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EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

THE British College of Psychic Science, established and maintained so far by the individual enterprise of its founder, Mr. J. Hewat McKenzie, has already acquired a well-recognized status in the field of psychical research. It is now to possess an organ of its own, whereby the principles which the College is designed to follow, and which it hopes to realize in teaching and practice, may be more fully and consistently enunciated.

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PSYCHIC SCIENCE is the knowledge, theoretical and applied, of the Nature of the Soul, and its properties, powers and reactions upon the physical organism. This knowledge is clearly of a twofold kind. There is the phenomenal side, which is the subject of intelligent observation, test, experiment and record; and there is the metaphysical side wherein the intuitive perceptions are called into play, and by co-ordination of results and inductive work upon these, the basis of a true philosophy of the relation and interaction of the human trinity, Body, Soul and Spirit, may be laid down.

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Little by little it is hoped that the work of the College may tend to the elimination of vulgar errors concerning the status and the powers of the liberated human personality, and the phenomena of the séance-room may fall into their proper place as the stepping-stones merely of a causeway from Matter to Spirit, through the various and infinitely subtle grades of the psychic middle region.

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Hand in hand will and must go the two processes, the one deductive, intellectual, based upon fact and phenomenon, and the comparative conclusions therefrom; the other the intuitive, arguing from the realizations of spiritual law, and predicating results. All argument must ultimately be based upon certain postulates, certain premises assumed for the simple reason that they represent self-evident truth. Certain ideas, often themselves the outcome of long experiment and research, have now become axiomatic, have entered into the consciousness of the Race, and need no further argument in principle.

Of these we may cite the idea of Physical Evolution. This, from a mere theory, has become an intuitive conviction in the Racial Mind, and refuses to be displaced, though it needs to be supplemented by its counterpart, a true concept of Spiritual Involution, ere it can acquire that perfect balance which alone can point the way to yet greater advances in human thought.

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Even so does the British College of Psychic Science accept as a basis for all its work the axiom or self-evident principle that the Soul of Man, the ideally-conscious part of him, is separable from the physical body, and from the physical or brain-consciousness, and that the Soul, with its proper vehicle or vehicles, survives or transcends that body. It proceeds upon the axiom that the powers of the Soul—whether embodied or disembodied, physically speaking—transcend the physical limitations of Time, Space and Personality as we know them in the physical. It works with the serious aim of inculcating the advantage and the pressing need of a scientific exploration of those powers, for the benefit of a generation in whom they are germinating spontaneously and scattering the seed of new and strange developments, full of potencies for good or ill in proportion as they are led into paths of human service or left to run riot as weeds in a garden. Never was Pope's adage more aptly to be applied than to the present age: "The proper study of mankind is Man"—and not merely the brother Man, but the Inward Man, of each is the right, nay, the necessary, object of study.

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The frank acceptance of the doctrine of Human Survival delivers us at once from a vast enmeshment of stale and fruit-

less controversy, much of which is of a merely destructive kind. Rising clear of this outworn and lifeless shell, the College will conserve, not waste, its intellectual effort by turning this ever in a constructive direction.

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In the treatment of sensitives the principle will be followed that has made for the fairness and soundness of the administration of English Law; that is to say, that all sensitives who may work for the College, or may offer demonstration of their powers, will be assumed as innocent of all intent to deceive, and treated as such, until any actual duplicity, or appearance suggestive of such, is manifest. And even then there will always be the careful differentiation between the conscious fraudulence, and the unconscious or subconscious and instinctive physical action which at times has been detected in the actions of sensitives known to be capable of genuine results, and at other times has been observed actually to accompany these results, as a sort of physical reflex.

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The encouragement and sympathy which sensitives are thus assured of at the hands of the College cannot fail to create a spirit of confidence which may increase tenfold the opportunities of research at the disposal of the College, and it is anticipated that many of those who have not yet dared to come forward will be encouraged to avail themselves of the new opportunities thus afforded them of working under sympathetic conditions.

