and must not go farther than the facts point. If I had been able to have further sittings, I quite believe I should have obtained further facts which would have convinced me of spirit-origin. One sitting is not enough to base anything on very definitely. My conviction of other-side agency in Wilkinson’s case is complete. I have no doubt about it whatever. But it has grown gradually, and is the result of many carefully recorded and studied sittings extending over a period of years. From all I can hear. Tyrrell’s mediumship is of the



same order, and I regret that I have not been able—mainly through distance—to obtain further evidence through him.

### SITTING 12

*Friday, September 22nd, 1916. Present, J. A. H. and medium (Mr. A. Wilkinson).*

The medium arrived at 2.25 p.m., and we talked about his recent tours in Durham and elsewhere for about a quarter of an hour. Then a few minutes' silence, and clairvoyance began.

A. W.: There is some youngish man about. He would be about thirty-one or thirty-two. He builds up in the corner there. Long face, pale. Biggish nose. It's a peculiar thing, one side of his clothes seems light, the other dark. It is the light from the window, I suppose. Lister is the name I get. That might be a surname. Lister Holden or Holden Lister. These two names go together. Thirty-one or thirty-two when he passed away. Been gone some years; all about his head looks quite subtle, because he has been away some time.

J. A. H.: Quite right, that.

A. W.: You see, it's two surnames, and I can't tell which comes first. There is a very old woman with this man; very old, quite feeble. Not been long gone; clothes quite dense, fabric very real. She stands up as if he were supporting her. There's something over her head, a cap. Quite venerable; eighty-five or eighty-six. Something to do with this man. Name Amelia. She was very old. She has a fancy apron on over her dress—a lace apron. Rather particular

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in her dress. [Takes pencil and paper and writes "Lister Holden" and "Amelia."]

[Amelia Holden, who died in 1910 at something well over eighty and who appeared for the first time at my last sitting with Wilkinson (August 2nd, 1916, p. 130), was wife of a cousin of my maternal grandfather. Lister Holden, here named for the first time, was her son, who died, as I afterwards found, in 1889, aged thirty-one. I know nothing of his appearance, but I learn that a long face and big nose were characteristic of his father, who died in 1888, so perhaps the son had them also. The cap and apron are correct for Mrs. Holden. She dressed well.]

Have you known somebody, a farmer, named Lee? There are always farmers come here; I feel as if I were about cattle and hay. I get the name of Lee distinctly. Not a very old man; older than you, but not very old. I am sure he has been about a farm.

That young man and that old woman must be related to each other. They belong to each other. Related.

[Yes, mother and son (Holdens), as explained. My father had an uncle named Lee who appeared at my last sitting with Wilkinson, August 2nd, 1916, p. 129.]

There is a man here, tall, no hair about his mouth, biggish face, elderly, sixty or sixty-one or a bit more. Name, Jonas Hey. A long time passed away; twenty years or more—more than that. Did you know him? [Writes "Jonas Hey."]

J. A. H.: Yes.

[Not sure that I did. A Jonas Hey certainly lived in Thornton, dying perhaps twenty years

ago, but I do not remember his appearance. My father knew him.

Later : Have found someone who knew him. Description is fairly accurate, but my informant thinks J. H. did not shave any part of his face.]

I am taken to a farm again. A lot of people called Hey come to you.

[Mother's maiden name. But I think Jonas Hey was no relation ; certainly not a near one.]

This man might be confused with another. [This turned out correct : evidently those on the other side saw I was going wrong. The J. H. intended was a relative of mine whom I never knew.] He has been deceased many years ; you would only be very young when he died. Do you know somebody called Whetley ?

J. A. H. : I don't think so.

A. W. : Have you known somebody called Lee Whetley ?

J. A. H. : I know who that is.

A. W. : There might be two persons, one Lee and one Whetley, connected with a farm. I should think that man Lee died rather suddenly. I can't get away from somebody living—somebody living that he has known. He probably left a wife alive. There is some attraction about a farm.

J. A. H. : I should like to know what he wants. He came last time, and may be trying to complete some information.

A. W. : I didn't think he had been before.

[It was my mistake. I was thinking of old Thomas Lee, who did come at the August 2nd sitting. But obviously the man Wilkinson was



talking about was Whetley Lee, Thomas's son, who had *not* been mentioned before. He (Whetley) lived at a farm a mile and a half from here—a very lonely and out-of-the-way place, far from main roads, and very unlikely to have even been seen by Wilkinson, who lives in the opposite direction. Whetley died rather suddenly about four years ago, leaving a wife. I think she is still at the farm, but am not sure. It is a long way from the farm where her father-in-law lived, in the next valley.]

There's a lot of people here to-day. A young man between thirty and forty, dressed up in style like a parson. Black clothes. Can't see his face, but am impressed with his clothes; black. Somebody who hasn't been here before. Cockin is the name.

J. A. H. : Right.

A. W. : I am inclined to think he was in an atmosphere where parsons were.

J. A. H. : I wonder what his first name was.

A. W. : There's a very old man with him now, white hair, over eighty, stoops, was tall and well-made. His name is Joseph. He is Joseph Cockin, and the young man is with him.

[Medium takes pencil and paper, and writes "Joseph Cockin."]

J. A. H. : Quite right.

A. W. : The younger has been gone longest; he is more subtle. The old man would be eighty—quite. He has not been a parson, I think, but the young man had something to do with them. Funny name—Joseph Cockin! The young man's name must have been Cockin, but I don't get any other name. He has been longer away

It's a wonder to me that you don't see or feel these people.

[Rev. Joseph Cockin was minister at a Congregational Church in Thornton for a few years. He either left or died about 1886. I have had no knowledge of any of the family for a long time. I should think it pretty certain that Wilkinson had never heard the name before. Certainly I had never mentioned these people to him; they are very rarely in my mind. My grandfather and grandmother went to "old Cockin's" church (he would die at about eighty), but we did not, and I do not remember him. I do not know who the young Cockin can be. It is curious that Wilkinson thought that Joseph was not a minister, although he brought that sort of atmosphere.]

A. W.: Wasn't it a parson or a schoolmaster who came before? [Evidently referring to Mr. Waldron, sitting of August 2nd, p. 132.]

J. A. H.: Yes. I wish he would come again.

A. W.: He doesn't seem to be about to-day.

That old man looked as real as life. You are sure you don't feel any worse after I have been?

J. A. H.: Quite sure.

A. W.: Those are very curious names, Whetley Lee and Joseph Cockin. I think this old gentleman was rather religious; rather pious, in his way; would be about chapel life.

J. A. H.: He was a minister.

A. W.: Was he? Did you know him?

J. A. H.: I knew of him. He was rather before my time. My grandfather knew him very well.

A. W.: You have never had any communication from the lady of the glove?

J. A. H. : No, except what you got. Would you like to try now ?

A. W. : Yes.

[Gave him a glove of hers, which he handled without result for several minutes and then put down.]

I think it is best, after all, to wait for spontaneous things.

That old man—had he some local connexion ?

J. A. H. : Yes, he was a minister in Thornton.

A. W. : The young man should have had a name, too.

J. A. H. : Yes, I wonder what it was.

A. W. (after pause) : There's some old lady again, another old lady. I have seen her here before. Eighty or so. Seems as if she moves about the house. I have seen these forms mainly in that corner, but she seems to be walking round. Name, Mary. Makes me feel as if she had some hold on you, some relationship to you. She would be eighty-one or eighty-two. Been an active woman all her life. Can you make out who it is ?

J. A. H. : Yes ; my grandmother, no doubt. I wish she could send a message.

A. W. : Had she a very big family ?

J. A. H. : No. Five children, I think.

[Rather curiously, he credited this grandmother with a large family before.]

A. W. : I don't think I can get any more.

After a little general talk, not about the sitting or my deceased friends or relatives, the medium left to catch the 3.48 train.

[January 23rd, 1917.—I learn to-day that old Mr. Cockin had a son Joseph, a very promising young man who went to Africa as a missionary



and died there—before his father's death—aged between thirty and forty.]

# TABLE OF SITTINGS, WITH PRINCIPAL NAMES AND INCIDENTS

July 21st, 1914. Sarah, Jonas, Dunlop, Armitage, Leather.

December 14th, 1914. Helen and Benjamin Torrington, Mary (grandmother), Walker, James Bannister, (Edmund) Driver, Ishmael, Purcell (Timothy ?).

January 15th, 1915. Trevor, King, Elias Sidney, Moses Young, Mary Bannister, Jowett, Hanson (woman connected with a school), Mary (mother), woman with limp, Leather, Purcell (girl with music, unrecognized), man with long pinafore on, forty or forty-two, died suddenly, Jonathan Ainsworth, John Hey, Yewton (farm).

November 19th, 1915 (per Mr. Frank Knight). Ishmael Hey, Sarah, Helen Torrington and a man (her husband), father described.

January 19th, 1916. John (grandfather Hey), Jonas, Lewis, Percy Tranter, Drayton, Henry and Robert, Whitley.

February 17th, 1916. Prediction of a good-bye, Mary (mother), unrecognized young man H——, Driver, later Edmund, Mr. Walkley described, imminent funeral of old lady (Mrs. Walkley) young man's mother (unrecognized), description of father pulling cloth over, and of grandfather (Hey), James Bannister, Charlton.

April 12th, 1916. Grandmother Hey described, Jonas, Jowett, Verity and Betty Tranter, tall, lame woman, Burroughs, Burns, Helen Torrington.

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April 19th, 1916. Description of church, vicar, house (Mrs. Napier's), Hanson, Joseph, Yewton (farm), John Henry Hanson, Armitage, Lethbridge, Jim Hey, William Bannister, Ishmael, Mary (grandmother Hey), prediction of London letter and would-be borrower, Elizabeth, Levensley.

June 5th, 1916. Mrs. Ingham, Mrs. Walkley, James Hill, young man who died in tragic manner, Sarah Hey, Mary, prediction about 3, some unrecognized event of May 7th or 17th, 1861, Jabez Purcell, Lewis.

August 2nd, 1916. Thomas and Betty (Lee), John and Amelia (Holden), some Clapton or Clapham, Thomas Waldron, Pudsey connected with Mr. Lund, young man who died suddenly, mentally ill, Pudsey man named Joseph, Leather, Sarah (Mrs. Leather), Mary (my mother) and her father.

September 11th, 1916. (Medium, T. Tyrrell.) James Brearley, Dr. Richard Hodgson, Henry Sidgwick, Gurney, Samuel Carter Hall, Frances Power Cobbe, Alice Nicholson, Rev. George Edmondson, Mickey Scanlon (Mickey Scanlon).

By letter, Bannister and Mary Hill.

September 22nd, 1916. (A. W.) Lister Holden, Amelia, Whetley Lee, Jonas Hey, Joseph Cockin and young Cockin, Grandmother Hey described, "Mary."

### A CRUCIAL TEST

It may be that the critical reader, inevitably less fully acquainted with all the data than I am, will

still feel a haunting suspicion that, somehow or other, Wilkinson's normal knowledge may account for more than I think, and may cover at least the cases where my own deceased relatives and friends are concerned. I am quite sure that it does not, but I recognize that a few instances of proof approaching the crucial are desirable. I therefore emphasize the quoted facts about Elias Sidney, who was unknown to me (pages 18-21, 25, 26, 68-71, 75-77), about Mr. King, whose appearance seemed due to the call of an unexpected visitor who was unknown to the medium (pp. 67, 68), and, above all, about such cases as those in which spirits connected with some recent visitor of mine are described and named. Of this last class the case of Mrs. Torrington (pp. 62-64, 80, 102) is good, but the hardened sceptic will explain it by telepathy from me. I therefore give, below, a recent case of this kind in which the theory of telepathy from the sitter is excluded.

In a sitting on November 9th, 1916, there occurred the following :—

A. W. : Did you know somebody called Ruth Robertshaw ? R-U-T-H.

J. A. H. : I don't remember anybody at the moment.

A. W. : About sixty-three or sixty-four. She has known somebody who has been here. "Ruth Robertshaw" is not a common combination. I saw her perfectly. A crescent-shaped light was over her head, and her face was illumined. She would be inclined to be rather pious in her way.

[Quite meaningless to me. Never heard of any Ruth Robertshaw.]

This woman Ruth is no relation to you, I think. . . . There was a gentleman belonging to her, called Jacob. I think he would be her husband. Whoever he was,



he was older than her. He would be seventy-three. She would be about ten years younger; it may be in the time between them passing away—I'm not sure. I don't see him; I only hear it.

All this conveyed nothing to me. But previous experience warned me not to dismiss it hastily, and it occurred to me to write to the last visitor I had had, three days before, in case the two people belonged to her; though I thought it unlikely, because she is a Miss North, and I knew of no Robertshaws among her relatives or friends. She lives at a distance of some miles, not in Wilkinson's direction; and she has never met him, I have never mentioned her to him, she is not a spiritualist or psychical researcher, and I am confident that he does not know of her existence. She calls only rarely—perhaps three times in the last year. Her reply was:

You make me feel creepy. Ruth Robertshaw was my father's cousin—one of the sweetest women that ever lived. She was a beautiful old lady when I knew her, and *good*. Jacob was her husband. The ages given are just about right. . . .

I have since found the exact dates. Ruth died in 1888, aged sixty-three; Jacob died in 1900, aged seventy-three.

The medium also made correct statements of the nature of messages from these two people, concerning a family related to them but unknown to me, a member of which was said to be ill. All turned out correct.

I regard this as approaching "crucial" proof of supernormality, even for the outsider, if my statements are believed. To me it is conclusive of something beyond either normal knowledge on the medium's part or telepathy from me; and indeed, I can find

no satisfactory explanation except the spiritistic one. Apparently those on the other side are aware of the movements of those in whom they are still interested down here, and are in some sense "with" them, even to the extent of being perceivable by a sensitive through an after-influence left some days before.

If it is urged that the influence does not bring spirits but only establishes a rapport by which Wilkinson was able to read the mind of the distant and unknown Miss North, I say that only a credulous and superstitious person can accept such a hypothesis; for there is little or no evidence for a hypothetical mind-reading of that kind.

### SITTING 13

Hitherto, except for one sitting with Tyrrell, I have kept to one series of sittings with the medium A. Wilkinson. By way of change, and as illustration of a different type of mediumship, I will now quote the reports of two sittings with the well-known London medium, Mr. A. Vout Peters. They are not evidentially very strong, but there are good points here and there.

March 2nd, 1916.

*Present, J. A. H., M. H. (sister), and medium (Mr. A. V. Peters).*

Peters came in from another room, where he had been resting, at 2.45 p.m., as arranged. No preliminary talk.

P.: Have you got anything for me to psychometrize?

[J. A. H. handed him a silver box which had belonged to Mrs. Napier and, some years earlier, to her husband.]

Two people have had this before you ; two different influences.

[Correct.]

A man, fairly tall, broad shoulders, broad forehead, hair gone white. Had a fairly good position ; clever, quick. Full of human sympathy. Deep insight into human nature. A restless feeling, full of energy, wanting to come in touch with people. Tremendous tiredness before passing away. Position of trust and honour. The person who had the box before you did not handle it much. Had it put away ; hidden, a long time.

[Fair description. Mr. N. was a country gentleman of independent means : estates in several counties.]

A lady comes. Woman of seventy or seventy-five. Rather round-faced, light eyes, hair gone very grey. Face rather thin, little wrinkled, longish hands. As she comes she brings a sense of force. Suddenly got old before she passed over. Feeling of rest.

[Unrecognized. Mr. N.'s relatives unknown to me.]

Now I am switched off to the man I first described. Got tired of everything, but did not show it. Somebody he loved had passed away before him. The lady comes in incidentally.

J. A. H. : It is the lady we want to hear from. (Meaning Mrs. N.)

P. : Another man : I should not be surprised if you did not know him. Tall, fair, light eyes. Been passed over some time.

Is that old lady your mother ?

J. A. H. : I think not.

P. : I want to sit up straight. Man, tall, longish face,



broad forehead, hair thin, eyes very blue. I am taken back some number of years—perhaps twenty or thirty. Clever. Not very happy before he died. Anxiety round about him. Whatever the cause of his death, he did not want to die. He comes as a side issue. He is sympathetic to you.

M. H.: Is he connected with the box?

J. A. H.: You had better put it down; there are many people connected with it whom we don't know much about.

[And in quarters where we could not ask.]

(P. puts box down and takes J. A. H.'s left hand, dropping it after a few sentences.)

You absorb magnetism immensely. Quick, active mentally, mind quickened by not being able to make physical exertion. Tremendous will-power: makes weak body do the mind's bidding. Dominating the body, this will-power would have even overcome the physical trouble, if it had been possible at all. You live in the world of ideas. The difficulty is to bridge over the two aspects of life. Your brain being accustomed to work on scientific bases, it is difficult to realize the purely psychic side of [? your] nature. Your mind is trained in a strong given direction, and the weak point is that the spirit cannot express itself as it would. There are both advantages and disadvantages in such a training. But we are more than mere brain. You have a creative mind—want to create things. Illness having shattered your early ambitions, you thought more into the world of ideas; getting in touch with spiritualism, which at first you did not feel drawn to, you saw the importance of life after death, and the necessity of bringing it to the front and spreading the knowledge. You are able to influence hundreds of

people in different countries. Your interests go out to hundreds.

Your work is not yet done. There is greater work for you to do in the future than you have any idea of.

How old are you—forty-three?

J. A. H.: Yes.

[Not evidential. He happened to have been told my age.]

P.: After you are forty-five you are going to get better. A curious thing will be that when the betterment takes place you will have a feeling of restlessness and distress in the lumbar regions. You have no trouble there?

J. A. H.: No.

P.: What it means I can't tell.

Your colour is blue. This is a recent development with me, seeing colours. There is blue around you—pale blue. What it means I can't tell. Very intense, tremendous vibration and force. Tremendous mental impetus. Much patience. Your interests go out to hundreds of people.

Spirit people are now building up.

Lady here, fairly tall, longish face, hair grey, nose not large, lips full, hands long. Something on her head. Tremendous interest in life. She has a bright manner—has, not had,—good housewife, very affectionate and loving. Shrewd and quick in her judgments, tremendous memory for the past. Very upright in carriage; certain amount of pride—not pride of race, but proper pride. A pretty woman when young. Comes very close to you. Ripe old age when she passed over. Been ailing a little, but not very ill; no great pain.

[Fairly good for my maternal grandmother, except that I should not have called her markedly affectionate. She died aged eighty-one, in 1890.]

There is a man who passed away, fairly tall, broad forehead, hair grey, about seventy. Eyebrows clearly marked, nose fairly long and rather broad, lips full, strong jaw, broad and thick set when younger, got thinner before passing away. Feeble of speech, something wrong with breathing apparatus. He is intensely interested to get back; he has not ever given you proper evidence of his survival, seems anxious to tell you "I am alive, I am alive!" Had worked tremendously hard when young. Strong sense of humour. Able and ambitious for himself and for others. Is it your father?

J. A. H.: Yes.

[My father died in 1898, aged sixty-six, of heart disease, which caused painfully difficult breathing and sometimes inability to speak. He had an exceptionally broad forehead, very bushy eyebrows, was stout in middle life, and indeed the whole description is accurate except that his hair was not very grey—though it was going grey particularly at the front—and that I should not have called him ambitious for himself. But he was for his children, in whose welfare and success he was keenly interested.]