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One by one the sciences have re-emerged from the low level of empiricism and public disrepute in which they lay during the dark ages. Medicine and Chemistry have come into their rightful inheritance of public appreciation and respect, as they have been inwardly rehabilitated. Side by side with them Art and Drama have attained a new status of dignity and usefulness as exponents of Man in his relation to Nature and his fellow-Man. It remains for the greatest Science of all—the Science of the Soul—to assert and to achieve a like conquest; and by co-ordination of study and aim, by elimination of waste effort, and by use of the stores of acquired knowledge, the College will strive to make itself a nucleus for the New Science.

So to the axiom of Physical Evolution may soon be added, let us hope, that of a Psychic and Spiritual Evolution, an Idea endowed with strength to permeate the mind and soul of the Race and lead it out of the slough of materialistic thinking, and emancipate it from that practical atheism which places all material values above the spiritual, and exalts individual possessions above the joy of human service.

Already the public mind, by dint of the insistent clamour of ideas and suggestions arising from the various schools and groups of religio-philosophical thought now arising, is beginning to attune itself to a response, and apathy is yielding to interest and enquiry. The newspapers, barometers of public interest, reflect this trend in increasing measure, and the cinematograph films are beginning to exhibit films in which various psychic problems, such as the science of spiritual healing, are interwoven with the plot.

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The foundress of Christian Science is reported to have said that the constant reiteration observable in her book had for its object the establishment of her principles in the subconscious mind of the people. The process of permeation of the popular mind by ideas suggestive of a spiritual source and a spiritual trend for and in all human activities, cannot fail, if it proceed normally, to impregnate the common thought of the people and to leaven the churches also in an increasing degree. Already we can form some estimate of the degree in which the citadel of materialistic thinking has been breached by these attacks, and even the present enemies of the new movement cannot but admit that the spiritualistic hypothesis has largely prevailed to check the more violent forms of materialistic doctrine which make use of racial and class exclusiveness, and use the reactionary forces of violence and anarchy for the furtherance of their aims. So, let us hope, the old materialistic habit of mind will insensibly disintegrate and dissolve away, with the ultimate disappearance of its attendant evils.

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A new note of firmness is perceptible in our President's able article on Miss Besinnet's phenomena. He has courageously exposed the intrinsic shallowness of the destructive criticism of those who, without any sufficient equipment for the work, are quite ready to disparage the honesty of mediums by the

suggestion of various artifices by which their phenomena could be paralleled. Many of these suggestions seem of an impracticable nature, and, generally, the argument of the conjurer is based on false logic, since even if a phenomenon claimed to be produced psychically can be demonstrated to be possible under similar circumstances by artifice, the conclusion cannot be a general one, nor can it even be a positive conclusion even in the particular case. And, be it remembered, there is no conclusion at all until the artificial phenomenon is positively demonstrated under exactly parallel conditions.

Let any trained logician set out the syllogism, and the fallacy of the conclusion is at once obvious.

This class of cheap criticism must be set down at its proper value. It is a relic of the Victorian era when the materialistic professor of physics or biology ruled as tyrant over the whole intellectual domain. Now such thinkers are few, and fewest amongst the great ones in the world of science. The discarded robe of their ancient arrogance has fallen on the shoulders of little men, of shallow reading and no equipment of experience, puffed with their conceits. They will pass, for they are light upon the scales.

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We are at present very far from the possibility of framing any satisfying theory of the processes of work in the production of psychic photographs—that is, photographic impressions produced upon plates by unknown and presumably psychic agency.

The examples offered by Major Spencer in this first number of *TRANSACTIONS* will increase the perplexity of the student, owing to the many strange features they exhibit. The plates are remarkable equally for what they do, and what they do not, show. Major Spencer has some suggestive theories to offer, and these will command the thoughtful attention of readers who should study carefully the record of the conditions under which the results were attained. The action of intelligent manipulators “on the other side” in the production of these strange effects, of manipulators possessing some sort of scientific knowledge which is as it were a counterpart of our own, is practically unavoidable. The results would argue for them a training in the handling of “psychic matter” and a high degree of specialized experience. The photographer is the

physical medium, but how his psychic forces are controlled or used, is a mystery perhaps not explainable in terms of physical science.