You are always able to make friends with men. I see a man whom you knew when you were about thirty-eight. Fairly tall, roundish face, broad forehead, hair dark. A little younger than you. Full light moustache. Comes very close to you. Quiet and undemonstrative in manner. Not in this house—away from here. You got on well together. The interest



was kept up afterwards by correspondence, though not very much. The interest slackened, and he passed out of your life, except as a memory. You have had to let many things slip. Now he is dead, and he comes to you. Feeling of restfulness. Perhaps you met him at a seaside place, had a happy time together. Quiet and restful. Tremendous sense of humour.

[Unrecognized, but may have some truth in it. I have made friends a few times in the way indicated, but cannot remember anybody whom the description would fit.]

(P. began rubbing his eyes; tucked up his feet in the chair, crossed his legs, and sat Brahmin-fashion.)

I want to 'splain some things. I am Moonstone. I will sit like this. You are not easy to read; you wrap yourself up as in a cloak. Your life has great limitations. You want to obtain knowledge, to help others. It is difficult for your own people to come back and give you things in the minute manner desired.

You never was quite strong right from the early times. You always want to do things very thoroughly. What laid you on one side was not so much that one part of the body was affected; the whole organism was strained, and affected one part. A muscle at the top of the heart has been hurt and damaged. It is a localization of the general sensitiveness. You have a curious feeling at the left side, not so much pain as a numbness; sometimes the heart goes quick, then subsides and feels as if it were going to stop, and all the blood leaves the head. Faintness. Is it not so?

J. A. H.: Mostly right. But not the faintness.

MOONSTONE: I see no reason why you should not recover. As you advance to fifty the trouble will

affect you less. You have drawn on your reserve strength for mental power. You have now learnt how to save up your reserves. You will get better.

A lady comes who passed into spirit life many years ago. Medium height, roundish face, dark hair, lips full, forty-five to fifty. Hair partly grey. Suffered a great deal internally. Cancer or tumour. She is building up at the side of you [to M. H.]. Do you know her?

M. H.: Yes.

Marie Anne. Not quite right. Marie is right. It is Marie something.

J. A. H.: "Napier," perhaps?

[I was thinking, quite wrongly, of Mrs. Napier, the late owner of the box previously mentioned, whose real name is rather like "Marie" at the beginning.]

MOONSTONE: No. That is a second name. This is a first name—what you call a Christian name. It is one word. Marie Anne. No.

M. H.: Is it Marianne?

MOONSTONE: Marianne. Marion.

[Seemed rather puzzled, and inclined to Marion.

"Marianne"—my sister's name—is perhaps less familiar to Peters.]

She was very ill, mademoiselle. Very patient. Six months hopeless. Pain disappeared before the end. Body could suffer no more. Clever with fingers; house things with her fingers. It is all frag-men-tary. Another opportunity.

I like you [to M. H.]. You are very discriminating, and feel things very intensely. You have put yourself on one side, yet you have got a great deal of joy out of other things. You are not sorry you have

lived a little behind the curtain, and you would not change places with those who have had a more active outward life. Spiritualism will come to you a little more personally than it has done. You are going to weave it into your life. I like you for putting yourself on one side.

[All very good. My mother is fairly well described, and she died of cancer. This has not appeared in print before.]

M. H. (giving ring): Does this convey anything to you?

MOONSTONE: A place apart. This used to be worn here [putting it on the wedding-ring finger]. She got thinner before death. You got a brooch as well as this ring. There was also a watch you gave away. You did not want to feel greedy or to cause jealousy. This belonged to someone very unselfish, very sweet and gentle. Progressive, a good talker, but not like my Medie.

[Laughs; in fact, general amusement, for Peters is a fluent talker.]

Good memory; very tactful. Was that your mother?

J. A. H.: Yes.

MOONSTONE: What a splendid character! She is with you. There was an intense feeling of love for the lot of you together.

[All this is good, of my mother. The ring was her wedding-ring, now strengthened and set with diamonds. Correct about brooch and watch, but no point in "jealousy."]

You have a brother or a sister on the other side; died in childhood. [Incorrect.]

You follow what I tell you about your mother?



J. A. H.: Yes.

MOONSTONE: Fond of music. Did not play or sing, but fond of church music. I see an old church, not modern, rather worse for wear. Tower. Rather high pews. Did she attend church?

J. A. H.: No; not what is usually understood by "church."

[This was practically telling, but the matter seemed unimportant.]

MOONSTONE: What you call "chapel"?

J. A. H.: Yes.

MOONSTONE: She shows me a church, or a place with pews. You did not like going [to J. A. H.]. He used to preach long sermons. [True, but guessable enough.]

Did she give you sweets to keep you quiet and divide them in two to make them last longer? You used to sit at her right side.

[First part guessable; the other two probably true—vaguely remembered.]

The pews had doors.

J. A. H.: I don't think so.

[I was thinking of the Thornton chapel, but until I was five we lived near Halifax, and the pews may have had doors, probably had.]

MOONSTONE: Died of cancer. Got very tired before she died. You was in a bigger house then.

J. A. H.: No.

MOONSTONE: You are going to write something; a bigger book than before. It will reach a wider public. But do not hurry it. It will speak more to the heart than before; the others have been to the intellect [tapping forehead].

You know how he works? [To M. H., who said "Yes."] It will be translated into three languages.

Now I must go. I am sorry not to have done better for you.

J. A. H.: You have done quite well, and we can only do our best.

MOONSTONE: Thank you. Do better next time, perhaps. Going now. Good-bye.

J. A. H. and M. H.: Good-bye. [4.10 p.m.]

A little twitching and eye-rubbing, and Peters was himself again very quickly—probably within two minutes. We talked about things in general, or, rather, we let him talk in order that he might come round in his own way, for about ten minutes.

When the name "Marianne" was almost correctly got by Moonstone—apparently from my mother—in this sitting, both my sister and I thought it was slightly evidential, for I had not used her name in his presence. But, a day or two afterwards, I seemed to remember, dimly, that she once wrote to him at my request, when I was down with influenza, telling him not to come. (This recent visit was our first meeting with him, but I asked him for a date in January, 1915, and he was coming if I had not stopped him by a telegram of which the letter was a confirmation.) Fortunately, I have found the copy of this letter, and it is signed in full, "Marianne Hill." The date is January 25th, 1915. Hence, though it seems unlikely that Peters would consciously remember the name, the fact that he has known it removes the at-first-supposed evidentiality.

This is a rather instructive instance of the untrustworthiness of memory. I have a rather good memory for details, but at the time of the sitting and for some time afterwards I had no conscious recollection of that letter; and when I asked my sister

whether she had written to Peters for me at that time, she did not remember having done so.

### SITTING 14

*March 3rd, 1916, with A. V. Peters. Present, J. A. H., M. H., and medium.*

In the following report I omit a few things which concern living people only slightly known to me; but the omitted portions do not count either way with regard to evidentiality.

Medium came in at 2.45 p.m.

P.: Have you anything you specially want me to do?

J. A. H.: Here is a letter from a friend of mine who has lost a relative. I should like to get a message for him. But if you don't get anything in a few minutes, I will give you something else.

[I had prepared and written out these sentences, and had them before me as I spoke. The letter was from Sir Oliver Lodge, and contained nothing that would indicate the writer's identity. It was entirely about a certain Greek sentence. I had, of course, cut off the address and the signature. At that time Sir Oliver had never written to Peters; moreover, I gave the letter wrong way round, so that he could not read it or get much idea of the handwriting. He folded it up instantly, crushed it into his left palm, and put the hand behind him.]

P.: The man who has written this letter is very quick, active, clever. Used to writing. I have a



curious feeling of wanting to speak rapidly, though he expresses himself deliberately. He has his thoughts pretty well pigeon-holed. No loose thinking. No unformed theories of life. Busy, active life. Much kindness and sympathy, though the heart side is not seen by everybody; rather hidden away.

This passing away made a tremendous difference to the writer's life. Before, he had an amateurish interest in spirit return; it is now different. Great interest. . . . Deep, affectionate nature; firm and lasting in friendship.

I don't understand this: kind of fragmentary; St. Paul comes here. Somebody is laughing and saying, "St. Paul." Truly religious; done a great deal of intellectual work, but not like it will be done in future. It will be better still. This is the man of the letter. He is somebody one can rely on.

[Sir Oliver has had many communications from a *soi-disant* Myers, through several different mediums, and an allusion to St. Paul has been used before, as an indication of identity. "St. Paul" is, of course, Myers's best-known poem.]

A lady's influence comes; affectionate, loving, considerate, good housewife.

Now there is contact with a young life: medium height, broad forehead, light eyes, longish hands, athletic build, quick in action and thought, full lips, bright and intellectual. Somebody who has passed away. His passing came quickly and unexpectedly. A feeling of happiness now. This is not his first time of communication. He has attempted in three different manners. I cannot form my ideas properly; I can't tell why. Queer. I feel unable to express myself in English. Do you know why?

J. A. H.: No.

[Perhaps indication of death abroad. Lieutenant Raymond Lodge was killed in Flanders.]

P.: I am to get at this young life. First the writer of the letter, then a lady, then the young life.

Tremendous interest on the other side created by this spirit's passing, because there has been work stopped.

[Not understood.]

In many ways I am sorry [P. seemed to be repeating what was dictated from the other side; eyes shut], and did not want to leave the body. But I am not alone, and the work I have started is going to reach out to hundreds. . . . Feeling of rest. This spirit links up with you. You may not have known him—I don't know. But you are going to have something to do with it. . . .

Hang it all! what has "human personality" to do with it? [Medium jumped up and sat down again.] I feel I want to throw back my head and laugh, and say: What has "human personality" to do with it?

[No doubt everybody knows about Myers's great work, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death.*]

I like this influence. Pleasant, soothing, nothing restless. Now the laughter has gone, and there is a sterner note. Tell Father every word. [Said slowly and very impressively.] Please put this down.

Tell Father that the time has come when the veil must be dropped. I can do no more. He will have to do the rest himself.

Great love of books, but I would not say he was a booky man. Too great interest in life for that. . . . It is not only a survival . . . m— . . . can't get

it. . . . Not only persistence but intelligent communication between the two planes of existence. Not simply a knocking on the rocks but a great hole has now been bored. [This reference to the tunnel metaphor in Sir Oliver's *Survival of Man*, p. 337, original edition, was similarly used as an identity-touch at Lady Lodge's first sitting with Peters, when she was introduced anonymously, at a friend's house in London. See Sir Oliver's recent book, *Raymond: A Treatise on Life and Death*, p. 133.] . . . Do not be surprised; I have come into touch with Huxley. I send my love to four, no, five. [It happens that five of the Lodge family had had sittings at which Raymond had purported to communicate; and the medium was not always Peters. One daughter went with Lady Lodge, and the "four, no, five" perhaps indicates that she was momentarily overlooked.]

That's all. [Medium throws crumpled letter on table. I gave him a glove of Mrs. Napier's.]

Restlessness. Careful and particular. Not very tall, longish face, broad forehead. Face went thin before passing out. Precise, punctual, loving, gentle in disposition. Feeling of pain. . . . A big tradition; quiet, yet ancestry at the back of it; outside, a grey life, but very active really. Has been able to come before, but not as successfully as she wished. Tried through two different women, one of them probably not a professional medium, for I see her in a comfortable, protected home life.

Proud of ancestry. Ancestors have *done* things. Patient. Neat in clothing. Religious, but broad-minded.

[Pretty good, but not specific enough to be evidential.]



Medium rubs his eyes and tucks his feet up.

3.20 p.m.]

MOONSTONE : Here I come at last !

We are here and alive all right, if we haven't got troublesome bodies any more. No suffering of that sort. The only thing we suffer from is remorse. Know what that is ?

J. A. H. : Yes.

M. : But it is no good worrying over it, for what is done is done. Some people are very apt to sit down and think of their sins. No good. I was a Yogi. My life was given up to salvation of my soul ; escape from reincarnation. It was selfish, in a way ; but it was what I had been taught. Repentance is very good ; but when you have gone downhill into valley of repentance, no good sticking there, worrying with remorse. Thing to do is to get up and walk up the hill again. So with life on both sides, though you have bodies and we haven't.

But many people think they can advance in life better with us than in the body. It is not so. Bodily mistakes are best corrected while in the body. Overcome the sins of the material world while in that world, and help others to do the same.

You cogitate a lot on met-a-physical subjects ?

J. A. H. : Yes, I suppose so.

M. : Spiritualism has not given you much food for thought. The literature has disappointed you. But what chance do the mediums have, poor beggars ! Majority of them is knocked about from pillar to post, pushed round to trot out evidence. What time have they, or what chance, for thinking and metaphysics ?

J. A. H. : True. I sympathize.

M. : But knowledge is best when worked for. It is

best to find it himself. We only really have what we have laboured for.

Spirit world is an extension of earth experience. When there is wrong use of anything, best to make it right. Easier to right wrong while in physical world. But I don't want to talk metaphysics to you, for I have plenty to see.

When you are doing a good hard think, as you often do, an idea will come into your mind. You analyse it away, away, away. Where has it originated? It has come from our side. You are going to write a book. You are able to present an outline of the philosophy of spiritualism so that not only people of elephantine brains, but ordinary people, can understand.

Now to pierce the mist, if I can.

You have got two or three of you a link together. You want to bring spiritualism into touch with a better class of people. Feeling of wanting to elevate it, and let people see that there is a great truth at the back of it. Not only you, but four or five persons, mostly men. I go away into very busy place, then into a suburb district where it has been originated, to link on to London. There is a certain Society: they want to link it on. Not originated with you, but with our side. The time has come when it has to be approached differently. Something world-wide useful, and not only scientific.

[Moonstone then began to speak very deliberately, and most of the leaders of the Society for Psychical Research, living and dead, were alluded to. For various reasons, this part must be omitted.]

The disasters that have swept over earth recently have stirred up more emotion from your side to ours and made communication easier.

Not good, he tells me. Can't get it.

There was a man all fireworks, known as Stead. Although making many mistakes, he was yet right in the main.

It doesn't matter how communications come, if they come.

Tell Hill [slowly and emphatically], tell Hill—that's you—I want this transcribed and sent to O. L., because it is for him more than for Hill.

It is only through him that this regeneration can come. If he does not do it, then the means which we have at our hands will be removed from our country and the time will be past.

This comes from a group of personalities who are behind you [J. A. H.].

There is a man in that group with a long face, and hair cut in a curious way. Parted in the middle. Large eyes, long nose. Moustache, long hand, slight body. An air of breeding; highly intellectual; deliberate method. Greek letters; he was a Greek scholar. Very interested in you. A lady to do with him. He make A. S.

[Curiously, I did not think of Professor Sidgwick, perhaps because I knew he had a beard and parted his hair at the side. The moustache and middle parting would apply to Edmund Gurney, who is one of the S.P.R. group on the other side.]

He has been on the other side a fairly long time. Interested in this subject intellectually. It ends up with "wick" or "dick."

[This, of course, indicated plainly who was intended.]

J. A. H.: Are you sure about the A?



M.: It looked like A.

[Dr. Sidgwick's name was Henry, and it is certain that the medium knows or will have known it. It is therefore curious that this mistake should be made; and it is noteworthy that if the uprights of H were made carelessly, slanting inward at the top, the letter would look like A.]

Interested in the subject, but not very heartily in it. He now sees the necessity of appealing to the middle-class average man. He led a quiet life: would have been in a monastery. Lived in a college. This isn't the man who gave that message. Oh, no; the man who gave the message is different.

Languid: retiring—still talking about the college man. Used to talking to students.

J. A. H.: Did he speak fluently?

[Thinking of his stammer. Control looked puzzled; guessed—and guessed wrong.]

M.: Yes. Clearly. Sentences cut like a diamond. People would listen to all he had to say.

They are trying an experiment to-day; trying to get at the man the Medie is afraid of. There's a man comes to see the Medie he's afraid of. But don't say so to him, for he likes to make out that he has the courage of a lion!

[At Sir Oliver's first sitting with Peters, anonymously, the medium said he was afraid of him, but did not know why. Sir Oliver's appearance is well known and striking, and he may have been recognized; but in answer to a question of mine in October, 1916, Peters said he had no idea who that sitter was until after his next visit. The sittings were at Peters's London rooms, and

were arranged by me for an unnamed friend. I think Peters would be expecting some Bradford or local man, but, of course, this is only conjecture. It is noteworthy that at Lady Lodge's first and anonymous sitting with Peters, Raymond said she had done right to come "without father," as the latter would have frightened the medium out of his wits. There is no reason to believe that Lady Lodge was recognized by the medium; this sitting was not arranged by me but by a London friend of Lady Lodge.]

Who's the old man got funny whiskers? Square forehead, hair caught away here [indicating temples], nose full, clean-shaven lips, upper lip hangs over. Whiskers here [indicating sides]. Scientific, cold. Not a man you would tell your heart troubles to. Very clever. Cold, scientific aspect.

[It is fairly certain that this is meant for Huxley; the description is good, though the coldness—a popular view—is probably exaggerated.]

That man who sent the message. Fairly tall, expressive eyes, long nose, face gone thin. Moustache. Had led a retired life. Done a lot of teaching.

[Seems to be a Sidgwick-Gurney-Myers mix-up, here.]

A man not apart from human feelings [Terence, *Nihil humani*, etc.]. Was family man; married. Not coldly scientific. Deeply religious. Interested first in spiritualism, attracted by the possibilities in universal testimony of the collected hallucinations and of the testimony of the subject of being able to receive the news of death at a distance [said slowly and in a puzzled way, like a child repeating something only half understood].

J. A. H.: He's talking about the Census of Hallucinations. [*Proceedings, S.P.R.*, Vol. x.]

M.: That's it!

In meeting a lady, Miss [here I expected Miss Alice Johnson's name] X. . . . G. F. . . . X. G. F. . . . she helped me only a little [Miss Goodrich-Freer wrote at first as "Miss X.," but no doubt the medium knows that]. For some time I was beating about the wilderness . . . not right. For some time I was wandering about the wilderness until I met the lady who helped me. Illness came. A removal came. A journey came. Death came. [Myers died in Rome, but no removal late in life.] But not the finish; my book I left behind. [*Human Personality* was published after his death.]

This is a strong message. Now I am told your part of the work commences from that point. You were attracted by the cross-correspondences [not specially true; I was a member of the S.P.R. earlier than that]. Being laid on one side you had time to think and cogitate. Being brought into touch with other people who thought along your intellectual lines—and especially with one—you saw the necessity of widening the outlook, but you did not see the possibility. Now the war has come, so I am linked on to the beginning of the message. [Pause.]

J. A. H.: Does Horace remind you of anything in connexion with O. L.?

[I had prepared this. It gave nothing away, for Moonstone had already mentioned O. L., and there is much about Horace in connexion with Myers, in *Proceedings S.P.R.* But my aim was to see whether anything would come relevant to an unpublished piece of Piper script which I had seen,



in which Myers sent a special message to Sir Oliver, embodied in an allusion to an Horatian ode, Bk. 2, xvii., saying that he would act Faunus to Sir Oliver's Poet ; i.e. shield him from some blow, as Faunus shielded Horace from the falling tree. See *Raymond*, p. 90 and foll., and *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Part lxxii., p. 111 and foll.]

M. [after pause]: Can't get his answer.

Very curious. I see verses. Too indefinite. Verses in English language. "O had I a little farm!" What's this mean? I get a picture of two mice. . . . One mouse is very smooth and nice; hair brushed prettily; fat. The other is rough and not so pretty. A little laugh. Somebody is laughing. I am in contact with someone who hasn't forgotten how to laugh.

What has that to do with a book? A little book, covered with leather. Curious title-page, much worn. Dear to you through age. It is held up to me. That's all. . . .

The power is slackening.

Medie was a little afraid of you at first.

Going now. Do not move until the Medie is quite right again, for I have had him pretty deep. Good-bye.

[Medium came round with ejaculations. "Oh, dear! Have you ever had gas? It's like that," etc.]

The answers to my Horace question are curious. I was not reminded of anything in particular by either the farm or the mice, for I was thinking of Faunus. But on looking up I found that the reference is obviously to Satire vi. in Book ii. of Horace's *Satires*, in which he describes his little farm and quotes the fable of the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse, in connexion

with his own preference for country life. Mr. Piddington (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Part lxxii.) sees in all this an apposite and evidential Myersian answer to my query, for it was on Horace's little farm that the tree fell and nearly killed him. A direct reference to Faunus would have been attributed to a reading of my mind; a roundabout allusion was therefore made, in order to exclude telepathy.

Another interpretation, to which Sir Oliver Lodge inclines, is that the answer refers to Mr. Oliver W. F. Lodge—Sir Oliver's eldest son—who has written "verses in English language" and had recently moved to a "little farm," very like Horace's, near Tintern. If so, telepathy from me is quite excluded, for I knew nothing of Mr. Oliver Lodge's move.

The difficulty is, of course, to decide not only which of the two is the more probable, but also whether either of them is necessary. Most reading people have read Horace, and Peters's own memory-stores, including his subliminal strata, may be enough to account for what was said, without assuming any external mind. I questioned him afterwards about his knowledge of Horace, and his conscious recollection seems to be almost *nil*. He thought the Mice fable was in Prior. (Prior does refer to it, but does not reproduce it.) But we have to allow for subliminal recollection also, and it is unsafe to assume total ignorance of anything in so widely-read an author as Horace.

On the other hand, it is to be noted that so far as Peters could know, my question was not necessarily about Horace the poet at all. It might have been in reference to some modern Horace, living or dead, connected with "O. L." The immediate acceptance of it as meaning Horace the poet seems to tell slightly in

favour of an interpretation involving the presence and action of Myers, who would at once understand what I was after. And the manner of the reply was quite in character with other cryptic Myersian allusions which have come through in other quarters. Moreover, although much of the matter of the sitting is common knowledge, I think there are many indications of supernormality, and even of discarnate agency. In the first place, even if Peters knew of my association with Sir Oliver Lodge—certainly he had learnt nothing of it from me,—it seems unlikely that his psychometry of the letter was guesswork. It might have been quite off the mark, for I get many letters from people who have lost relatives recently. And there are many little points which seem possibly evidential. For instance, the S.P.R. group is indicated in a curiously ingenious and “composite” sort of way. Sidgwick, Myers, and Gurney are suggested as shown in the notes. There remains Hodgson. And, though his name is not mentioned, the references to laughter, and particularly to throwing back the head and laughing, are extremely applicable to him, and not specially to the others. The references to Sir Oliver’s book and to my own may be guesses, but they certainly went beyond the medium’s knowledge. On the whole, then, I think that at least some supernormality is justifiably inferrible, and that some amount of other-side communication probably took place.

As to whether Sir Oliver Lodge’s or Mr. Piddington’s interpretation of the Horace incident is the more correct, I do not know. It does not matter much, for both indicate a Myers source. In fact, they may both be true. Myers may have had both Faunus and Mr. Oliver Lodge’s farm in mind. He knew Mr. O. L. in



life, and took a kindly interest in his budding poetic faculty; and it is natural that he should be interested in the move of the son of his old friend to a Horace-like farm which, moreover, lent itself to an evidential message in his characteristic manner.

But I do not consider this sitting a really good one. It is interesting but not evidentially strong. Much of the matter is mere padding or control-talk, and the indications of an external mind are suggestive rather than coercive.



## CHAPTER VII

### Of Mediums, Sitters, and "Trivial" Evidence

LEST it should be supposed that the obtainment of evidence is a quite certain and facile matter, it is perhaps desirable to elaborate the warning on this head. Investigators are sometimes found to begin their quest with such high expectations of immediate success that a few disappointments come as a painful shock; and there is danger that they may rush to other extremes and believe either that evidence is so elusive and exceptional that it is hardly worth the trouble—and may, indeed, be attributed to happy chance—or that we who have obtained it are somehow or other mistaken. The right attitude is one of open-minded hopefulness, with small expectancy, and judgment held alert and critical. Careful notes should be taken at the time—verbatim if possible, though this necessitates the easy use of shorthand—and particular attention should be given to noting down what is said by the sitter, so that in studying the report afterwards it will be possible to estimate with some reliability the amount of information imparted or inferrible. And what the medium says should be reported as fully as possible; firstly, in order that the correct statements may be compared with the incorrect in total, and a decision arrived at as to the likelihood of chance coincidence giving the proportion of success achieved; secondly,

because things which are unrecognized and apparently negligible may turn out important in the light of further sittings, as the reader will have noticed in my own investigations.

It is, of course, vitally important that a good medium should be chosen, particularly for the first experiments, when failure would be most likely to discourage. I have sat with mediums whose futile performances, if I had witnessed them at the beginning of my quest, would almost certainly have deterred me from further inquiry. I should probably have assumed that all other mediums were like unto them, dismissing the evidential cases which one reads about as due to chance coincidence, or fraud, or other normal cause. I should have been wrong, but that is what I should probably have done.

Like travellers who spend a few weeks in New York and then write books about America and the Americans, we all are apt to generalize from insufficient data. Only the other day I had an experience with one of these failure-mediums. I had been recommended by a prominent and intelligent spiritualist to try this Mrs. Drury (pseudonym), and I did. In the first instance I wrote to her (keeping a copy of the letter), asking her to come and give me a sitting, because I wanted to hear from someone who had recently died. She came; talked genially and sensibly, and eventually described half-a-dozen spirits or more, and would apparently have gone on indefinitely. Not one of the spirits was recognizably anyone ever known to me. Only one name was correctly got—a very common name which would fit some deceased relative of almost anyone. The medium felt that someone in my surroundings wept a great deal (which is extremely untrue),



and that a glove which I gave her was therewith associated. The glove, she thought, had belonged to my mother, who had died suddenly and without expecting it, not many months ago. Apparently she had made a guess that the recent death alluded to in my letter was probably my mother's. As a matter of fact, my mother died thirty years ago, after a lingering illness which both she and everybody round her knew to be incurable. The glove had not belonged to her, but to a lady friend, not a relative; and in her case also the death was neither sudden nor unexpected. Mrs. Drury made many other bad shots; so many that it was a matter of surprise to me that the number of hits, or approximate hits, was so few; for I should have expected chance to give her more than she got.

Now I believe this woman to be perfectly honest. But I think that she is guided, consciously or subliminally, by hints given by sitters, and that her active visualizing imagination does the rest. No doubt she will have the luck to score a number of good hits sometimes, particularly when giving "clairvoyant tests" to a large audience—for out of a hall full of people nearly any sort of description will apply to some deceased relative of somebody present—and an uncritical person will tend to remember the hits and forget the misses. Consequently, according to my belief, many "mediums" of the public kind have more or less of a reputation which has no basis in any real psychical endowment at all. They are good platform speakers, and combine an address with clairvoyance in the recognized convention of the spiritualist society; but the clairvoyance in their case is not real, and, indeed, this class of "medium" does not get beyond societies of rather weak and uncritical kind. They

are therefore fairly easily avoided, though it is necessary to mention them in warning.

But if care is taken in the early choice and experimentation, I think there is little danger of complete failure. I regard it as unlikely that anyone will fail to get some small measure of success in a series of, say, half-a-dozen sittings. I have heard of people having a larger number without getting any evidence, but I think the cases must have been exceptional, or perhaps the sittings were more or less public, and no determined individual effort was made. Private sittings, so that there is no mixture of influences, are usually essential to good results. In most cases known to me, some evidence of supernormality has been given at the first sitting, and it has only remained to eliminate by further experiment the various alternative hypotheses of telepathy, etc., which, though unlikely, are possible. At my own first sitting with a medium, many years ago, my mother's name was given, her age at death, and its date (within a year) and the name of the place where she died, from which locality we had removed. I had told the medium none of these things, and accidental knowledge of them was improbable to the point of complete incredibility; further, they could not be attributed to chance, for everything said was true, so it was not a case of selecting hits and ignoring misses. There were no misses. Consequently, there was a clear issue. It was either a reading of my mind, or the medium had deliberately made inquiries about my long-deceased mother, or the communication was from some other mind—presumably her own. Further investigation eliminated the first two suppositions. It took several years and many sittings to convince me of this, for I wished to make the ground thoroughly

sure before risking any advance; but my accumulated facts ultimately gave me an amply solid basis for the new conclusion of the genuine agency of discarnate human intelligences.

Now as to the alleged "triviality" of communications. Some inquirers at the beginning of their quest, or, rather, at the beginning of their reading of the literature of the subject, object to the triviality and the so-to-speak secular tone of the reported messages. They think that a glorified human being should sermonize a little, or should at least tell us something of his present state; and they are rather shocked to find that he sends his love to this or that relative, and is glad that his watch is being kept for little nephew Tom. But, on reflection, this is surely seen to be the right and natural thing. As already said, death is a catastrophe on the physical plane, but is only an incident to the spirit. The man remains essentially the same. As the old woman said to Little Nell, in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, "death doesn't change us more than life"—no, nor as much. The other opinion is the result of obsolete theologies which, though discarded, leave a more or less subconscious but nevertheless very real impression behind them; in consequence of which impression we feel a jar or jolt when some radically different idea is presented to us. The Protestant orthodoxy of the last three centuries supposed a sudden change at death. Man became angel or devil; went to everlasting bliss—presumably becoming perfectly good—or to everlasting torment—presumably becoming absolutely bad—*instantly*.

But this is not the way things do happen. Nothing is really catastrophically sudden like that. Things grow out of what has gone before. Lyell showed this



in geology—how, for instance, sandstone was formed by long-continued deposition on the sea floor, as it is being formed to-day. Darwin showed it in biology, proving that species become gradually differentiated, and that each line progresses smoothly, or at most with very small jumps—namely, the favourable variations. And now comes the equivalent on the psychical side. We see now that physical analogies point to the probability of a gradual and not a catastrophical and tremendous change at death. A change there must be, in manner of perception, for the spirit has dropped his old sense-apparatus. But the man himself, his spiritual and mental essence, remains very much the same five minutes after death—to quote the Bishop of London—as he was five minutes before. That is what we arrive at by a wide survey of physical science and by arguing analogically therefrom. And the facts of psychical research support this view. The spirit remains himself, with his old interests. He progresses, learns, improves, and gradually passes away from earth conditions; but for some time—the period varying in different cases—he remains something like what he was. And, therefore, it is natural for him to communicate in a quite human and secular manner when he “returns” not long after his departure, and to send the same sort of messages to his loved ones left behind, as he would send to them if he had only emigrated to another part of the physical world. Moreover, it is precisely this kind of message, with names of relatives and intimate family detail, that gives the best evidence of identity. Those who demand sermonizing and lofty communications would speedily be dissatisfied if they got them. “How do we know,” they would say, “that this is a spirit at all? How

do we know the medium isn't doing it himself? Anyone with inventive faculty could talk this sort of thing." And they would be quite right. That sort of thing would be eminently unconvincing and unsatisfactory.

As a matter of fact, a great deal of this unverifiable but "higher" information does come through; and, after identity has been established, it is admissible and interesting. Spiritualistic literature abounds in volumes of automatic writing which describes conditions on the other side and inculcates moral and religious teaching. Stead's *After Death*, Stainton Moses' *Spirit Teachings*, F. Heslop's *Speaking Across the Borderline*, and Mr. L. V. H. Witley's books may be mentioned as examples. No doubt in each case the recipient became satisfied of the sender's identity, by evidential tests, and then published the other writings—which mostly fail to impress us, for we do not know the details of the identity tests, and we cannot verify the statements about other-side conditions. But the fact remains that the statements are there in plenty; so the objection about communications always being trivial, besides being misplaced—small personal details being very useful as identity evidence—is, indeed, not even true.

## CHAPTER VIII

### False Statements and their Explanation : and Remarks on Wilkinson's "Forms"

IF all survival-evidence were as clear and consistent as that which I have obtained in my own investigations, the thing would seem to my mind not only settled but also quite simple. In my evidence the facts all point one way ; they are interpretable on the spirit-theory, and they contain no incident that is inconsistent therewith, while they do contain many incidents which in my opinion are inconsistent with any other reasonable hypothesis. Judging from my own first-hand experience, I should have no doubt or difficulties.

But in studying other evidence it is different. While finding much that supports my own view, I find much to puzzle me. Apparently my friend Mr. Wilkinson is an extraordinarily good medium, for he is hardly ever wrong. He may not get much at some sittings, if he is in poor form or conditions are unfavourable, but what he gets is usually correct.<sup>1</sup> With most other mediums there is a good deal of padding, also a certain amount of "fishing," and sometimes false statements of an out-and-out character inconsistent with at least part of the spiritistic claim.

<sup>1</sup> He does not give private sittings in a general way, being nervous about not getting results. He is kind enough to sit for me, practically without remuneration, because he knows that I understand. I am greatly indebted to him for the unselfish help without which I should never have reached my present conclusions.



For example, the Conner series of incidents in the case of Mrs. Piper.<sup>1</sup> Now I believe, with Mrs. Sidgwick and other cautious and sceptical investigators, that supernormally-acquired knowledge was often displayed in Mrs. Piper's speech or script, and that it is difficult to explain all of this without supposing in some cases the agency of dead people. The case of George Pelham, described in Vol. xiii. of *Proceedings S.P.R.*, is particularly impressive; indeed, granting the honesty of Dr. Richard Hodgson who superintended the investigation and wrote the report—an honesty which no one has ever impugned,—the evidence in this case is almost coercive.

But what about the other aspect? A young American named Dean Bridgman Conner went to Mexico City in 1894, was employed as electrician at a theatre, became ill with typhoid fever, and in March, 1895, was reported by the Consul to have died at the American Hospital and to have been buried in the American cemetery. Some months afterwards, however, the young man's father had a dream in which his son appeared and informed him that he was alive and in captivity, being held to ransom in Mexico. Mrs. Piper was consulted by friends of the Conners, trance sittings were held, and the controls—by aid of rapport-objects belonging to D. B. Conner—purported to trace his movements and whereabouts. They confirmed the father's dream, and stated that the missing man was in or near Puebla, in a building which they described, guarded by a man whom they described and named. Several investigators went to Mexico, one after the other, and it was finally established by Mr. Philpott, who found the nurse who was with

<sup>1</sup> *The Quest for Dean Bridgman Conner*, by Anthony J. Philpott.

Conner when he died, that the Consul's report was perfectly true, and that the dream and the trance "information" were, so far as Conner was concerned, entirely wrong.

Now it is not particularly surprising that ostensible spirit communicators should make mistakes, for we do not suppose them to have become omniscient by the mere dropping of their physical bodies. They know more than we do, but they do not know everything. When we ask them questions we must not expect infallibility in the answers. But this does not dispose altogether of the Conner case.

In the first place, it is queer that such definite and persistent statements should be made, if the controls knew that they were imaginary and false; for the said controls might have known that investigations would be started and the deception discovered. It seems more probable—bizarre though the idea is—that the controls, whatever they are, cannot always distinguish between objective truth and their own imaginations. And, after all, the idea is perhaps not so bizarre as it seems at first. When we dream, we have no test of objective truth; all seems real to us. If we described, while still asleep, all that we are experiencing in a dream, a waking listener would find many references to existing people and things, and correct statements of various sorts, mixed with much falsity and nonsense. Now it seems certain that whatever these controls are, there is something sleep-like in their condition: the medium is in a sleep-like trance, and this, *plus* the more specific internal evidence of what is said, suggests that the control is more or less in a sleep-like state, and, indeed, is inevitably so. In some such way as this we can account for the curious mixture

of sense and nonsense, knowledge and ignorance, that is shown in these trance phenomena. The control, we say, being in a sleep-like condition, is not always able to distinguish between what is true (true on our waking plane) and what is due to the dreaming activity of his own or the medium's mind. The Conner case, therefore, with all its mistakes, does not invalidate the true things that constitute good evidence for survival in other parts of Mrs. Piper's experience.

Another point, however, must be mentioned. In Mrs. Piper's trances a large number of controls purported to appear at different times. Of these George Pelham gave by far the best evidence of his identity. Some others gave fair evidence, and some none at all. And some few of the persons mentioned were obviously dream-creations. For example, an Adam Bede was alluded to as a real individual on the other side, as well as a George Eliot! Also Julius Cæsar, who, though possible, seems hardly probable. And the troublesome thing is that George Pelham vouches for the reality of the others. If we admit that George Pelham has proved his identity, how can we reject Julius Cæsar whom he introduces? And what about Adam Bede?

This is the question that occupied Mrs. Sidgwick in her laborious inquiry in Vol. xxviii., *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*. Her final opinion is that the controls stand or fall together, and that George Pelham is a subliminal fraction of Mrs. Piper, like all the others. At the same time Mrs. Sidgwick affirms without hesitation that supernormally-acquired knowledge was displayed in Mrs. Piper's trances, and that some of it justifies the hypothesis of communication from the dead. She therefore distinguishes carefully



between the *control*—the subliminal fraction which is the intelligence proximately operative—and the *communicator*, who may be a person in the spiritual world, a person who can somehow send his message through the control. In cases like Pelham's, a real G. P. was there in the background, and was exceptionally successful in getting his messages through. In the Conner case, there was no spirit communicator there at all; the subliminal fractions of Mrs. Piper's dream-self were having it all their own way.

Something like this is probably true. I believe that many trance controls, not only some of Mrs. Piper's, may be dream-creations of this sort. But I do not feel able to say that *all* controls are such. In specially good evidential cases, as sometimes with G. P., the identity-evidence flows so freely, and the give-and-take with the sitter is so quick, that it is difficult to visualize the process as telepathy through a personation. It seems much more like direct control by the communicator himself. Perhaps we can accept this and at the same time get over the Julius Cæsar and Adam Bede difficulty by supposing these latter personations to be dreams of the real G. P. control, rather than of Mrs. Piper's subliminal. But on this question of the real nature of controls I feel that we do not yet know enough to dogmatize; perhaps not even enough to begin distinguishing—except for convenience of description—between control and communicator. It is a matter of detail, and is interesting and no doubt psychologically important, but it does not affect the main fact that survival-evidence comes.

From the psychical research point of view it does not much matter whether it comes from the communicator at first hand or whether it comes from him

*via* a mouthpiece or channel which calls itself and perhaps believes itself to be a spirit. The main thing is that the evidence comes. The psychological process can be analysed and determined in due course. But I mention the problem in order that the difficulties may be seen. I have no wish to make the case out to be better than it is. There are puzzling problems still to be solved, particularly in regard to trance mediumship. But while in fairness insisting on the recognition of these difficulties, I must also in fairness repeat and emphasize the fact that in my experience these difficulties have hardly occurred at all. For in my sittings with trance-mediums I have never had any such mystifications as the Conner case, and in my sittings with Mr. Wilkinson, which have given me my best evidence, there was not the complication of the trance.

It may, however, be suitable here to discuss briefly the nature of the "forms" which this medium sees. He is not in trance—is, indeed, in a normal or at most slightly "absent" state; yet there is something unusual and abnormal in the phenomena, for the figures are invisible to ordinary sight. What, then, are they?