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Once we admit that Mind can operate on Matter from a field unseen and outside the limitations of physical space, then the problem becomes one of methods, and of the progressive understanding of Law as operating in those dynamic fields of Nature which lie between Matter and Intelligent Will.

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The classification of spiritual and psychical agencies present in mediumistic phenomena, which will be found in the paper by Rev. Drayton Thomas, is a convenient one. These are classed as "communicator" and "control." It is, of course, not intended to preclude the possibility of many intermediate agencies, partaking of the qualities of either extreme, and the presence and action of more than one "communicator"—even of a multiplicity—must be allowed for, whilst even in the case of the psychical "control" there may be evidence of a duality or series. The normal law would seem to be "one control and many communicators." Sometimes the communicating intelligence bears but little mark of distinctive individual personality; at other times it may be strongly tinged with this. The "control," on the contrary, would be expected to retain the more personal marks of earth affinity. There is a physical linkage with the medium. But at times, when the communicating intelligence is of a lofty spiritual order, the impression is given that it is a corporate voice rather than an individual one that is trying to frame the interpretation of some great truth but dimly symbolized by human words, and that the unnamed Entity who delivers to the medium these messages of high wisdom may be a Greater Personality builded of the thoughts, memories and aspirations of a multitude of living souls in unison.

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The actual wording of a message is, we believe, the coinage of the substance of the medium's brain, but that coinage may be, and probably is, but a translation of a translation, the original idea descending through many grades of symbolism of increasing materiality until at last it finds its outward and physical expression in the written or spoken word.

THE VALUE AND BEARING OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

By Stanley de Brath, M.Inst.C.E.*

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, whom all shades of political opinion now regard as one of our truly great men, as well as being eminent in the world of practical affairs, gave it as his considered opinion that of all the many objects of human science, none was so important as psychical research. And this with reason; for, while physical science has placed more and more powerful instruments in our hands, it has done nothing, and can do nothing, to influence the quality of minds that direct these instruments to good or evil purposes.

This direction of the Will is generally supposed to be the special function of Religion. But the first demand of Religion—the ground on which it takes its stand, and from which it operates—is “faith.” In the absence of faith it is powerless; and “faith” has unfortunately come to mean acceptance, often blind acceptance, of theological propositions. These propositions, instead of being regarded as human representations of realities that transcend our powers of definition, are themselves erected into intellectual definitions, and have therefore come to be regarded by the large majority of persons, both educated and uneducated, as having little bearing on practical life. John Stuart Mill was only expressing the secret opinions of very large numbers of educated men when he wrote:—

“The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments—of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue—are complete sceptics on religion; many of them refraining

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from avowal, less from personal considerations than from a conscientious, though in my opinion most mistaken, apprehension, lest by speaking out what may tend to weaken existing beliefs, and by consequence, as they suppose, existing restraints, they should do harm rather than good."—(J. S. MILL, "Autobiography.")

Since his day this scepticism has gone much further, and the materialist movement culminated with Haeckel.

Darwin, always careful, logical and scientific in not going beyond his data, prefaced his theory of pan-genesis—that all existing forms are derived from the primitive cell by heredity, plus variability and enormous powers of increase—by the proviso that "Variability is governed by many unknown laws, more especially by that of the correlation of growth" ("Orig. Species," Ch. I). These laws, which modern investigation tends more and more to show as psychic, were the starting points of variations which adaptation to environment and natural selection developed into species by the transformation of existing organs to new uses and new forms. He laid down, too, as a conclusion following logically on the causes assigned, that no organ, faculty, or sensation can have arisen in animals except through its utility to the species. But from the chapter on Religion in his "Life and Letters," it is clear that he willingly admitted that the universe could not have existed without an intelligent Cause, though any adequate conception of the nature of that cause lay beyond the powers of the human mind.