I do not know. I feel that I can offer only the most provisional guesses; but these, for what they are worth, I will state.

The forms, *plus* the clairaudience, convey information, as I believe, from certain disembodied people. But I do not think that what Wilkinson sees and hears is an affair of matter in any ordinary sense of the word. When he "hears" a name, I do not think he hears it with his ears, as a result of air-waves. If he did, I think I should hear it, too, however low a whisper it might be, for I have exceptionally acute

hearing. I have reason to believe, from various indications, that in ordinary physical auditory sensitiveness the medium's nerves are no more delicate than my own. The clairaudience is psychical; an "inner" hearing.

Similarly with the seeing. Wilkinson almost certainly does not see the forms with his physical eyes, for he often describes details which he could not see on an ordinary incarnate person at the apparent distance. The perception is psychic, inner, and is translated only by habit into the visual form. Such experience, in varying forms and degrees, is not confined to professional mediums. In fact, it is fairly common. For instance, Mr. Edward Carpenter tells of something of the sort in connexion with his mother. "For months, even years, after her death, I seemed to feel her, even see her, close to me, always figuring as a semi-luminous presence, very real, but faint in outline, larger than mortal."<sup>1</sup> And, of course, apparitions, even of evidential order, are fairly numerous, as the Society for Psychical Research has shown by its laborious census. The difference is that while Mr. Carpenter saw only his mother, and other percipients similarly saw people with whom they had some link of affection, Mr. Wilkinson's perceptivity is so much more delicate and keen that he sees people unknown to him, and even people unknown to the sitter. By making his mind quiet, hushing his senses, orientating himself the other way, so to speak, he perceives in the other world; and perceives very truly, though only in gleams or flashes.

It has often been remarked, with regard to apparitions, that the ghost behaves in an aimless sort of way,

<sup>1</sup> *My Days and Dreams*, p. 106.



standing about or moving without apparent purpose ; and this has been tentatively explained by the supposition that the ghost is not " all there "—that it is, perhaps, a *partial* manifestation of the person it represents, his main portion being elsewhere, as our main mental portion is elsewhere or in abeyance when we are asleep. In fact, apparitions have been called " the dreams of the dead," and there is almost certainly some sort of truth in it. In a case known to me, a girl was frightened into brain fever by violent rappings lasting nearly all night, and it turned out that her brother had been killed, a few minutes before the rappings began. (It was before the war, and the young man was not in any specially dangerous employment, so there was no anxiety or expectation.) If we attribute the knockings to the activity of the brother's spirit, it seems clear that his full consciousness was not there, for he would not have wished to terrify his sister thus. The probable explanation is that he did not know what effects he was producing in the material world. His mind would naturally turn to his favourite sister, and he would try to speak to her or to attract her attention ; but, finding himself suddenly in a new state, and being upset and bewildered, he did not fully know what he was doing.

The people whose forms Mr. Wilkinson sees have mostly been gone some time and have become accustomed to their new state. The forms consequently do not behave in any erratic or distressing manner, but they do give an impression of being only a partial manifestation of the spirit's full consciousness. Sometimes they are described as motionless images, remaining for perhaps a quarter of an hour and then fading gradually away ; as if the spirit had manufactured a

form out of something half-way between spirit and matter, for purposes of identification. There is a curious resemblance between the general conception which these particular phenomena suggest to me, and the conceptions of the early Greeks and Romans, who described the heroes in the Place of Shades as having a rather dull and aimless time of it; but the real hero—the man himself—is in bliss elsewhere. It would almost seem that the philosophers and poets had had visions somewhat like modern apparitions and like Mr. Wilkinson's forms, which led them to this idea of dim and half-conscious shadows—the "astral" shapes of the Theosophists.<sup>1</sup> But we must not digress further. My point is that the forms are not the spirits themselves, but are partial manifestations or representations. They have the real spirit behind them, as the marionette has its operating but invisible intelligence in the man who pulls the strings; but they cannot convey all that is desired, because of the limitations of the situation. The discarnate mind is in a clearer and much freer and happier state; and to convey ideas to the medium necessitates a coming down, an approach to our clogged material condition, and a building up of forms out of something which is sufficiently near being matter for the still enmattered medium's perception to see.

A word or two as to the naturalness of psychical phenomena. A friend of mine, who had never sat with a medium, said to me with evident surprise, after reading a manuscript account of one of my sittings, that the medium seemed "quite a homely sort." I do not

<sup>1</sup> Plotinus speaks of the shade of Herakles being in Hades while the true Herakles is with the gods, and Ovid says that the flesh is buried, the shade flits round the tomb, the *manes* goes to the underworld and the spirit "seeks the stars."

know what he expected, but I rather think that many people have more or less mistaken notions on this head. They think of the process and the person as necessarily weird and alarming and nerve-shaking. Darkness, blue lights, sheeted ghosts, perhaps even the clanking chains of the orthodox Christmas story, fill their imagination. Hamlet's father occurs to them, and they feel that any commerce with the other side ought to harrow up their souls, freeze their young blood, etc. Perhaps they think of Dante also; and certainly any communications from Dante's Paolo and Francesca—not to mention Brutus, Cassius, and Judas, who were in the very lowest hell—would be depressing enough. But if they refrain from having sittings because they expect something of this sort, it is a poor sort of testimonial to the virtues of their translated relatives and friends. Evidently these latter are thought to be having a very purgatorial time of it.

But probably this is not quite the true reason. Many people avoid having sittings because the secularity of the proceedings is distasteful, and this is understandable and excusable, as I have already said; though it is perhaps regrettable and to be somewhat resisted, being due mostly to prejudice. Others, perhaps, have a natural shrinking from having intimate family matters—names of loved relatives and the like—handled by a stranger. But probably most people who, while quite inexperienced, nevertheless elect to remain so, feeling an unexplained aversion, are influenced by their imaginative fears. These may be vague, but they are real. Mediums are thought of as weird and pallid ladies—as I recently saw the species seriously described—and dramatic tales of obsessions and haunts rise dimly before the mind.



Theosophy has been a contributory cause to this mistaken frame of mind. Particularly in its early days it was perceived by its High Priestess, Madame Blavatsky, that sittings with mediums must be discouraged, lest the authority of the spirits should compete with her own. A later priestess of a different cult—Mrs. Eddy—similarly forbade preaching in her church, perceiving that heterodoxy would arise. Madame Blavatsky frightened her docile flock away from séance rooms in order that they might continue to sit at her own feet. That is quite understandable. So is the Roman Catholic opposition, for if we think we get firsthand information from the other side, we do not go to the priest for his secondhand teaching. Quite obviously, religions of centralized authority will fight spiritualism with all their might, for they are as antipathetic to it as despotism is to democracy. And their method is usually terroristic. It employs "frightfulness," as despots do. Psychical research is "dangerous." Terrible things are told of; more terrible things still are hinted at.

These dangers may exist. I do not know everything, and nothing but omniscience can make universal denials. But I have not encountered any evidence of their existence. I have investigated more or less for over ten years, and intimate friends of mine have investigated for periods of ten to forty years. Nothing in their or my experience has occurred to scare them or me from the research. Sittings with mediums for phenomena of "psychological" order—i.e. not physical phenomena such as movement of objects without contact and materialization—are quite ordinary and prosaic affairs, with nothing alarming about them. All is quite natural. An imaginative and impulsive

"rationalist" describes a sitting as "weird," though it was an amateur affair, and, so far as the narrative indicates, had nothing weird about it.<sup>1</sup> Certainly no one, however nervous, need fear the sort of sittings I myself have had.

With Wilkinson here, a stranger coming in would find one man sitting in an arm-chair chatting apparently in a quiet, ordinary way, with occasional pauses; and another man writing, in an equally quiet and ordinary way. The hypothetical stranger might easily mistake the medium for a business man dictating letters, and myself for a secretary taking them down in shorthand. Listening to the matter of the discourse, he would, of course, find that the speaker was describing things not normally visible to other folk, but the experience is so ordinary to him that his manner is perfectly calm. He tells me that he frequently sees spirit forms, which are quite lifelike and solid-seeming, in his own home, and very often they talk to him, though by impression or telepathy rather than by ear-heard speech. One day, quite unexpectedly, his deceased mother appeared, along with another woman who was unknown and who seemed rather dishevelled and unhappy. The two seemed so real that Wilkinson momentarily almost forgot that his mother was dead, and said, "Why, mother, whoever have you got with you?" To which she replied: "Oh! it's somebody I'm just looking after a bit." All quite natural and homely.

And it is pretty much the same with trance mediums. There is usually nothing distressing about the transition from waking to trance and back again, and there is nothing uncanny in the trance itself. In Mr. Alfred

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Joseph McCabe, in the *Literary Guide and Rationalist Review*, March, 1916.

Vout Peters this is particularly noticeable, the trance coming on easily and almost instantaneously, and the Moonstone control—said to be a Brahmin who died four hundred years ago—being a quite likeable personality, on any theory.

I once had a sitting with a London lady which struck me at the time as being rather amusingly dramatic, but even that was not uncanny. It was due to the fact that it became dark before the end, and I could not light up lest the glare should jar the medium, so she went on with her large magnetic passes, and the healer control—a supposed Syrian chief, a Druse—went on talking, sometimes in unintelligible sounds, purporting to be an Eastern language, to the light of a street-lamp which shone in through the window. But it was not weird. The control was jolly and friendly, and the medium herself was an excellent soul.

So, judging from my own experience, there is nothing in the least alarming or upsetting in these forms of mediumship. The phenomena are unusual in the sense that few people manifest them; but after our first introduction to them they soon fall into place as part of the natural phenomena of experience.

Let it be understood, however, that I do not urge or even encourage anyone to seek this kind of experience. *Psychical research* requires training, and, indeed, special aptitude. It takes time, e.g., to learn how to be sympathetic and friendly, while giving nothing away and remaining alert and critical. And a medium requires proper treatment, for he is an instrument more complex and more delicate than any inanimate one. The investigation is therefore not suited to everyone.



## CHAPTER IX

### Home Mediumship

No investigator will deny that paid mediumship has its disadvantages. Apart from the question of fraud—which, as I have said, is easily eliminated in the discussed class of phenomena—there is a certain natural shrinking, particularly at first, from the idea of getting into communication with friends on the other side through a stranger to whom we pay a fee. Moreover, most mediums being, as it were, habituated to the experiences which to others are exceptional, are apt to take things as a matter of course, and to speak of the other side with an ease which rather shocks those of us who had an orthodox religious upbringing. This is our misfortune, not our fault—or the medium's. Our early notions were wrong. There is no need to adopt an air of solemn awe or to get up a state of Victorian piety when communicating or trying to communicate with those who have gone before. They are human beings still, who love us and wish to be loved by us ; they are not stern archangels before whom we must act the trembling worm. Seriousness, entire earnestness of purpose, is, of course, strongly and unqualifiedly desirable ; also affection directed towards the friend in question. This is so, indeed, when we communicate with a friend still in the body. And when he has dropped this latter, our attitude towards him does not call for any essential readjustment. Con-

sequently, we need feel no repugnance to the genial and, so to speak, secular manner of a medium, if such his or her manner happen to be. Some, of course, have a religious manner. No doubt it depends a good deal on their temperament and early education and training.

And the more general objections to paid mediumship, though they are natural enough, are nevertheless equally without reasonable grounds. In almost every department of life we depend on specialists for the supply of our needs, and practically all are paid for their services. Even the clergyman is paid—sometimes very well paid—and the medium's function is certainly no more sacred than his. No one who subscribes to church or chapel funds can have any logical objection to paying a medium, even if we consider mediumship in its most emotional aspect as putting us once more in close touch with some loved one; while, on the intellectual or investigation side, the payment of a medium for the use of his psychical gifts is only on a par with paying a messenger for the use of his muscles in bringing a note from a living friend round the corner.

But, while it is thus possible to show the irrationality of such objections, it is not possible altogether to dispel the feelings of repugnance which many people have. Consequently, some alternative method is desirable. Some such method might be achieved, and an eminently satisfactory one, if paid mediumship could somehow be put on a more systematic and more dignified footing. At present one gets a medium's address, goes, with or without appointment, and may never go again; the conditions are good from the sitter's "evidential" point of view, but the system—

or lack of system—must be bad for the medium. Whatever the exact essentials of the medium's constitution may be, it is certain that that constitution is of an exceedingly sensitive kind; and it is indeed surprising that such good results are obtainable at all from these delicately-organized people who are subjected to the searching scrutiny of sceptical and often hostile strangers—with the law looming in the background, threatening prosecution of rogue and vagrant. The whole thing ought to be better managed than that.

There ought to be some central institution—perhaps affiliated with the Society for Psychical Research, on the one hand, and with the Spiritualist Alliance and, perhaps, the Spiritualists' National Union, on the other; an institution under the control of some qualified man of the Dr. Richard Hodgson type, with a representative committee behind him. Mediums should be tested and then engaged in some systematic and more or less permanent way, so that their payment would be even and reliable, and depending on their average level of results; they would thus be less anxious in each individual case, and would consequently do better. Sitters could be introduced without names, and a full shorthand report made of everything said by both medium and sitter, the latter annotating one copy and forwarding it to the secretary later—or, better, doing it on the spot—so that the amount of success could be estimated. When sitters are not forthcoming, the medium's time can be given either to experiments devised by those in control, introducing "artificial" sitters, or to some kind of meditational exercises or development, or to rest and recreation.

How far this is possible I do not know, but it is



desirable. Perhaps the Stead Bureau might lead the way to some such scheme.<sup>1</sup>

This is one way of mitigating the paid-medium difficulty. The other is the development of the seeker's own psychic powers, or of those of someone in his surroundings. Here we come upon many difficulties. Many of us seem to be almost or quite destitute of any such powers, even in the most latent or rudimentary state. I myself have tried persistently for automatic writing, both with planchette and a free pencil, without the least sign of success. I have worked planchette freely enough with psychical friends, getting results which sometimes surprised our normal consciousnesses very much, but which were not provably due to anything outside our own "subliminals"; but I think the power was all in my friend, and my own part was only that of a catalytic agent, perhaps efficient by removing the fear that he was "doing it himself." It is common enough for planchettists to feel that the board is moving of its own volition, pulling the hands with it; and probably in such cases perseverance would lead to supernormal results, first of telepathic kind—after preludes of cryptomnesic phenomena—then perhaps of spiritistic; for there seems reason to believe that communications from the other side come through the medium's subliminal mental levels, which adjoin the spiritual world. Automatic writing, in the first instance with planchette and a collaborator, is

<sup>1</sup> This was written before the recent founding of the College of Psychic Science by Mr. J. Hewat McKenzie, and I am uncertain as to how far my foreshadowings apply to it. In what I say about the S.P.R., I am expressing my own opinion only, and that in tentative fashion; for I am aware that any co-operation of the S.P.R. with bodies representing something more than investigation would be a rather delicate and difficult matter.

therefore a good way of beginning home experimentation.

Another method is for two or more people to sit with their hands on a small wooden table which will rock or tilt under slight pressure. A large proportion of people seem able to get, in this way, movements which are not the result of conscious volition; and intelligible messages may be spelt out by a tilt at the right letter, the alphabet being repeated and the indicated letter written down by the note-taker. It is a slow and cumbrous process, but occasionally good results may be obtained. So long as the messages contain nothing that is not known to those touching the table, there is, of course, no strong evidence that the operating intelligence is anything external to them. The interest begins when the matter given goes beyond that knowledge. Allowance has to be made for possible subliminal knowledge—things we have known, or may be presumed to have known, and “forgotten”—but, even with a liberal allowance on this head, there is sometimes a residuum which seems to call for the hypothesis of some external mind.

Other development-methods there are, for clairvoyance, clairaudience, physical phenomena, etc., but these need not be more than mentioned here. The best method will depend on the idiosyncrasy of the person aiming at development; on the direction in which the incipient phenomena seem to point. And it need hardly be said that development of psychic faculty is probably not a wise thing for everybody. Many people are better occupied in other ways. Good health is desirable; a cool and critical judgment is essential. Each must decide for himself or herself. As a matter of fact, I think the dangers have been

greatly exaggerated by many writers, chiefly Theosophists or Roman Catholics, who think that communicators are demons, or astral shells, or earthbound spirits, or what not. Mr. Myers knew about fifty automatic writers, and in his opinion the practice was harmful in three cases only; and in these cases only because the writers became vain of their power, and did not exercise sufficient judgment. Very probably the three in question would have pushed any sort of activity, and not only psychical development, to harmful excess. People cannot be protected against themselves. But the fact seems to be that there is little or no danger in careful development to an ordinarily well-balanced and healthy person.

However, the chief reason for hesitating to advise on the matter in any particular case is the smallness of our knowledge of the seeker's personality, and, indeed, the smallness of our general knowledge of a subject which is only now for the first time being scientifically attacked. In such circumstances it is natural to be cautious. There is always danger in pioneer work. But I have never known of a case where psychical development has resulted in serious harm. I know many cases in which it has been productive of good, both to the person chiefly concerned and to others.

Here it may be remarked that in automatic writing, as to a perhaps less extent in other forms of psychical activity, there is often misleading information or advice, particularly at the beginning. This seems generally due, wholly or in part, to the interfering subliminal or dream-self of the automatist. In one case of a lady well known to me, the automatic script foretold her death within a few months, and persisted in the assertion, causing a good deal of very natural perturbation. But the lady



is still alive and well, after the sombre predictions of five years ago ; and she has wisely dropped automatic writing. In another case known to me the automatist—a man in business, far from ascetic, and very secular in his ways—after being convinced by evidential details of the reality of the spiritual communicator, was advised to wind up his affairs and leave the city (Mexico) because an earthquake was going to destroy it on account of its exceeding wickedness. He obeyed, and went to Canada ; the earthquake did not come, but Revolution did—though not until a year or so after he left—and the advice may have been good in spite of its literal untruthfulness. And I am sure that this automatist benefited morally and spiritually from the messages in his script. He has dropped alcohol, tobacco, and other forms of indulgence, and is again a churchgoer.

And even in the case of the just-mentioned lady who went through such a trying time, there may have been good in the experience, which undoubtedly exercised and braced her courage and general fibre. In many such cases I think there *may* be some deep good purpose behind the surface falsity. But I would not take the responsibility of advising any automatist to risk it. I should say : “ Use your judgment ; do not let it be overruled by any communicator in matters of great moment.” If an ordinary incarnate man introduced himself to us and was prolific of advice, we should rightly decline to be guided by him until we knew more about him. And a similar discretion should be exercised with regard to strangers on the other side—much more so with regard to subliminal dream-personalities.

## CHAPTER X

### Telepathy and Survival

CONFRONTED with *prima facie* evidence for survival, such as an apparition of a person who, though not known to be ill or in danger, did, as a matter of fact, die at or about the time of the experience, it is fashionable to say that if it was not a chance coincidence it was probably "telepathy." And, unlike many fashionable things, the suggestion is sensible. Such incidents, when their veridical (truth-telling) quality is not due to chance, are certainly due to telepathy. So are many mediumistic communications. I have never met an investigator of any experience who has not come across mediumistic phenomena which require some further explanation than the medium's normal knowledge. Therefore telepathy is rightly invoked.