This "remnant of superstition" was distasteful to enthusiastic evolutionists enamoured of the doctrines of the Struggle for Existence and the Survival of the Fittest, especially in Germany. It is difficult to say whether the desire for a modern version of the Hammer of Thor, or hatred of the religious idea, or sheer inability to perceive that there are facts that no natural selection can account for, was the origin of Haeckel's solution to "The Riddle of the Universe," but his answer to that riddle was precise. He says:—

"The development of the universe is a monistic mechanical process, in which we discover no aim or purpose whatever; what we call design in the organic world is a special result of biological agencies; neither in the evolution of the heavenly bodies, nor in that of the crust of the earth do we find any trace of a controlling purpose—all is the result of chance

. . . Our own 'human nature' which exalted itself into an image of God in an anthropistic illusion, sinks to the level of a placental mammal, which has no more value to the universe at large than the ant, the fly of a summer's day, the microscopical infusorian, or the smallest bacillus."

These views had enormous currency in Germany, and almost as much in England. Their natural sequel was Nietzsche's doctrine of the Superman: for him Humanity was divided into the supermen, especially Prussian supermen, and the slavish herd—the cannon-fodder; and in the character of Zarathustra he exclaims, "Ye have heard it was said by them of old time, 'Blessed are the peace-makers.' But I say unto you, Blessed are the war-makers. . . . What is more harmful than any vice? Pity for the weak and helpless."

We have now the issue clearly stated. This theory, announcing that there is no God, that "soul" is a mere name for the functions of life, that "spirit" is a synonym for energy, that thought is a secretion of the brain impossible without phosphorus, that survival of the body is a contradiction in terms, for the soul is but the sum of bodily functions, that man is as irresponsible as the bacilli, having no limits to his desires but the power to satisfy them, was so attractive to the average man who saw therein a release from all moral obligation, that it spread through Europe like fire in dry stubble. The Great War was but the natural result of such mentality. And Europe is now filled with the fruit of its own devices.

Simultaneously, or nearly so, with these theories, there have arisen over the whole civilized world, phenomena that show that there really exist spiritual and psychic causes for which materialistic theories do not account, and which put them completely out of date. The widespread interest these phenomena have excited, and the fact that they have prevailed against seventy years of denials by the general public, of contempt by scientists, and of anathemas by ecclesiastics, are testified to by the large number of journals dealing specially with psychic matters. The official Report of the International Bureau of Spiritism (registered at the League of Nations under II. B4) gives these as in N. America (14), S. America (63), England and Scotland (6), Holland (4), Belgium (3), Spain and Portugal (6), Italy (5), Switzerland (2), Czecho-Slovakia (3), India (2), Australia and New Zealand (2); with others—

147 in all. The facts are world-wide, and it is very remarkable that the supernormal occurrences should be alike in all countries. This outpouring of psychic power is not sought by men; it has come uninvited and often unwelcomed. The moral teaching is everywhere substantially the same, differences of creed and nationality notwithstanding. This teaching agrees with the essence of Religion while often disregarding its forms.

But human bias is so great, and the ability to distinguish clearly between facts and the explanations of them is so rare that sensible men and women who see the great importance of the facts, *if true*, are now asking for reliable statements what the psychic phenomena really are. This question is inseparable from the conditions under which they occur. It can be answered only by scientific and carefully controlled experiment. To meet the need Institutes and Colleges have arisen which devote themselves to examination of the facts without bias of any kind. They are furnished with laboratories and instruments for record and measurement without which no reliable results can be secured. One of these is the International Metapsychic Institute of Paris (89, Avenue Niel, Paris), founded and endowed by M. Jean Meyer, who had received proofs (to him indubitable) of the reality of survival. He secured the adhesion of some of the leading men of science in France and Italy on its Council. All their experiments are conducted, not by single individuals, whose "personal equation" must always enter into experiments, but by committees of three or more experienced observers, whose high scientific standing makes their results decisive. Its bulletin—the "Revue Metapsychique"—is published every two months, and is the most reliable record that I have met with on psychic matters.

The British College of Psychic Science, established at great expense and carried on under heavy financial loss, exists to supply similar reliable data to enquirers in England, who desire to know what facts are really established, what are still in suspense, and what may be dismissed as being not facts but opinions. This it does by providing opportunities for experiment, by competent lecturers on the scientific aspects of the phenomena, by circulating reliable books on psychic subjects (and the mass of works is so great and their merit so unequal that guidance is imperatively necessary), by open

discussion, and by "courses" on special subjects. To those who join as students are brought the data which enable them to take a sane and well-founded view on these intricate matters; while those who merely wish to know whether the phenomena are real have the chance of seeing with their own eyes and hearing with their own ears under circumstances which preclude fraud or illusion.

It might have been expected that in a land where large sums of money can always be found for such objects as Antarctic exploration or the ascent of an inaccessible mountain, there would be found some who would come forward like M. Jean Meyer to support investigations fraught with infinitely greater consequences to the race, and to aid the brave pioneers who give money, time and energy to the quest. It is curious that this neglect has been the fate of many British discoveries. Faraday discovered the principle of the dynamo; but Gramme in France applied it, and Germany developed the electrical industry. Perkins discovered the coal tar products, but Germany saw their immense possibilities, and though we have no special reason to be grateful for aniline magenta, we are now finding out that English-made dyes are not "fast," while German-made dyes are. It is the same with psychic discoveries. Professor Richet, in his letter to the recent Psychic Congress at Copenhagen bore noble testimony to Crookes and Myers as the first men of science who had ventured to touch upon a subject that exposed them to all kinds of calumny. Crookes and Wallace, to name only two out of many men of science who have followed these investigations, found their reputations assailed, their normal scientific work depreciated, and their new discoveries disregarded by all but an intelligent minority. But their work has prevailed, as truth always will in the long run.

The intellectual position now is widely different from that in the nineteenth century. Then the field of conflict lay between the reactionaries on the one hand, whose concepts of primary causes were derived from the Old Testament and ecclesiastical traditions, and students of natural laws on the other; it now lies between those who deny and those who assert the testimony of the psychic facts to the existence of qualities and faculties in Man that could not have been developed by any process of selective adaptation, which establish the soul as a real entity, which point to its survival

of bodily death, and imply a Mind and purpose in Evolution.

But the bewildering multiplicity of the phenomena and the prevalence of half-baked theories is such that new difficulties have arisen. People who do not even know the difference between Matter and Energy talk glibly about electrons and ether waves.

Each science tends inevitably, by reason of human limitations, to separate into two branches; the one dealing with applications of the known, and the other seeking to penetrate into the unknown. Psychic science necessarily follows even more distinct lines; the one branch seeks to verify the bare facts and to apply them to life and practice; the other seeks to discover the mechanism whereby the facts come about, the functions of the subconscious part of the human mind, and the problems raised by telepathy and other phenomena that seem independent of Space and Time. These latter complex results cause much confusion of thought, which may, however, be cleared up by a few simple considerations.

The senses are our natural limitations. To the senses Matter, Energy and Mind (without definition) are the fundamental realities. It is of no consequence to the architect, the engineer, or the plain man whether Matter consists of electrons or not; they know matter, whether in its solid, liquid, or gaseous state, as a ponderable stuff consisting of chemical atoms. It is a separate category in Nature.

The next primary reality of which our senses inform us is Energy, often miscalled "Force." Energy, whether of motion, gravitation, heat, light, cohesion, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, radio-activity or muscular power, is invisible, imponderable, occupies the same space as its material vehicle, and is readily interconvertible in all its forms. This is in strong contrast to Matter whose elementary forms are, as yet, inconvertible on the large scale.

Mind we know by internal experience, and as the means which directs energy to purposes determined by the will.