But what do we mean by the word? Those who wish to avoid "spirits" evidently mean telepathy from *incarnate* minds—ordinary living people. This is what the "rationalists" mean by it. Mr. Joseph McCabe, departing from the orthodox unbelief of his German master, Professor Haeckel, and his co-"rationalist," Sir E. R. Lankester,<sup>1</sup> makes the remarkable admission (no doubt perceiving that he is between the devil of telepathy and the deep sea of spirits, and preferring the former) that he considers the evidence

<sup>1</sup> "Modern biologists (I am glad to be able to affirm) do not accept the hypothesis of 'telepathy.'"—*The Kingdom of Man*, p. 63.

for telepathy "satisfactory." (*"Literary Guide and Rationalist Review,"* March, 1916.) He means thought-transference by unknown means *between incarnate persons*. But he ought to have said so. What he does say leaves him open to the greatest suspicion of harbouring spiritistic views, for telepathy may be thought-transference from the dead. It is not an alternative theory to spiritualism. The word is used in that sense only by people who use words loosely. Let us try to clear up this point.

The coiner of a word has a right to define it. Huxley coined and defined "Agnosticism"; F. W. H. Myers coined and defined "Telepathy." And this is what he meant by it: "the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognised channels of sense" (*Human Personality*, vol. i., p. xxii.). Observe, it is "from one mind to another"; the definition specifies nothing about the condition of the minds, incarnate or discarnate. They may be either, or there may be one in each of the two conditions. Say to a spiritualist that his messages from *soi-disant* spirits are due to telepathy, and he may reply with equanimity: "Precisely; telepathy from the so-called dead to the living." And it is now admitted by even so cautious an investigator as Mrs. Sidgwick that a supposition of this kind is required to explain some of the evidence. Mrs. Sidgwick asserts that communication from the dead is a justified hypothesis; calling it "telepathy" gives it the respectability associated with the Greek-derived coinage of a scholar, and may therefore render the idea rather more acceptable to the sceptic, but it definitely concedes the main claim of the spiritualist, and we may as well admit it frankly.



Having seen that the word "telepathy" does not mean anything that negates the spiritualistic theory, we may turn back to consider the idea which it is sometimes improperly used to convey—namely, telepathy between the "living" (incarnate) only, which is what is meant by Mr. McCabe.

For my part, I think the evidence for this thought-transference between incarnate minds is satisfactory, and am glad to find myself in agreement with Mr. McCabe. If he quarrels with his fellow-rationalists about it, I shall be glad to back him up. And I think it was wise to work "telepathy from the living" for all it was worth, in considering mediumistic phenomena, before going on to the serious consideration of more unorthodox hypotheses. Moreover, it happened that the contemporaneous discovery of wireless telegraphy made it easy to believe—though, as a matter of fact, we know of no brain waves in the ether, or anything of the kind, and the analogy may be misleading,—so we believed without requiring any large body of evidence. Evidence there is, of course; the experiments of Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, and others, had indicated that ideas of diagrams and the like could be communicated from mind to mind by means other than the known sensory channels. But we accepted this very easily. Then, when apparitions and mediumistic "communications" came along, we had our explanation of them ready. It was "telepathy." If any fact given by a spirit is known to any living person, the explanation is telepathy from that person; if I see an apparition of my soldier-brother, who afterwards turns out to have been killed a few minutes or hours before, it is either accidental coincidence—my "subjective hallucination" being due to natural anxiety—

or it is telepathy from the living—i.e. in Mr. McCabe's sense ; his mind having turned to me on being wounded, sending out a pulse which either was some time in reaching me or, reaching me, remained a little while subconscious and latent.

It may be so. But it is time to question whether it is so. Telepathy from the living, I suspect, has been overworked. It is time to be more critical. If telepathy may be either between incarnate and incarnate or between incarnate and discarnate, we must differentiate. If the materialist says there are no discarnate minds, we ask how he knows. We demand his proof—which is not forthcoming. We admit, however, that the antecedent probability or improbability of survival falls to be considered. Therefore a word on this point.

It can hardly be denied that though individual survival of bodily death remains part of the supposed belief of Christian churches, it has ceased to be part of the living faith of the average religious man. It is rarely preached about or written about. Clergymen shy at discussing it ; they have no vital belief in it themselves. I am aware that this is a risky generalization, and no doubt there are exceptions. Some clergymen have such vital belief, intuitionally. But, generally speaking, the religious man for the last half-century has been able to do no more than stretch "lame hands of faith." "We have but faith, we cannot know." Tennyson typified his generation and the one following it. The great advance in natural science had resulted in the material world's filling all our field of vision. It is now receding into its proper perspective. We are beginning to remember that Spirit is the primary thing. Humanly-caused events

take place first in the human mind before they are manifested on the material plane. The Forth Bridge, the first *Dreadnought*, the aeroplane, were created in the builders' minds before they took visible form in matter and could be perceived by others. And, analogically, events not humanly caused must have their source in another Mind, as Berkeley and all the Idealists have taught. In other words, there is a spiritual world behind the material one, and the former is the more real. The seen things are temporal; the unseen things eternal.

And if there is any sense in this philosophy, survival of the human spirit is more likely than its extinction. Mind is not caused by and dependent on body, but the other way round. Body is merely part of the mind's experience—a necessary part in the present plane, an engine or vehicle of its manifestation; but a part that can be dropped like a suit of old clothes when the time comes for us to go "up higher."

It is not necessary for us, then, if this philosophy is sustainable, to cringe to the materialist, humbly begging his tolerant examination of our evidence. We have been too patient. It is time to take our rightful position. Survival is at least as likely as extinction, to put it at its very lowest; and, if so, and if we have evidence claiming to support survival, it is for our opponents to prove that it does not, or confess themselves beaten. If it is "telepathy" (from the living), let them prove it. Let them produce experimental telepathic results—provably telepathic and without spirit help—of the same kind as the evidence in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* that claims to be due to the



action of discarnate minds. It has not been done. Let Sir Ray Lankester and his friends do it, and we will accept telepathy from the living as a possible and reasonable explanation. But until it is done there is no scientific basis for the belief that telepathy between living minds can produce results even remotely approaching those in question.

Now, further, this telepathy from or between the living is used loosely to cover two entirely different things. For clearness' sake there ought to be two different terms, one meaning the *experimental*, or at most the *inferribly-willed* transmission of thought, including cases in which, for example, a veridical apparition is seen of a relative or friend who may reasonably be presumed to have directed his mind to the percipient at or about the time; the other meaning the thing that happens so frequently in mediumistic communications, when details are given which are unknown to the medium but which are known to the sitter, who, however, did not happen to be thinking about them, or which are known only to some distant person who, again, is not—so far as reasonable inference goes—thinking about them or “willing” their transmission. There is a great difference between the experimental telepathy effected by hard voluntary concentration, and this supposititious reading of a mind which is not concentrating on the subject at all. For example, in a sitting with Mrs. Piper, a message came, purporting to be from the son of a man slightly known to the sitter, who was Sir Oliver Lodge. The message was to be given to the ostensible sender's father, and this was judiciously done. The details, which referred to matters totally unknown to Sir Oliver, turned out true. The father neither knew

nor was known to Mrs. Piper, and the same was true of his deceased son. If this was telepathy from the living, it means a reading of the mind of a distant person whose existence was unknown to the medium, *plus* elaborate makebelieve to represent the message as coming from the son. If Mr. McCabe or any other so-called "rationalist" can believe in such "telepathy" as that, great indeed is their faith! I confess that my credulity cannot stretch so far. I must remain sceptical.

And even when the knowledge is possessed by some person present at the sitting, it is by no means certain that the explanation is a reading of that person's mind. In my own investigations I have particularly noticed that the communications are not what I should expect on a mind-reading theory. They come very often from people I have not been thinking of for months or even years; sometimes from people whose very existence I had almost forgotten; sometimes from people whom I am sure I had never heard of. In this last case it usually appears that some other spirit, known to me—name given—has "brought him," apparently to get round the telepathy theory; and on inquiry I find that the person did exist and was a friend of the man who "brought" him. Perhaps my best case is that of Elias Sidney in my sitting of January 15th, 1915, with Mr. Wilkinson, but the reader will have noticed others—e.g. the crucial case on pp. 171–174. And I repeat that even when the facts are known to me, they do not seem to be associated in the same way as they are associated in my own mind. If the process were some sort of fishing among my recollections, we should expect certain groups to be fished out together; we should recognize in the

mediumistic communications a resemblance, in grouping and articulation and emphasis, to the arrangement and prominence of recollections in our own minds. I have never found this to be the case, but quite the reverse. The grouping of the details, as well as the details themselves, suggests some mind other than my own, and other than the medium's. I do not say that mind-reading is disproved or absurd. It is a tenable hypothesis as a guess. But the facts, in my experience, are heavily against it. They tell much more strongly in favour of the actual presence of the minds which are purporting to communicate.

Lest the sceptical reader should think I have overlooked a point, I must explicitly guard myself against being thought to hold that my evidence proves the activity of *all* the alleged spirits who ostensibly communicate or who are described at my sittings with clairvoyants. I do not claim, for instance, that Elias Sidney was "here"; his "form" might be a thought-form created by Mr. Leather for evidence' sake. Nothing was said about him beyond what Mr. Leather almost certainly knew, and the same is the case with Mr. Drayton. The phenomena indicating the presence or activity of these men would only be evidential of their survival and presence in the strict sense, if it contained true information characteristic of themselves but unknown to me, to the medium, and to *all the other communicating spirits who knew the men in question*. If my grandfather and grandmother are named and described, with identifying details, it does not follow that both are here; it may suffice if one of them is, or indeed any spirit who knew the facts given; though if we say so we are making the assumption that one spirit can produce a form, visible



to a clairvoyant, of another spirit ; and assumptions are dangerous. There is experimental proof that a living person may produce an apparition of himself, but little or none that he can produce an apparition of someone else.

I admit, therefore, that though in the strictest sense there is no proof of the presence of all those mentioned, I am disposed to accept the supposition as reasonable that all the minds suggested were probably more or less concerned. It is somewhat the same as the wider question of whether *all* human beings survive death ; we cannot prove it, but if we can prove (or obtain good evidence for the hypothesis) that some do, most of us will be willing to admit, at least provisionally, that the attribute extends to the whole species. I am not at all sure that it does ; some may be melted up again, as the Button Moulder wanted to do with Peer Gynt ; but the hypothesis is at least good enough and reasonable enough as a temporary supposition.

To sum up, then: (1) "Telepathy" means communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognized channels of sense, and this definition will cover and include communications from minds no longer in fleshly bodies. (2) It is rash to assume, in cases of veridical apparitions after the death of the supposed agent, that the cause was a thought sent out by the latter before death, this thought remaining latent for some time in the percipient's mind. There is little basis of fact for such a guess. In many cases it seems far more probable that the communication is the result of *post-mortem* activity—telepathy from the dead. (3) Philosophically, survival of human personality is as

likely as, or more likely than, its extinction; there is consequently no need to apologize for the evidence or to cling too timorously to materialistic or *quasi-materialistic* explanations—telepathy from the living and the like. (4) Telepathy, either from the living or the dead, is a doubtfully admissible supposition unless it is reasonable to infer that the communication is willed by some mind. In experimental cases it is so willed; in many mediumistic phenomena no willing of the kind on the part of living people is known of or reasonably to be inferred. The willing, if any, then, is on the part of some discarnate mind, human or non-human. And in many cases I believe this to be a fact. As Miss Alice Johnson has said, some of the evidence indicates intelligence, will, initiative, on “the other side.”

## CHAPTER XI

### Influences or Rapport-Objects

It will have been noted that in some of my sittings I have given the medium some object, such as a glove or small trinket, for so-called "psychometry." This is one of the most puzzling parts of a very puzzling subject, but it happens to be one on which I have not the slightest doubt.

In regard to the "spirit-theory," and other theories in various departments of psychical research, I am quite ready to admit the possibility of alternative hypotheses; I have my own preferences—e.g. the evidence for spirits seems to me satisfactory, and I therefore accept the spirit-theory in explanation of some happenings—but I recognize that the proof is not coercive, and that some other alternative explanation may turn out to be the right one.

In this matter of "influences," however, I have no hesitation whatever. My experiences over many years and with many mediums have convinced me, slowly but in the end quite completely and unshakably, that some peculiarly-constituted people, by handling an article which has been in close contact with some person living or dead, and which has not been handled much by anyone else, can somehow tell things about that person's appearance or state of health or about things that have occurred in his life; and that the correctness of these statements excludes chance-



coincidence by guessing, while involuntary hints from the sitter—also telepathy from him—are excluded as rational explanation by the fact that the things said are sometimes not within his knowledge and are only verified afterwards.

My first acquaintance with this kind of thing was about a dozen years ago. Many reports had reached me of the powers of a certain medium—Mrs. White, who lived a few miles away—and eventually several intimate friends of mine went and had sittings, quite separately and at various times. Their reports shook my previous healthy scepticism, and I asked a relative to go on my behalf, taking a snipping of my hair. The medium's medical controls described me very accurately, diagnosed correctly, and prescribed sensibly, without being told anything. Naturally, Mrs. White being a person living in the neighbourhood, I could not dismiss the possibility that she might possess some normal knowledge of me, though I had no reason to believe that she did, and indeed very good reason to believe that she did not. However, some years of experimentation put normal knowledge out of court, also telepathy from the sitter; for it often happened that the latter, going on behalf of a sick relative or friend, would be told how often the patient had omitted to take his medicine or to what extent he had neglected other things which he had been ordered to do; and these delinquencies, though unknown to the sitter, were confessed when the deputy arrived home and charged the culprit.

From my knowledge of this medium alone, I was driven to admit the fact of supernormally-acquired knowledge, apparently through the agency of—or partly by aid of—such rapport-objects; and I have

had abundant confirmation through others. I have not made many experiments of this kind with Mr. Wilkinson, though an occasional test has been made, often with good results. For instance, the correct matter relative to Mrs. Napier in my sitting of April 19th, 1916, seems to go beyond what might be expected from pure chance, and it certainly went beyond any telepathy from my mind; and on one occasion this same medium got results which excluded both these hypotheses, for on handling a paper-knife belonging to my friend Mr. Knight—whose sittings were described in my book *New Evidences*—he correctly and fully named its deceased former owner, whom, so far as we are aware, he had never either known or heard of, and whose surname was not Knight; also getting correct details unknown to Mr. Knight, but verified later, about certain relatives of the dead man.

The question naturally arises: How does it come about? What is the *modus* of the process? And the answer is, unsatisfactorily enough, that we do not know. Neither does the medium know. He handles the object, making his mind as passive and quiet as possible, and ideas or names “come into his head” which are found to have relevance. That is all he can say. It is mysterious, though perhaps not much more so than the homing instinct of animals, as when a cat will find its way back over scores of miles which it certainly never travelled before except in a closed basket on a train. But though it is mysterious and entirely baffling as to its *modus*, the facts now available do at least enable us to answer provisionally one interesting query with regard to the phenomenon, namely: Does this psychometry count for or against survival, if it has any bearing thereon at all? The answer, I now

think, though formerly I thought otherwise, is that it counts *for* that theory.

The thought inevitably arises, when a medical medium not in trance and without any claim of spirit-help can supernormally diagnose a distant person's ailment from a bit of hair or a worn object, that perhaps the object somehow carries the information, independently of whether the owner is alive or dead. (Here I must remark that in Mrs. White's case there is full trance and the controls claim to be spirits; but in some cases the normal state or something near it is retained, and there is no appearance of spirits, though of course there *may* be help of that kind behind the scenes.) Something of this sort has been claimed by old writers, such as Denton, in his *Soul of Things*, and in recent books such as Dr. Hooper's *Spirit Psychometry*. According to these, objects carry their history with them, or render it accessible; in such fashion that a psychometrizing medium can correctly see the main incidents in the career, say, of a piece of rock or a fossil, quite apart from any human mind. I think, however, that the evidence for this is far from convincing. If the claim were established, it would certainly minimize or nullify all evidence for survival in which a rapport-object has been used; for the object would be capable of giving a great deal of information about its late owner, quite independently of whether that owner is still in existence on the other side or not. But the claim has not been established, and, indeed, it hardly seems possible that it can be. A medium may quite honestly reel off the history of a fossil or bit of volcanic rock, believing the ideas to be supernormally received; but subliminal inference from the appearance of the object, *plus* imagination and perhaps some



involuntary hints from the experimenter, seems enough to account for most of the evidence so far presented. Moreover, if no human record exists, it is impossible to verify what has been said ; and if it is claimed that it fits in with geological or palæontological knowledge which is beyond the medium's range, there is still telepathy from the sitter to reckon with. So, on the whole, I incline to reject the idea of objects carrying readable indications of their history—other than inferrible ones—independently of human minds. As to the kind of evidence that is obtained when a human mind *is* concerned, I once thought that medical diagnosis was somehow an affair of reading the object's memory, so to speak ; but now I think it is an affair of telepathic rapport between the medium's mind (or the control's) and the patient's. On this supposition we must include the patient's subliminal, for sometimes true things are said which are unknown to the patient's normal consciousness, but which are presumably known to the subliminal levels.

Similarly, then, when a rapport-object formerly belonging to a dead person is given to a medium, it establishes a rapport, and the medium gets in touch with the dead person's mind, though perhaps only with a small and distant creek and not its main part. If through will and affection on the other side the discarnate friend directs his attention to that outlying creek of his personality, its waters will rise, and much evidence of identity, or at least supernormality, will be forthcoming. If there is no particular interest, the evidence may be scanty. On a purely psychometric theory, the results would be different. A stranger taking an old glove of some dead person to a medium would get as much information about that person as

if a near and dear relative had taken it. And this is not what we find. A discarnate human being seems to remain for some time more or less aware of what is being done by survivors with the things that interested him in life, and he can more or less "communicate" when any rapport-object is taken to a medium; but he is not interested enough to communicate much unless the bringer of the object is someone who has a place in his affection.

This idea of rapport rather than psychometry is supported by a series of recent experiences of my own. A friend of mine died on November 3rd, 1915. For nearly ten years we had had a compact that the one who died first should communicate evidentially with the other if possible; and, curiously, she always thought she would go first, though our ages were nearly the same and she had far better health than I for years after the compact. A week or two before her death she wrapped in oiled silk certain objects—gloves, a Prayer Book, a "Tennyson"—and I have presented these at different times to several sensitives, both professional mediums and private persons among my friends, who have psychical powers. The first attempt was made five days after death, on November 8th. No evidence of identity was obtained, and the owner of the object was said to be still mostly sleeping the recuperative sleep which follows death and which varies in duration in different cases. On the following day she was said to have an occasional waking period, and the automatic writing (it was a psychical friend of mine who did not know even the name of the spirit) succeeded in getting a gleam of evidentiality in a short message purporting to come from my friend on the other side; but there were several quite in-

correct statements, and the communicator, if it were really she, seemed to be still dreamy or not in full control.

Two days afterwards (November 11th) one of the objects was presented to a medium in trance, and correct psychometry was obtained, with two letters correct for the first two letters of my friend's surname, and correct and appropriate references to me. (The medium—a London lady—does not know me; the sitting was held on my behalf by a London friend who had not known the deceased lady and did not know her name.) But at this sitting also it was said that the control was “afraid it was too soon” to get much (the medium and control had been told nothing as to the nearness or remoteness of the death, and it might have been years ago, so far as the medium could know), and that more would be obtainable later. A further sitting took place with the same medium on November 25th, with some further success, but it was evident that the link of friendship was lacking, and the control said that my own presence was necessary to induce the spirit to make much effort to communicate. On March 2nd, 1916, I had the sitting with Mr. A. V. Peters reported in the foregoing pages, but I made the mistake of handing him a box which had belonged to my friend's husband, and to her only after his death, and the result was confusion. Then on April 19th, with Mr. Wilkinson, I got the first coherent and considerable evidence of my friend's identity and initiative, and I hope to get more.