Space and Time are relations perceived by the mind, they are not *things*. What we call Space is the distance between masses, measured in three directions like the edges of a cube. What we call Time is a rate of motion or of change in masses of matter; either recognizable and measurable as days or years by the motion of the material planet, or by the swing

of the pendulum which depends on the mass of the earth ; or non-measurable, as by the ageing of a tree or a man. Matter is the fundamental reality, and space and time are derived concepts and co-relatives. An alteration in our perceptions of matter would alter correspondingly our notions of space and time. Matter, Energy, Space and Time constitute the relativity in which our minds live.

The psychic facts introduce us to existence in an entirely new relativity : to life without protoplasm ; to thought without physical brain ; to telepathic action independent of space ; and to precognition and lucidity more or less independent of time. They indicate the existence of another relativity than that in which we now live.

It is no wonder then that we find great difficulty in accepting the facts ; still greater difficulty in expressing them in the language that is derived from sense-experiences ; and the greatest difficulty of all in accounting for them, for the full explanation must involve notions that we have not yet formed, compelling us to use language symbolically. The facts are within our relativity, but their causes are not, as yet. Psychical research is concerned to discover these causes and to correlate them with the results of physical research ; Spiritualism seeks to establish facts and to correlate them to our mental and moral life. This can be done without exhaustive study of complex relations and only common sense and an open mind are required ; the plain man may be quite content to leave the physics of the next state till he gets there, while yet quite convinced that there is such a state.

Spiritualism then, if it is to fulfil its object, must first establish the real existence of the entity which (without definition) we call "the human spirit," with its faculties of telepathy, clairvoyance, lucidity and the like, as well as Will, Memory, Love and Intelligence. It has, therefore, very wide bearings—scientific, philosophical, religious, social and personal.

Scientific : because the facts show the Spirit as an actual reality—a Force-Intelligence whose existence can be proved ; they show Evolution as a process of developing consciousness, and they connect the higher laws with those of Matter and Energy.

Philosophical : because the facts imply that Mind is not a product of matter, but creates and conditions it, the proximate cause of Variation being psychic ; therefore, on the

human plane, body exists to manifest Mind, and mind to manifest Justice, Mercy and Truth. This is the obvious evolutionary purpose.

Religious: because the survival of the soul is the only explanation that covers all the facts; why and how it must reap as it has sown, not by the award of a Judge, that is but a vivid figure of speech, but by God's law of strict consequence; and why character is destiny. They show too something of the nature of "inspiration," and why it must always be conditioned by the minds that receive it; that "miracle" is not a violation of law, but the action of an unseen intelligent agent by a higher law.

Social: because the facts show clearly the interdependence and solidarity of mankind, the key to prosperity being mutual co-operation and Good Will.

Personal: because they show death as simply the next evolutionary change of an essentially spiritual being, that this being has powers that are latent, or nearly so, while it is clothed in matter; more especially that it has a latent memory of all the events, even the trivial events, of its earth-life; and it has psychometric faculties which in the next phase cause all thoughts and character to be naked and open to all around. They have shown many persons how near to them "the dead" really are.

In fine: Spiritualism has many aspects, all of which can be presented without touching the recondite psychic mechanism, or the supposed antinomy of Spirit and Matter, or the unification of the two that goes by the name of Monism; it can remain within the limits of our present relativity, and yet minister to faith and hope, and give satisfaction and rest to the mind. I will close these remarks with a quotation from the late Master of Balliol which seems to me particularly apposite:—

"What will be the deepest, most useful, truest and most lasting form of philosophy? Common sense idealized; or, rather, a meeting of common sense and metaphysics, well expressed by Coleridge: 'Common sense is intolerable when not based on metaphysics.' But are not metaphysics intolerable when not based on common sense?"—(BENJAMIN JOWETT, "Life and Letters," p. 77, vols. ii.)

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GODSPEED.

We greet thee ! Herald of a coming Day !
O bear thy message from the All in All ;
And point thou out the Everlasting Way
Unto those souls that languish—great and small.
Success be thine ! and more than this, we pray
That Wisdom's best, and God's consummate Art,
Shall wing the flight of thy transcendent sway
To bring God's Truth into the human heart.