Now if psychometry were only a reading of indications somehow imprinted on an object, would not the sensitives have been able to read them *at first*, and, indeed, best then, while they were fresh? The failure



at first, and the gradual improvement later, is certainly an indication—if it would be too much to call it a proof—that communications depend on the reality and activity of the surviving mind with which the rapport-object links us up, and not primarily on the object itself.

And this is borne out by much of the evidence of the Society for Psychical Research. Such objects or “influences”—so called by the Piper controls—were often used in the sittings with Mrs. Piper, and in many cases it may be argued that their use does weaken the survival evidence. But Mrs. Piper’s phenomena do not stand alone. In the cross-correspondences there is ample evidence of something beyond even “cosmic memory” suppositions; there is evidence of will and initiative on the other side, as Miss Johnson, one of the most cautious and most sceptical of investigators, has so well pointed out. (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. xxi., pp. 376–7. See also Sir Oliver Lodge’s *Survival of Man*, pp. 324 ff.) And one of the automatists—Mrs. Holland, who was in India and had no personal acquaintance with the other writers—was entirely without any rapport-object belonging to Mr. Myers or the other ostensible communicators. Yet the Myers control sent evidential messages, giving, for example, the address in Cambridge to which some of the script was to be sent. This was an address unknown to the automatist, but it turned out to be the correct address of Mrs. Verrall, a lecturer at Newnham, whom Mr. Myers had known very well. The script made allusions to a certain text (“Quit you like men,” etc.), and it happens that this text, in Greek, is over the gateway of Selwyn College, and that Mr. Myers had often remarked to Mrs. Verrall about a small linguistic error in the in-

scription. Mrs. Holland, it should be mentioned, had never been in Cambridge. This, occurring without any use of rapport-objects, suggests the action of the surviving spirit, as do also the cross-correspondences.

My provisional conclusion is that these objects serve as useful links, in some unknown or only dimly surmisable way, but that they act only as helps, the actual mind of the person being required for anything in the way of extensive evidence. I would draw no hard and fast line, for such objects may yield a static sort of evidence like descriptions of appearance and of illness, somewhat as the scene of a murder, or some old houses, may yield to a sensitive some vision or impression of the locality's history through some emotional imprint on what Myers called the "metetherial environment." But where initiative is plainly shown, as in much of the evidence, this thought-activity requires the supposition of an acting discarnate mind. It goes beyond any hypothesis of a reading of "dead memories."



## CHAPTER XII

### Psychical Phenomena in Earlier Times

ONE sometimes hears the objection: "But if all this is true—if the dead are alive and can communicate—why haven't we been told before? Why has it been left for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to discover?" But the answer is that we have been told before; not once, but many times. We were told in the Bible, and probably in all the other Scriptures of the world. We were told by most of the great philosophers, from Plato (and before) downwards. To some extent the belief of prophet and philosopher was due to intuition or to general reasoning of the Platonic kind; but it is almost certain that a great deal of it was based on special facts of the kind which psychical research is now examining and authenticating. These facts are not new things in nature; though they would not, therefore, be incredible even if they were—for new facts do arise, both by human agency in invention and by non-human will in the course of inorganic or organic evolution. A new species is a fact. So is a new star. Novelty does not mean incredibility. It would be no argument against psychical phenomena indicating either survival or anything else that they had only begun to happen recently. But the truth seems to be that they are at least as old as history, and no doubt older; though their character may change more or less according to the current thought-moulds.



Mediumistic communications were at some times and places supposed to come from Apollo, but they often contained truth, as in the famous "test case" of Cræsus, related by Herodotus. Admittedly, such oracular utterances seem as likely to have been due to the medium's own clairvoyant faculty as to any agency of the dead; and we know that the human subliminal is suggestible, often running the material which it may obtain supernormally into the mould of any suggested personality—as in the case of Mrs. Piper's Phinuit, if we accept the theory of the more sceptical wing of the Society for Psychical Research in explanation of that dubious but attractive communicator. But the said clairvoyant faculty remains to be explained, and it points beyond a materialistic philosophy. Apollonius of Tyana at Ephesus sees clairvoyantly the assassination of Domitian at Rome, crying out suddenly, amid his friends, "Strike him down, the tyrant!" And, in a few minutes: "The tyrant is killed." Materialism has no explanation of that. It can only refuse to believe the account.

However, many of the ancient phenomena were definitely associated with the survival and continued activity of dead people. They were by no means entirely subliminal Apollo-clairvoyance or the like. There is evidence that in the paimy days of Rome there were spiritualistic societies and materialization-séances,<sup>1</sup> and it seems likely that spiritualistic phenomena formed part of the early Greek Mysteries; else why should the initiate Plato say that the knowledge attained

<sup>1</sup> In the last century B.C. some of "the greatest personages of Rome" were "subjected to police supervision on account of their alleged practice of summoning into visible presence the spirits of the dead." Myers, *Classical Essays*, p. 207.

in the Mysteries is a full assurance of immortality? And, apart from mediumistic phenomena, it is clear that in those days there was general belief—probably with some basis of fact—in the spontaneous psychical happenings now known as veridical apparitions. Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* tells how the drowned Ceyx “appears” to his wife Alcyone, and the story is quite true to the modern type<sup>1</sup> as fully dealt with in the “Census” of the S.P.R. (*Proceedings*, vol. x.). And in later times it is almost certain that the witch-burnings—the most horrible persecution in history, its victims being mainly helpless old women—were due to the hysterical fears of an ignorant populace which had here and there come across psychical phenomena which it could not understand, and which it therefore, as usual, attributed to the Devil. (The “subliminal” has now taken the Devil’s place; it is a useful word for the covering of our ignorance.) And, among these happenings which got on the nerves of the people and the priests, there were pretty sure to be phenomena engineered from the “other side,” mixed up with a large amount of “suggested” matter; for instance, the haunting, a little later, of John Wesley’s parental home.

No, the difference is, in all probability, not that in our times the things happen and that in earlier time they did not, but only that in those earlier times, before

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century and After*, May, 1916, article, “A Classical Death Phantom,” by Sir Oliver Lodge; and *Metamorphoses*, Bk. xi., 415-748. Similarly with Æneas’ veridical vision of Creusa (*Æneid*, Bk. ii.) and—though these were dream visions—Dido’s equally veridical interview with Sichæus, who informed her of the mode of his death and the whereabouts of the treasure (*Æneid*, Bk. i.), and Isabella’s vision of Lorenzo (in Boccaccio’s tale), who told her of his fate and place of burial.

the rise of modern science in the sixteenth century, the phenomena were not observed and recorded in the careful and elaborate way which our higher critical standards now require. And this was inevitable. We cannot expect to find ancient evidence that will come up to modern standards. Consequently, we can neither accept nor deny, in any dogmatic way, such psychical stories as those in Herodotus, or the miracle narratives of the world's sacred writings. But in so far as the happenings described in the old narratives conform to types which are recognizable in the phenomena of to-day, they may at least provisionally be considered likely enough. For example, all the miracles of the New Testament are credible to anyone who has done much psychical investigation, for he comes across more or less similar things; things, at any rate, sufficiently similar to warrant the belief that where the modern phenomena fall short of the ancient, the reason is that in the case of these latter a higher and more powerful Personality was concerned.

It is natural enough that in a pre-scientific era the marvellous should have run more or less to seed, the imaginative and dramatic faculty being unrestrained by the severe criticism of a later day. The Bollandist collection of *Lives of the Saints* contains about 25,000 hagiologies, full of miracles of most extraordinary kinds; yet in those days the accounts caused no astonishment. There was no organized knowledge of nature outside the narrow orbit of daily life—and how narrow that was, we with our facile means of communication and travel can hardly realize. Consequently, there was little or no conception of law or orderliness in nature, and therefore no criterion by which to test stories of unusual occurrences. Anything might hap-



pen; there was no apparent reason why it shouldn't. One saint having retired into the desert to lead a life of mortification, the birds daily brought him food sufficient for his wants; and when a brother joined him, they doubled the supply. When one of them died, two lions came and dug his grave, uttered a howl of mourning over his body, and knelt to beg a blessing from the survivor.<sup>1</sup> The innumerable miracles in the *Little Flowers* and *Life of St. Francis*, are repeated in countless other lives: saints are lifted across rivers by angels; they preach to the fishes, which swarm to the shore to listen; they are visited by the Virgin, are lifted high in the air and suspended there for twelve hours while they perceive in ecstasy the inner mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. Almost every town in Europe could produce its relic which had effected its miraculous cures, or its image which had opened or shut its eyes, or bowed its head to a worshipper. The Virgin of the Pillar, at Saragossa, restored a worshipper's leg that had been amputated,<sup>2</sup> and the saints were seen fighting for the Christian army—like the “Angels of Mons”—when the latter battled with the infidel. In mediæval times this kind of thing was accepted without question and without surprise.

About the end of the twelfth century there came a change. The human mind began to awake from its long lethargy, began to writhe and struggle against the dead hand of authority which held it down. The Crusades, as Guizot shows, had much to do with the

<sup>1</sup> The authority for this is no less a person than St. Jerome. Cf the curious but more credible story of St. Francis taming “Brother Wolf,” of Gubbio, in Chap. 21 of the *Fioretti*.

<sup>2</sup> This is regarded by Spanish theologians as specially well attested. There is a picture of it in the Cathedral at Saragossa (Lecky, *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. i., p. 141).

rise of the new spirit, by causing educative contact with a high Saracenic civilization. Men began to wonder and to think. Heresy inevitably appeared and became rife. In 1208 Innocent III. established the Inquisition, but failed to strangle the infant Hercules. In 1209 began the massacre of the Albigenses, which continued more or less for about fifty years, the deaths being at least scores of thousands; but the blood of the martyrs was the seed of further freedom and enlightenment. Nature began to be studied, in however rudimentary a way, by Roger Bacon and his brother alchemists. The Reformation came, weakening ecclesiastical authority still further by dividing the dogmatic forces into two hostile camps, and thus giving science its chance. Galileo appeared and did his work, though with excusable waverings, for Paul V. and Urban VIII. kept successively a heavy hand on him; he was imprisoned at seventy, when in failing health, and, some think, tortured—though this is uncertain, and his famous muttered reservation that the earth “does move” is probably mythical. Perhaps more important still, Francis Bacon, teaching with enthusiasm the method of observation and experiment. The conception of law, of rationality and regularity in nature, emerged; Kepler and Newton laid down the ground plan of the universe, evolving the formulæ which express the facts of molar motion. Uniformity in geology was shown by Lyell, while Darwin and his followers carried law into biological evolution.

Then man became intoxicated with his successes. It had already been so with Hume, whose argument against miracles depends on a *petitio principii*, assuming that we know all the “laws of Nature”; it became more so with Matthew Arnold, who declared, in italics

that "*miracles do not happen.*" (*Literature and Dogma.*) Man treated his own limited experience as a criterion, and denied what was not represented by something similar therein. Especially was this the case when the alleged facts had any connexion with religion. Religion had tried to exterminate Science, and it was natural enough that, in revenge, Science should be hostile to anything associated with Religion. Consequently, the scientific man flatly denied miracles, not only such stories as the rib of Adam and the talking serpent (concerning which even a Church Father like Origen had made merry in Gnostic days, fifteen hundred years before), but also the healing miracles of Jesus, which to us are now quite credible.

This negative dogmatism is as regrettable as the positive variety. It is foolish to dictate to Nature what shall or shall not happen. When the Quietist miracles at the Parisian church of St. Medardus, in the seventeenth century, became too extensive, the Government intervened; whereupon a wag adorned the church door with the inscription:

De par le Roi, défense à Dieu  
De faire miracle en ce lieu,

and this is what some pseudo-scientists have done. But the attitude is not scientific. Science stands for a method, not for a dogma. It observes, experiments, and infers; but it makes no claim to the possession of absolute truth. It does not dictate to God or Nature. A genuine science, confronted with allegations of unusual facts, neither believes nor disbelieves. It investigates. The solution of the problem is simply a question of evidence. Huxley in his little book on Hume, and J. S. Mill in his *Essays on Religion*, admirably showed up the foolishness of the "impossibility"



attitude. Says the former, in *Science and Christian Tradition*: "Strictly speaking, I am unaware of anything that has a right to the title of an impossibility, except a contradiction in terms. There are impossibilities logical, but none natural. A 'round square,' a 'present past,' 'two parallel lines that intersect,' are impossibilities, because the ideas denoted by the predicates *round*, *present*, *intersect*, are contradictory of the ideas denoted by the subjects *square*, *past*, *parallel*. But walking on water, or turning water into wine, are plainly not impossible in this sense" (p. 197).

In matters of alleged objective fact, it is a question of evidence. If things happen which do not fit into the current theories, it is "so much the worse for the facts" and their upholders, *just at present*, until ignorant prejudice has been battered away; but ultimately it will be "so much the worse for the theory." Room will have been made for the facts. The hypnotic trance was looked on by orthodox doctors as a delusion of Elliotson's and Esdaile's, and it was even said that the Indian natives who underwent severe operations at the hands of the latter without showing signs of pain must have been *shamming*—must have been feigning the anæsthesia which Dr. Esdaile affirmed was real. But the ignorant *a priori* notion had to give way before the rain of further facts, and anæsthesia in the hypnotic trance of a good subject is now a medical commonplace. The system of orthodox science had to make room for the new facts. And it will have to make room for the facts which indicate survival of bodily death; facts which probably have always been sporadically existent more or less, but which have only recently been attacked in a systematic scientific way by men eminent in other branches of natural knowledge.

It must be admitted that in these matters as in many others the "educated" world has not greatly shone. Except for a few men like Sir William Barrett, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Dr. A. Russel Wallace, our scientific leaders have not led. They have, instead, been pushed along; and some few even still refuse to budge, being perhaps too busy to investigate, and being quite properly cautious about accepting the conclusions of others. It was the early Spiritualists who laid the foundations, found the facts, bore the obloquy, but forced the phenomena on the attention of the "leaders." Even while regarding many spiritualistic phenomena and theories and procedures with a certain dubiety, we cannot refuse to the Spiritualists our admiration and our thanks. We should not have been where we are now but for them. They have developed and supported the mediums who have provided us with phenomena to study. Early Christianity had no scholar till Paul embraced it. It had zealous adherents, but little "respectability." It has been somewhat thus with spiritualism, which, with F. W. H. Myers as its scholarly apostle—it is curious, as I have said already, that his best-known poem is "St. Paul"—is now coming to its own, leavening the thought of the world even where its label is not used, and itself becoming almost respectable!

Lest it should be thought that the phenomena in the *Lives of the Saints* are extravagances without exception, it is only fair to say that a few of the things are true to authenticated types, and are therefore not inherently incredible. For instance, in the *Little Flowers* of St. Francis there is a levitation of St. Bernard that is paralleled in the performances of D. D. Home, and there are several cases of human apparitions. When

Friar James was dying, his friend Friar John "besought him dearly that he would return to him after his death and speak to him of his state; and Friar James promised this, if God so pleased." A certain day was fixed for the fulfilment of the compact, and, according to our modern notions of "suggestion," Friar John ought to have had a hallucination of his friend on that day, for he was expecting it. Certainly, if he had, we should have ruled it out as non-evidential, because of his expectancy. But, as it happened, he saw no apparition of his friend on that day, though he saw Christ, with angels and certain saints. On the day following, however, Friar James appeared, and Friar John asked: "Wherefore hast thou not returned to me the day that thou didst promise?" Friar John replied: "Because I had need of some purgation. . . ." <sup>1</sup> And there are a few other cases which at least suggest some sort of genuine basis, though the accounts that have come down to us are so crude and sketchy, and so tinctured with the particular religious prepossessions of the narrator, that we cannot accept them as very weighty evidence.

But the sum of the whole thing is that throughout history there have been reports of the occurrence of psychical phenomena of various kinds. Before the rise of scientific method, these happenings were, naturally, not well investigated or attested, and in the materialistic eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they were mostly disbelieved. But careful investigation is now showing that more or less similar things still occur, and that they have an important bearing on many vital problems of science, philosophy, and religion.

<sup>1</sup> *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, p. 94, Dent's "Everyman" edition.



## CHAPTER XIII

### Pre-Existence and the Nature of the After-Life

IF, then, the soul lives on after death, being thus proved independent of the body of this flesh, may it not have existed before birth? There seems no reason why it should not; indeed, the supposition is almost inevitable, and has been accepted by many great minds, both before and since Plato. There is, it may be admitted, nothing inherently absurd in the idea of creation of each individual soul at birth or shortly before—the exact moment is a difficulty—for if we talk about a beginning at all, of anything, we must admit creation somewhere; but the idea is less in accord with the body of our scientific knowledge than a more “graduated” concept.

It seems more reasonable to suppose that the soul of man has grown up gradually, from lowly beginnings, as his body has grown from the unorganized speck of protoplasm. Not that either process excludes Divine help, guidance, control; quite the opposite, for these are required at every step; a biological “sport,” breeding true, is as much a creation as it would be if man had appeared without his ape-like ancestors or cousins.<sup>1</sup> It is all a matter of size of step or jump; the principle is the same. Purposive activity must be admitted in one case as in the other. “Selection” by

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the works of Mendel and De Vries, and an excellent booklet by Sir James Crichton Browne, *A New Theory of Evolution*.

"nature" accounts for the extinction of creatures having certain qualities, and for the continuation of those having others; but the qualities themselves come into existence by creation, or, if you like, are introduced from the spiritual world into the material one.

So it is not logical to exclude creation and Divine action just because changes are small and multitudinous instead of few and great. The whole trend of science since its birth three hundred years ago has been to show that the former way is the way God works; not the big-jump way, as was formerly thought. And, all the analogies of material science pointing to graduated soul-growth, we see it as the reasonable thing, as we now see the reasonableness and greatness of our body-growth. Sudden creations of very complex things are at the least improbable. God works in stages. "Slow grows the splendid pattern that He weaves."

If, then, we lived before birth, it is natural to wonder how and where. It is an ancient problem; ancient even two thousand five hundred years ago. And in those days, when spirit was thought of as almost or quite a material thing, though vaporous (*πνεῦμα*, breath), it was inevitable that the former life should be conceived as a material sort of existence, and partly, indeed, a this-earth one; and the same after death—a recurrent cycle. "There comes into my mind," says Socrates, "an ancient doctrine which affirms that they go from hence into the other world, and returning hither, are born again from the dead." And in the famous myth of Er (*Republic*, Bk. x.), Plato, though saying that some of the incarnating souls foolishly choose exalted lots because they came from heaven and "had never felt the discipline of trouble," certainly teaches a return to earth for the departed human soul, after its sojourn

in heaven if its previous life was good, or after its purification in nether regions if in that previous life it had been evil. Virgil seems to have accepted something of the same sort (*Æneid*, Bk. vi.), and a similar theory is held by the modern Theosophists, who base mainly on Indian philosophy.

Some conception of this kind, elaborated to fit the new conception of human personality with its enlarged "subliminal" areas and powers, and purified of early crudeness and materiality, seems likely to become a prominent feature in the religious belief of the coming time. Man is proved by many psychical phenomena—e.g. the facts showing heightened faculty in hypnotic and allied states—to be greater than he normally knows. A large mental part of him remains subliminal—"below the threshold" of consciousness. He is an iceberg which floats with only one-twelfth of its mass above water.