May Power of Heaven's Living Love and Light
Adorn each page, and waken from the dead
Souls that have slumbered in the deeps of night,
Hearts that have toiled, and for their freedom bled
With whisper of that Love—complete and whole,
Which is in One—the Entrance and the Goal !

L. F. WYNNE FFOULKES.

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MISS ADA BESINNET.

REPORT OF MISS ADA BESINNET'S MEDIUMSHIP.

J. Hewat McKenzie

(Hon. Principal of the British College of Psychic Science).

MISS BESINNET, of Toledo, U.S.A., arrived in England on May 17th, 1921, and departed November 26th, in fulfilment of a six months' engagement at the British College of Psychic Science, as a medium for various forms of mental and physical phenomena.

During this time a hundred seances were conducted, fourteen of these being held under strictly test conditions. The ordinary sittings were open to members of the College and friends introduced by them, the test sittings being conducted by the College Research Group.

In August and September sittings were given to members and members' friends in Birmingham, Brighton, Bournemouth and Glasgow, all these being conducted under the auspices of the College. During the first four months Miss Besinnet enjoyed excellent health, and only asked for one week's vacation, which was spent in a visit to Paris. The officials of the College were desirous that she should take a longer rest, but this she declined, preferring to go on with her work. She contracted a severe chill in Glasgow in September, the after-effects of which were evident throughout the remainder of her stay.

During this engagement Miss Besinnet endeavoured in every way cheerfully to meet the requirements of the College, and the whole relationship was one of extreme pleasantness. She was always regular and punctual in her appointments, kind, thoughtful and obliging with all the members with whom she came in contact, carrying through her arduous duties in a dignified and serious manner. She has a delightful, quiet and retiring disposition, quick to appreciate thoughtful treatment, scrupulously honest, straightforward and generous in all her dealings.

Miss B. has been conducting séances in America similar to those carried out at the College, for about twelve years, and is now thirty-two years of age. She is not of robust constitution, and during her early teens suffered from glandular trouble, with a tendency to consumption. During her work as a medium, however, her health has greatly improved. Her psychic development was undertaken when she was about fourteen years old by her foster mother, who for years carried on the work amongst friends without remuneration.

Professor J. Hyslop, the late President of the Society for Psychical Research in America, carefully tested Miss Besinnet's mediumship during 1909-10, and carried out about seventy test sittings, in most of which he was assisted by two fully trained physicians. I would refer interested readers to the record of these sittings printed by the American S.P.R. Volume V, 1911, which contains a detailed report of about 700 pages. One can judge from the long, painstaking efforts of Prof. Hyslop that he realized that Miss Besinnet's mediumship presented an extremely interesting psychic phenomenon. Doubtless since his investigations, Miss B.'s mediumship has improved in quality and in kind, and has also in some ways slightly altered. Many of the facts, both mental and physical, in Miss B.'s mediumship, which Prof. Hyslop proved, have been verified at the College, but I do not agree with all his deductions from these facts, and in some points consider these to be quite erroneous. The Professor has referred to the mediumship of Miss B. as "a Case of Hysteria." The conclusions I have arrived at, from a series of experiments—as careful and as complete as were those conducted by Prof. Hyslop—go to show that those actions of the medium which the Professor attributed to Hysteria, may be fully accounted for as due to the action of controlling spirits. This difference of view may arise from the fact that the medium in 1909 was probably less developed than at the present moment, and that Professor Hyslop had at the time a very limited experience of *physical* phenomena produced through mediumship, most of his attention having been devoted to the study of mental mediumship, he being not fully cognizant of the psychic mechanism used by unseen intelligences acting on physical matter. At the time of his investigations the reality of Ectoplasm had not been scientifically proved, as has since been done by the work of the late Dr. Crawford, Mde. Bisson, Baron von Schrenck-

Notzing and others, though it has been well known to advanced students of psychic phenomena for many years.