This idea helps us to reconcile one fact which is an obvious difficulty in a pre-existence theory, namely, the fact that we have no recollection of any existence before our present one. Our total self being much greater than its present manifestation, we are able to suppose that other fractions of us have lived in a material body before, their experiences being hived in the memory of the complete self, while the present fraction is a new thing—with, therefore, no memory—as a cloud is new, though formed out of a pre-existing huger mass of vapour, into which it returns, directly or indirectly.

To use yet another figure—and only through analogies can we present the thing to our mental vision,—the total individual mind is a balloon, high up in the heaven and the sunshine, with a wide view and some



unknown great purpose. From time to time it has a rope or ropes out, with a dredging-net trailing on the ground as one dredges for sea-bottom specimens. The point of contact with earth is an individual earth-life. It moves on, ever gathering experiences, with continual painful jerks and jolts and bruising. Then, when it ceases or nearly ceases to be a gatherer, it is drawn up and its contents made useful; another new one is thrown out, to gather experience in its turn. Thus there is indeed a succession of representatives of the same transcendental ego, but—here we differ from the cruder form of reincarnation theory—no reappearance of exactly the same fraction.

As to the destiny of the whole self, that question is beyond us at present. It is best to leave it alone and to study "things of a size with our capacity," as Thomas à Kempis has it. And, in speculating even as far as we have just adventured, we must remember to "sit loose to theories." We are feeling out into the unknown, guided by facts indeed, but going beyond them and guessing at others. We must recognize that we are speculating, and must remind ourselves that we are not laying down a dogma, an absolute and unchangeable truth, but only saying that at present, on the basis of such knowledge as we have, this or something like this seems on the whole to ourselves the most reasonable supposition, though others may quite justifiably think otherwise, their knowledge-data being different and perhaps wider.

On this point, once more, Plato can hardly be bettered :

"A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be very confident, that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do

say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who, having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him and working harm rather than good, has sought after the pleasures of knowledge; and has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—in these adorned she is ready to go on her journey . . . when her hour comes.”

Admittedly it may be that the whole fabric of experience, including all inferences, such as that of a future life, is a sort of dream or illusion. Sense-perception may be a confidence trick; one sense confirms another, but who is to vouch for the lot? They are related, have grown up together, and naturally are in league. They are like Schopenhauer's sciences, each of which introduces another as his cousin, “but how do I stand to the whole company?” The Chinese philosopher Chuang Tze, after dreaming that he was a butterfly, said, “Now, am I a man who has been dreaming he was a butterfly, or am I a butterfly now dreaming I am a man?” There is no proof possible, either way. “Absolute” knowledge is unattainable. But, the experiences of each state being real while we are in that state, it seems probably futile to speculate much as to how real or unreal they may be when seen from the standpoint of another state. That kind of speculation leads to nothing but destruction and scepticism, so far as philosophy is concerned. Quite

probably there is a sense in which our present life is indeed a dream—a very bad dream sometimes, in our times of suffering and sorrow—and when we wake into the next stage we may find it so radically different that our present experience does not enable us to form any true conception of it.

It may be so. The Christian Scientists seem to think so, and to get help from the thought. But to most of us it will seem best to take reality largely at its face value; to accept experience and the rational interpretation of it, and to keep our fulcrum, so to speak, on this side. Consequently, however true it may be in some absolute or incomprehensible sense that this present life is a dream and that we can infer nothing from it about Reality, it nevertheless seems best, on the whole, to act as if it were real and reliable; to accept—here is the present point—to accept the inferences about a “future life” which seem to be required by the facts of psychical research, as we accept other scientific inferences when the facts seem to require them.

We have climbed up a long ladder of development, and there is no reason to suppose we are at the top. Human intelligence is certainly the highest that is so obviously existent as to be admitted by all, but it is absurd to suppose it the highest in existence. *We* did not make the Universe. Something did. That may be called naïf argument, but it is sound. Effects require causes. If you throw causation and reason overboard, you are throwing away the pilot and the steersman, and you may land where you should, or you may not. Indeed, you are also denying the existence of the shipbuilder. Beings higher than ourselves there must be. Certainly *a* Being, and almost certainly



a multitude of intermediate beings, for everything goes by gradation in the world we are in at present. To the level of some of these we may climb. Some of them are those we have lost awhile; who have gone before.

At each stage there is an appropriate World-view. But though we thus believe that there are world-views far transcending our present feeble conceptions, our wisdom is to get the best view we can with the faculties we have now and the facts we can now obtain, leaving to those other and later stages the experiences proper to them. To do otherwise is to make the mistake allegorically indicated by Balzac in his *Quest of the Absolute*—to drop the reality for the shadow. For though a plane is real to those on it, it can only be shadowily realized on another, and the reality of the present one is partly lost, good experience being thus missed. This has been the mistake of India and of many mystical cults. We must avoid the materialism which sees only one world, but we must equally avoid the mysticism which is so filled with the thought of worlds ahead that it tries to live in them before its time. To each day its task. Some mystics

. . . breathe in worlds

To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil,

and, being so loftily remote, they can hardly get the good of this world as they might, though indeed they may be here as teachers mainly, antidotes to materialism. But, on the whole, the right mysticism is that which loves the good green earth and its living freight: living and acting "here" as well as "there."

Obviously, then, the very thing that I am saying now, and which I believe sincerely and profoundly to

be true—about gradation and progress through the worlds—is nevertheless not true in any “absolute” sense. My conclusions, and all contemporary ones, will be superseded by successors more true and worthy, as the Ptolemaic system was succeeded by the Copernican. But that need not depress us; it certainly does not depress me. By the time incarnate folk have got ahead of where I am now, I shall no doubt have gone ahead considerably myself.

In short, all I am contending for is that though Science brings no “absolute” knowledge, the proper thing to do is to accept the knowledge it does bring, in each plane; to face facts, and to face ourselves, honestly, seeking only to learn and grow and help; and to leave all else to the Master Power whom we may call God.

It occurs to me, here, that some readers may be disappointed with the vagueness of my suggestions regarding the nature of the after-life, and may wish for something concrete and exact. I believe that we survive death, that we are met by friends when we go over, and that progress continues on the other side; and, for me, this is enough at present. As to the exact nature of the progress and of the life there—whether we shall live in houses, go to concerts, wear clothes, etc.—I simply do not know. As Plato says, “Something of the kind may be true,” and it is certainly desirable to link up the next stage with this as closely as possible. For myself, I do not yet see how a spiritual world can safely be regarded as only a material world of a finer kind; it reminds one of “weighing the soul,” brain secreting thought as liver secretes bile, and other materialistic confusions. However, I may be wrong. And some of these materialistic heaven conceptions are

interesting, and perhaps helpful to many, so I venture to quote at some length one of the best that I have come across, from an old book by Dr. Hare, which probably is now not easily obtainable. It was published in New York in 1855, under the ponderous title: *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations Demonstrating the Existence of Spirits and their Communion with Mortals*. Dr. Hare was M.D. and Emeritus Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania. His messages were obtained by various ingenious ouija-methods, some of which seem to have eliminated the possibility of mediumistic fraud and even also of the medium's subliminally causing the phenomena—unless we assume a great deal of clairvoyance—for the letters were arranged invisibly. However, it is difficult to feel sure about that. The quotations are from pages 119 to 124 of the work cited:—

620. From the information conveyed by communications submitted in the preceding pages, as well as others, it appears that there are seven spheres recognized in the spirit world. The terrestrial abode forms the first or rudimental sphere.

621. At the distance of about sixty miles from the terrestrial surface, the spirit world commences. It consists of six bands or zones, designated as spheres, surrounding the earth, so as to have one common centre with it and with each other. An idea of these rings may be formed from that of the planet Saturn, excepting that they are comparatively much nearer to their planet, and that they have their broad surfaces parallel to the planet and at right angles to the ecliptic, instead of being like Saturn's rings, so arranged that their surfaces are parallel to the plane in which his ecliptic exists.

622. Supposing the earth to be represented by a globe of thirteen and a half inches in diameter, the lower surface of the lowest of the spiritual spheres, if represented in due proportion to the actual distance from the earth, would be only one-tenth of an inch from the terrestrial surface. The



bands observed over the regions in the planet Jupiter which correspond with our tropical regions, agree very well in relative position with those which are assigned to our spiritual spheres. They are probably the spiritual spheres of that planet.

It having struck me as possible that these bands might be due to spiritual spheres appertaining to Jupiter, I inquired of the spirits ; their reply was confirmatory.

623. The objection naturally occurs that ours are invisible to us ; yet we know that light may be polarized in passing through transparent masses so as to produce effects in one case which it does not in others when not so polarized. It will have to pass through the spheres of Jupiter, and return through them again. This light, twice subjected to the ordeal of passing through the spirit world, when contrasted with that which goes and returns without any such ordeal, may undergo a change of a nature to produce an effect upon the eye, when, in the absence of this contrast, no visual change should be perceptible. . . .

630. The interval between the lower boundaries of the first spiritual sphere and the second is estimated at thirty miles as a maximum, but this interval is represented to be less, as the spheres between which it may exist are more elevated or remote from the terrestrial centre.

631. Each sphere is divided into six "circles" or plains. More properly these may be described as concentric zones, occupying each about one-sixth of the space comprised within the boundaries of the sphere. There being six subdivisions to each of the six spheres, in all there must be thirty-six gradations.

632. These boundaries are not marked by any visible partition, but spirits have in this respect a peculiar sense, which makes them feel when they are passing the boundaries of one sphere in order to get to the next.

633. This allegation of the existence of an invisible spirit world within the clear azure space intervening between the surface of this globe and the lunar orbit may startle the reader ; and yet this idea may have been presented by Scripture to the same mind, without awakening scepticism. It was urged by a spirit friend : Is it more wonderful that you

should find our habitations invisible, than that we are invisible ?

634. It is plain that between the lowest degrees of vice, ignorance, and folly, and the highest degrees of virtue, learning, and wisdom, there are many gradations. When we are translated to the spheres, we take a rank proportional to our merit, which seems to be there intuitively susceptible of estimation by the law above alluded to, of the grossness being greater as the character is more imperfect.

Both the spirits and spheres are represented as having a gradation in constitutional refinement, so that the sphere to which a spirit belongs is intuitively manifest. Rank is determined by a sort of moral specific gravity, in which merit is inversely as weight. Another means of distinction is a circumambient halo by which every spirit is accompanied, which passes from darkness to effulgency as the spirit belongs to a higher plane. Even mortals are alleged to be surrounded with a halo visible to spirits, although not to themselves. Intuitively, from the extent and nature of this halo, spirits perceive the sphere to which any mundane being belongs. The effulgence of the higher spirits is represented as splendid. As soon as emancipated from their corporeal tenement, spirits enter the spheres, and are entitled to a station higher in direct proportion to their morality, wisdom, knowledge, and intellectual refinement.

635. The first spiritual sphere, or the second in the whole series, is as large as all the other five above it. This is the hell or Hades of the spirit world, where all sensual, malevolent, selfish beings reside. The next sphere above this, or the third in the whole series, is the habitation of all well-meaning persons, however bigoted, fanatical, or ignorant. Here they are tolerably happy.

636. In proportion as spirits improve in purity, benevolence, and wisdom they ascend. They may ascend as love-spirits in consequence of the two first-mentioned attributes ; but cannot go up on account of wisdom alone.

A knave, however wise, cannot advance in the spheres. There are, in fact, two modes of ascent—love, so called, and love and wisdom united. Those who go up in love are called *love-spirits* ; those who unite both qualifications are called

*wisdom-spirits.* A feminine spirit, who had been remarkable for her disinterested devotion to her relatives and friends, ascended almost forthwith to the fifth sphere. My friend W. W. had an ascent equally rapid to the same sphere. Yet another spirit, who was fully as free from vice as either of those above alluded to, took many years to ascend in wisdom to the fifth sphere, not being satisfied to rise unless accompanied by the attributes of wisdom, as well as love. Spirit B. alleged that because he was a free-thinker he went up more quickly than another spirit, A. A., being questioned, admitted that B. had gone on more speedily in consequence of superior liberality.

637. Washington is in the seventh sphere.

638. In the spheres, diversity of creed has no influence, excepting so far as its adoption indicates badness of heart and narrowness of mind, and has been of a nature to injure the moral and intellectual character.

639. Degradation ensues as an inevitable consequence of vice, and as the means of reform, *not as vindictive punishment.* God is represented as all love, and is never named without the most zealous devotion. Spirits in any sphere can descend into any sphere below that to which they belong, but cannot ascend above this sphere. They are surrounded by a halo, which is brighter in proportion as their sphere is higher. They have an intuitive power of judging of each other and of mortals. Attachments originating in this life are strengthened, while hatred passes away. The spirits in the upper spheres have "*ineffable*" happiness. The sufferings of those below are negative, rather than positive. They are made to feel shame at a degradation which is rendered intuitively evident to themselves and all other spirits. But all are capable of improvement, so as to have elevation and happiness within their reach sooner or later. The higher spirits are always ready to assist sinners by kind admonition (92).

640. My brother alleges himself to hold the office of a teacher. By teachers, spirits fresh from this world, called the "rudimental sphere," are examined to determine their rank.

641. Spirits are carried along with our globe by their moral affections and affinity, which upon them acts as gravitation



upon material bodies. They are just where they wish themselves to be, as they move in obedience to their moral impulses or aspirations, not having a gross, material body to carry along with them.

642. Spirits of the higher spheres control more or less those below them in station, who are sent by them to impress mortals virtuously. Spirits are not allowed to interpose directly, so as to alter the course of events upon earth. They are not allowed to aid in any measure to obtain wealth.

643. Blessed spirits are endowed with a power competent to the gratification of every rational want. They enjoy, as I am authorised to say by the convocation of spirits to whom allusion has been made, a power like that ascribed to the genius of Aladdin's lamp (593).

644. There is nothing of the nature of marketable property in the spirit world, since every inhabitant above the second sphere, or Hades, has as much as he wants, and needs no more to purchase the requisites for his enjoyment or subsistence than we need to buy air to breathe.

645. It ought also to be explained that after spirits reach the highest plane or circle of the seventh sphere, they are represented as being entitled to enter the supernal heaven, taking place among the ministering angels of the Deity.

646. Whether the connubial tie endures or not, is optional. Hence those who have not found their matrimonial connection a source of happiness in this world are at liberty to seek a new hymeneal union in the spirit world. Where there have been a plurality of husbands or wives, those unite who find themselves happy in doing so. But, as if to indemnify mortals for the crosses in marriage or in love, or for the dreariness of mundane celibacy, all are destined in the spheres to find a counterpart with whom they may be happy, there being peculiarly ardent pleasurable emotions attached to the connubial union in the spheres which mortals cannot understand.

647. Infants grow as they would have done upon earth, nearly. They are nursed and educated, and on account of their higher purity have, in this point of view, as much elevation as their relatives who attain great worldly pre-eminence.

648. The alleged motive for our existence in this rudimental sphere, is the necessity of contrast to enable us to appreciate the immunity from suffering of the higher spheres. Infants in this respect are at a disadvantage; but being unable to appreciate their deficiency, do not grieve therefor. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." . . .

650. Among the most wonderful facts narrated by my spirit father, and sanctioned by the convocation of spirits, is the existence of a spiritual sun concentric with ours, and yet emitting independent rays to the spirit world, not for our world; while the rays of our sun do not reach the world above mentioned.

651. Further, the facts that spirits respire a vital fluid inscrutable to our chemists, although it coexists everywhere with oxygen, and furnishes our spirits, while encased in the flesh, with an appropriate spiritual nourishment.

652. Thus is there another world existing concentrically and in some degree associated with ours, which is of infinitely greater importance to our enduring existence than that wherein we now abide.

I have not been able to trace the history of this sphere-idea with any exactness, but it seems probable that it is a revival of the Ptolemaic planetary spheres, which, indeed, go back more or less to Pythagoras.<sup>1</sup> These seven heavens are referred to in the Koran, Mohammed having apparently got the idea from the Kabbalists; and the reader will remember the same kind of thing in Dante. Perhaps the influence of Swedenborg revived these notions, hence their appearance in Andrew Jackson Davis's *Great Harmonia* (vol. ii., pages 251, 252), published in 1851. But I have quoted Hare instead of Davis because he is fuller

<sup>1</sup> Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—the then known "planets"—were supposed to be fixed in crystalline spheres at increasing distances from the earth. Then came the heaven of the firmament or *primum mobile*.—See Sir Oliver Lodge's *Pioneers of Science*, p. 18 ff.

and more definite. It is quite possible that these conceptions may contain some truth, even though their astronomical basis is exploded ; but I cannot accept them literally, and I do not see how they can be either proved or disproved. They are interesting speculatively, but the evidence for their truth is not of the same cogency as that which proves the main fact of survival.



## CHAPTER XIV

### Psychical Research and Religion

PSYCHICAL research is a branch of science. It observes, records, and cautiously infers. An intelligent journalist said to me recently, on my mentioning something connected with it, that he feared he "had not enough poetic imagination to be interested in psychical research." He has a considerable knowledge of a few sciences, and he evidently looks down on us poor poetic dreamers. Or, rather, he feels himself to be planted on the good solid earth of fact, while he thinks of us as soaring into the blue. But, in thus thinking, it is he who is deceiving himself by too active poetic imagination. We keep as close to fact as he does; indeed, closer. The difference is that he is inexperienced; there are some facts which he has not yet become personally acquainted with. Schopenhauer said, a century ago, that "the person who does not believe in the fact of clairvoyance is not entitled to be called a sceptic; he is merely ignorant." It is true enough, though characteristically blunt. The fact of the existence of human faculty that is not yet recognized by "orthodox" science is now established to the satisfaction of all who have made patient and unprejudiced investigation; or, to be more carefully precise, I have never known anyone, or even heard of anyone, who has given time and labour and an open mind to the subject without being convinced; not necessarily

convinced of personal survival, but convinced of supernatural faculty of some sort. But time and labour and an open mind are necessary. The thing is a science, and, like all branches of science, must be worked at.

And, being a department of science, it would seem that it has nothing specially to do with religion. The psychical researcher might stick to his last, declining to be tempted into other departments, leaving it to the philosophers and the religious world to decide what significance his facts and theories have for their own special subjects. And this is what some psychical researchers do, particularly those who are chiefly concerned with the medical side—hypnotism and mental therapeutics generally. But all sciences have religious or philosophic implications, near or remote; for our knowledge of the material universe affects our metaphysical ideas. Copernicus and Galileo were astronomers, but they influenced theology also. The greater universe-conceptions which they brought about needed a correspondingly greater God. Metaphysics has to keep pace with physics. And though the mental-therapeutic side of psychical research—somewhat like chemistry—has little direct bearing on religion, the other departments dealing with telepathy and survival have—like astronomy, but more so—a rather vital or at least intimate relation thereto.

We are, therefore, almost inevitably carried forward to the discussion of wider things than the facts with which we were primarily concerned; for the explanation of these facts seems to call for statements which hitherto have been regarded as a monopoly of theologian or prophet. We find that these facts confirm—in essentials, not in detail—much that Religion has taught. If materialistic scientists still remain and are

inclined to deprecate this, we can only say that we are sorry if we offend, but that we are seeking truth, following the indications of the facts, applying all known tests, and going out of the old scientific territory only when the facts fairly drive us out. But we do not go outside of science; we consolidate our position, bringing the new territory into the scientific realm.

What, then, is the bearing of psychical research on religion? How does it modify our previous religious conceptions; or, if we had no religious conceptions previously, what are those which it supplies or suggests? In what follows I must be understood as speaking for myself alone, and not for the Society for Psychical Research, which, as a body, has no creed except that the subject calls for investigation. I am probably a fairly average member, but individual members naturally differ more or less on many points.

The results of psychical research bring about a radical change in our conception of human personality; of its *nature* first, before we even begin to question ourselves about its destiny. They enlarge it somewhat as the new astronomy of three centuries ago enlarged our conception of the external universe. They enlarge it in two ways, which we may call, for convenience, Width and Length.

#### WIDENING OF PERSONALITY-CONCEPTION

This is mainly through the establishment of the "Subliminal," which, though more or less recognized under various names by writers such as Hartmann and others, was first fully and systematically treated, thirty years ago, by F. W. H. Myers, who, as Prof. James has remarked, may be said to have discovered it. The facts of hypnotism, notably the



performance of feats of memory and calculation which are quite impossible to the subject in the waking state,<sup>1</sup> coupled with the similar phenomena of arithmetical prodigies who do not know how they get their results,<sup>2</sup> and with the curious facts of multiple personality<sup>3</sup>—these, not to mention the ordinary though unexplained phenomena of “instinct” and the perhaps allied phenomena of dowsing and clairvoyance generally, are proofs that the total self is something far greater than its present conscious manifestation. This total self has been compared, as already remarked, to an iceberg, of which only one-twelfth—representing the normal consciousness—is ordinarily visible above the surface. Or it may be compared to a polygonal object resting upon one of its facets on a table. The facet touching the table is the normal consciousness, the part (of the total self) which is in contact with the material world. But the other facets are existing also, in a different and higher environment, and the experience of the total Self is greater than that of any one of the sides. If reincarnation is a fact (I express no opinion, for I see little evidence for it, while admitting that it is a legitimate speculation) we may visualize the polygon as turning over on another side, bringing a new facet in contact with the material world. It is a different facet, and consequently has no recollection of the preceding life of the other facet; but it belongs to the same Self as that other, and therefore it is a sort of reincarnation, being a reappearance of the same entity.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bramwell's experiments, in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xii., pp. 176-203.

<sup>2</sup> Myers's *Human Personality*, vol. i., pp. 79, 116.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality*.

In all such figures of speech, however, we must remember that we are only inventing them to help our thought, which inevitably is shaped so greatly by our visual experience; we must not forget that in visualizing as spatial and material a thing which is certainly neither (i.e. the mind, or soul, or spirit), we are making a risky venture which is sure to be partly wrong. But if we are to think and get along at all we must construct these thought-models, as we do in other sciences—visualizing flying atoms or electrons, or what not—even if we know them to be inadequate. They are useful for the present, and that is their justification. The polygon for the transcendental Self is a legitimate figure, expressing the fact—vague if not visualized—that our Self extends far beyond our present manifested portion; that we are “greater than we know,” as Wordsworth said.

#### LENGTHENING OF PERSONALITY-CONCEPTION

The Self, we have said, is a wider affair than was thought. We are greater than we know. But the facts we have glanced at—increased faculty in hypnosis and the like—while extending personality in width, do not necessarily extend it in length. However great the Self's reality may be, the whole *may* go out of existence at the death of the manifesting portion. But here come in two important lines of evidence—two streams of new facts—which prove extended duration as well as extended faculty. These two lines are Telepathy and Spiritistic Evidence. If Telepathy is a fact—if communication between mind and mind really occurs through channels other than the known sensory ones—and if, as seems likely, it is not a physical process,—it proves at once the existence of a spiritual

world, for it must take place in a world of some sort, and the non-dependence of mind on body. Or, if this latter can hardly be "proved" by telepathy, it is at least rendered likely; for if telepathy is not physical, the spiritual seems likely to be the *prius*, and the material an adjunct. Admittedly, thus far, *individual* continuity is not yet made clear. Telepathy, by suggesting a common nature in mankind and a probable continual small leakage and permeation between mind and mind imperceptibly, indeed suggests a sort of *pan-psyche*, a spiritual total in which individuation is only temporary, characteristic merely of the present world; a sea in which at present we are the waves. But here comes in the spiritistic evidence, of which the S.P.R. and other workers have given examples. There is no doubt whatever about the significance of this evidence. It points most unmistakably to individual survival. The Self continues. It is greater than we know, longitudinally as well as laterally. It has duration as well as extent, beyond the bodily manifestation.

Human personality, then, is extended in duration as well as widened in faculty. The Self's powers are greater than those normally manifested in the earth-life—how much greater we cannot wholly know—and its longitudinal existence is a far greater affair than the present life, which is but a small section. In my Father's house, which is the Universe, are many tarrying-places, many sections of road, many halting-places, and some of them are unpleasant. But they are only part of the way, and are only experienced as evils by part of the Self; by the whole they are seen to be good. A seer with partial sight has said that man is a god in ruins; but a greater has seen past the slightly time-damaged frontage to the whole fabric,



saying simply: "Ye are gods" (Psalm lxxxii. 6). There is no spiritual pride in accepting this doctrine, which, indeed, is ratified by One Who was pre-eminently meek and lowly in heart (John x. 34). We need only remember that it is the total Self that is meant. The present sectional manifestation is ungodlike enough, we know well; we do not glorify *that*—we want to improve it and make it more useful; and this very want is a proof of our real greatness, for an ideal involves a real which we dimly sense and would like to draw down and make manifest.

So much for human personality. But, if we talk about religion, we must go beyond the human. In the West, at least, a "religion" must have a God. What, then, of psychical research and Theology?

In all inquiry the most hopeful method is to proceed from the known to the unknown. In seeking after God, if haply we may feel after Him and find Him, it is wise to begin from the standpoint of our own most indubitable experience. Therefore, let us briefly consider some aspects of that experience.

There is a difference in degree of certainty in our affirmation of things experienced, for memory is untrustworthy and even perception is liable to error; so perhaps the only certain thing is a sensation of the present moment. But I leave these hair-splitting difficulties, and start from the position that each one of us is certain of his own experience and of his being an experiencing Self. When we have pain we know about it, and no amount of argument—not even Christian Science argument, which tries—can convince us that we are mistaken. The pain is real. So with other experiences, in varying degree. We may mis-

interpret sensations, mistaking a bush for a cow, and the like, but the mental experience—the cow-thought—is real. It is a mental fact.

Closely connected with this inner order of experience is our own body. This lump of matter, separated quite definitely from the remainder of the material world, is associated in some special way with the entity we call “I.” We do not feel pain outside its borders. We are “in” it, manifesting through it, though the method of the interaction remains entirely unknown. It is as true as when Tyndall said it in 1874, that between the physics of the brain and the corresponding facts of consciousness there is a gulf that has not been bridged—has not been bridged, that is, by our understanding; for in the actuality there is no gulf—the two things do go on together, closely interwoven.

Pass now beyond the body. We find ourselves in an illimitable material universe, compared with which our bodies are infinitesimal. In the first place, we are on the surface of a planet 8,000 miles in diameter. If both land and sea were covered with human beings, that living scum would bear the same relation to the mass of the earth as a skin about a millionth of an inch thick would bear to a very large orange. Is it reasonable to think that all the mind in the planet has got decanted off into this exceedingly small portion which we call “living” matter? Our bodies are part of the earth’s mass. The earth is our mother. The dead cannot give birth to the living. If the earth has produced living things, the earth must be in some sort alive. It seems absurd to suppose anything else. True, inorganic activity is of a kind different from, and more regular and more predictable than, the activities of living things; but the difference may

easily be exaggerated. Regularity and predictability do not disprove the existence of mind ; for instance, the value of the goods stolen in a given area within the next year can be closely predicted, else the insurance companies could not fix their burglary premiums. By dealing with large numbers, and striking averages, prediction is possible in human affairs. And in the inorganic world of physics we are dealing with huge aggregates of molecules—a far huger number of units than the number of human units dealt with by the insurance companies—and this may account for the regularity of their activities as seen by us. However this may be, inorganic activity there certainly is. Molecules, atoms, electrons, are in rapid and ceaseless motion. Air and ether are continually undulating, the latter with inconceivable rapidity. Is it not difficult to believe that all this is going on—not chaotically, but in an orderly and intelligible fashion—without some Mind behind it ? May there not be a planet-soul, energizing through the body of the earth as I energize through my body ? Of this Spirit our spirits are parts, as our bodies are parts of the earth's material mass. I am related to that Spirit somewhat as one of my blood-corpuscles is related to me, or as a sensation is related to my whole mental content. The sensation is remembered ; the individual dies, but is remembered—continues to exist in the Earth-Spirit.

The earth is on a larger scale than we, for it includes us, body and soul. It is longer-lived than we in our present modes, and its development is accordingly slower. Its extreme youth of turbulence and chaotic strife among its elements, human and other—as of a child driven this way and that by its impulses—is over, and maturity is being reached. Great and



terrible wars are still possible among its human corpuscles, but these latter are at least beginning to *desire* peace. A great nation has temporarily reverted to the barbarous stage when war was regarded as the natural and right thing, but it *is* a reversion. The Earth-Spirit's aim is plain: greater solidarity, greater harmony and interpenetration; first isolated families, every man's hand against every other man; then tribes at constant feud; then nations occasionally at war; then—in the future—the Federation of the World.

From the Earth we pass to the other celestial bodies, and may permit ourselves to assign a soul-part to each, as, indeed, was done in cruder form in earlier days. Each planet had its angel—which Kepler was accused of irreligion for dethroning by the bald and barren formulæ of his laws—and the Sun had its Uriel. The idea may, after all, be true. In view of the intense activity now known to be going on not only on the molar but on the molecular, atomic, and electronic scale, we can no longer look on non-living matter as a mere lump of stuff which *does* nothing. It is doing a great deal; and if it does it in a way which is orderly and comprehensible to our minds, it indicates guidance and control by something akin to those minds. And the movements of the heavenly bodies are orderly also, and at the same time awesome and majestic. We know little yet of the movements of the "fixed stars," or whether the natural guess of some central body or focus is true; but all seem to be in motion, and all that we know leads us to believe that the motion is systematic and would be intelligible if we knew enough.

Behind the phenomena of the material universe, then, we infer a Spirit who manifests through it as we

manifest through our bodies. Nature is the body of God :

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Here, however, presents itself the age-old Problem of Evil. Why do sin and suffering exist, even for parts ? If God as a whole is perfect, almighty, all-good, why do we, who in Him live and move and have our being, so continually find ourselves in a condition which is very far from being good ? I think this is a question which is obviously unanswerable in any final way. The smaller cannot comprehend the greater. We cannot explain the higher by the lower. Chemical and physical laws do not explain man ; he extends into higher realms. Man does not explain God ; he can dimly surmise by analogies, but God contains and transcends him. My blood-corpuscles—billions of them—may suffer when I undertake extra exertion, and thus may have a Problem of Evil of their own ; but their pain may serve my higher purpose, which, if I am doing useful work, may be justifiable and indeed very good. Similarly, our pains may serve God's purposes. We may be assisting in labours and processes more august than we can conceive.

I admit, however, that there is something not quite satisfactory about this conception of a finite, struggling God—for that is what it amounts to. It is true that we have the highest authority for it, if Jesus's saying will bear this meaning, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work " (John v. 17) ; and philosophers such as J. S. Mill, William James, and Professor Bergson have inclined to some such notion in order to retain a God

<sup>1</sup> Pope's *Essay on Man*. In what I have been here saying it will be perceived that I owe much to Fechner.

who shall be in close relation to us, near at hand and not afar off, as is the Absolute and Unconditioned of Dean Mansel and the thoroughgoing Idealists. Perhaps compromise may be effected somewhat as follows: a compromise which shall satisfy our demand for illimitability and static Perfection in God, while still seeing Divine striving in the universe—in what Emerson calls the continual effort to mount and meliorate, out there in Nature and within our own souls. I put forward this compromise scheme with diffidence, for, though it may have occurred to others, I have not seen any statement of it. Of course, it is only a speculative “way out,” and, as already said, all human conceptions of this kind must be inadequate representations of the reality; nevertheless, they help us to form some notion of it, and this is better than nothing, if it is a worthy notion.

God, we have said, is the Soul of the Universe. He is immanent in the material creation, and, if visualized only thus, there is strife and suffering and progress and dualism or pluralism—within Him; and this seems unsatisfactory. I therefore incline to represent God's Personality—in a higher sort of anthropomorphism—as consisting of two portions or aspects corresponding to what in human personality we call the supraliminal and the subliminal. The Divine essence which ensouls the material universe, and of which we are a part, is His so-to-speak normal or lower self; but beyond and above this—as with our own transcendental ego—rises and extends the Transcendent and Unimaginable Godhead, of which perhaps the greater mystics have gleams even now, and which Dante has tried to give some feeling of, according to the framework thought of his time, in the *Paradiso*. “It is



only the finite," says Emerson, "that has wrought and suffered; the infinite lies stretched in smiling repose." Similarly sings Mrs. Browning :

And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our  
incompleteness,—

Round our restlessness, His rest.

Theology has oscillated between the conception of a glorified man, a sort of immeasurable clergyman, who sits outside his universe, watching it go, and an immanent, striving, finite Principle, manifesting itself in all natural phenomena. The first philosophizes itself away into Mansel's Unconditioned and Incomprehensible, who is indeed presented in our Prayer Book ; the second lands us in variations of the old and crude notion of two great warring Spirits, God and Devil, who are very evenly matched if we may judge from the "moral" facts of life, though we hold the faith that God will win in the end. Both these extremes of Transcendence and Immanence are unsatisfactory if held alone. The thing to do is to combine them. No concept formed by a created being can be greater than the Creator's reality ; we need not be afraid of over-estimating Deity. God is both Immanent and Transcendent. He is the Soul of the Universe and, phenomena being His manifestation, all things and not a sporadic few are miraculous ; He does not need to step down and interfere with Himself. But He is not entirely enmattered. He is Soul of the material universe, but He is also more. He transcends it. He is comprehensible and finite in His Immanent aspect, but He extends into incomprehensibility and infinity in His Transcendence.

The seen things are temporal, the unseen things

eternal. The earth and the heaven shall wax old like a garment; shall pass away and be no more seen. But the Spirit of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth Eternity shall endure for ever, with all of good that we have known—not its semblance but itself.

With wide-embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years,  
Pervades and broods above,  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,  
And suns and universes ceased to be,  
And Thou wert left alone,  
Every existence would exist in Thee.<sup>1</sup>

We may conceive, then, that surviving human beings who communicate with us are still within the domain of God's normal or immanent consciousness, though even in that there will be many grades; and that eventually those souls, with our own and the values of the whole temporal order, may be sublimed into that transcendent portion which is beyond our comprehension. It is almost beyond our apprehension also; but the facts of experience impel to a dim inference of its Being, and analogies give it visibility. And some few mystics—whether in the body or out of it they hardly know—have come into still closer touch, achieving certainty of knowledge. We cannot dismiss their experiences; they are data, like other data. And there is something in all of us, I think, which tells us that these experiences have a reality that is more than subjective. As even William James has said, in that direction lies Truth.

It is well for the Reason to criticize intuitions—that is the quite proper function of science and philo-

<sup>1</sup> The last lines that Emily Brontë wrote: *Works*, vol. i., p. 81.

sophy. But it is the living experiencing Self that goes forward into the new. Religious experience is its own warrant to the experient, and even for the outsider it is beginning to count, for data require an explanation, and the indications are clear. And, even to the cold Reason, the facts of psychical research seem to justify or require an explanation which confirms the intuitions of the mystic, that Spirit is real—Matter a temporary vehicle or medium—a dome of many-coloured glass which stains the white radiance of Eternity, as Shelley has it. Reason and intuition—science and Religion—are thus at last agreed.





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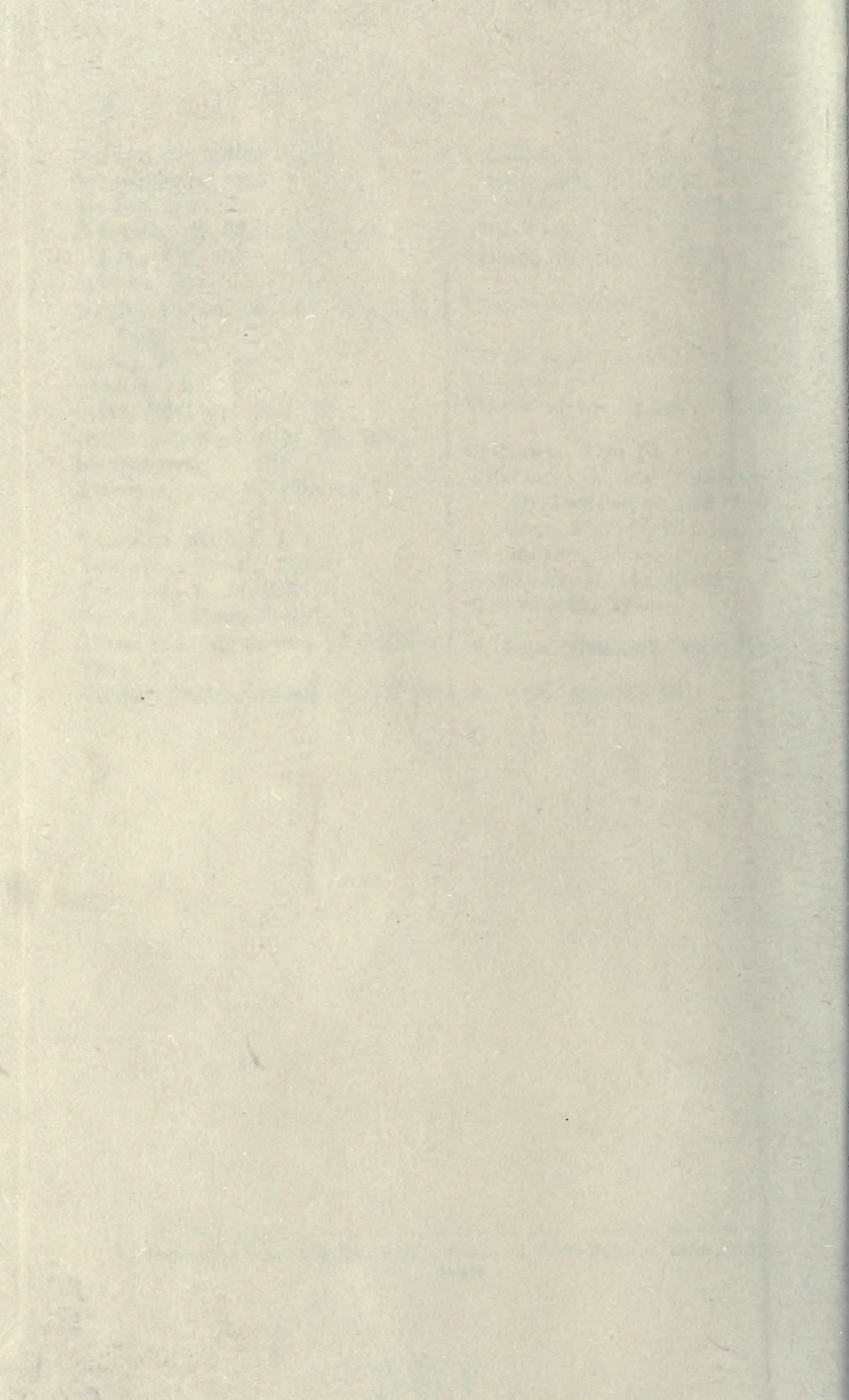
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