The "general" séances conducted with Miss Besinnet have always been particularly agreeable and easy, and, considering that she sat with the sitters immediately on her right and left, one would have supposed it to have been a simple and easy matter to arrive at conclusions regarding the genuineness of her psychic manifestations. This I have not found, but must rather state that her mediumship has been the most baffling and difficult to check of any physical manifestations that I have hitherto tested. Easy conditions were largely contributed to by the gramophone, the use of which enabled the sitters to do without the laborious singing, so generally requested to create the conditions necessary to produce the best results in physical phenomena. I do not hesitate to acknowledge that during her term of work, I found myself confronted with some of the most difficult psychic problems I have ever undertaken to study, and it was not until the last few weeks of her engagement that I was able to perceive the *modus operandi* by which some of the phenomena were produced. It is doubtful if I could then have arrived at a satisfactory explanation had I refrained from taking a heavy responsibility upon myself, in risking an experiment which might have had serious consequences to the medium. This experiment was carried out by the Research Group at the last sitting of the series, on November 18th. Fortunately, the great care that was exercised resulted in the procuring of valuable facts at a cost to the medium of a few hours' suffering and several days' nerve strain. The details are given later in this report. It is also important to say, that this serious step was undertaken in view of the fact that Miss Besinnet was anxious to have a true understanding of the full quality and kind of her own mediumship. Earnest requests had also come from various students in America who knew Miss Besinnet's work, asking me to test the medium, as they were anxious to receive my conclusions and report on the various puzzling phenomena presented through her.

MISS BESINNET'S SENSITIVENESS TO LIGHT, IN TRANCE.

One of the chief difficulties met with in the study of physical phenomena in Psychical Research is the necessity for darkness

in order to secure the best results. The smart but ignorant critic refuses to investigate unless such phenomena be produced in light. It can be done, but at a heavy cost, this being a reduction in quality and extent of the phenomena. If voices, for instance, are to be heard clearly and distinctly, the condition of darkness for intensification is usually required. The psychic organism which exudes from the medium in darkness, instantaneously shrinks up within her physical body when exposed to the action of light. When this difficulty can be overcome—in some cases where mediums are highly developed—the psychic organism of the medium may exteriorize itself in the light, but as a rule under such conditions it remains within a few inches of the physical body. Students of the subject are just beginning to realize something of the marvellous psychic mechanism by which spirit operators act upon physical matter through a medium, and until this is better understood, little progress will be made in the further elucidation of the laws governing psychic manifestation.

With Miss Besinnet it was found imperative that the experiments should be conducted in total darkness. I have never known a medium so sensitive to the influence of light. From the records of Prof. Hyslop it was evident that twelve years ago she could sit in a room with a very limited amount of light, but to judge from his report, the whistling and singing were much inferior to that produced to-day in total darkness. In his investigations, when white light was turned on accidentally or deliberately, and unknown to her, the same collapse of the medium took place, as was verified at the College.

On several occasions during the College investigations it was found possible to get some slight physical phenomena, such as raps, in a fair amount of light, and on some occasions the direct voice, but this was always low and indistinct, very different from those resonant tones that were produced in darkness. When phenomena took place in the light, the medium was variously engaged, at meals, sitting at a table, or having quiet conversation with friends in their homes.

The effect of light in her usual seance was demonstrated again and again in various ways. A small red spark burning six feet away from her, and *entirely out of line of her vision*, kept her from going into trance so long as it continued to burn, but immediately this was extinguished trance suddenly followed. The light was not visible to the medium, and

neither she nor any sitter except myself was aware of its presence, nor did she know when it was extinguished. On other occasions lights were placed in various parts of the room, and while these remained the trance condition could not be induced, even though the medium knew nothing of them, nor were any rays from these visible. Details of this will be given in a later part of the report. The trance was usually so rapid after these hidden electric lights were extinguished, that it was obvious that the small unseen, dim and obscure illuminants were the direct cause of her inability to go into trance. Upon another occasion, when drawing the electric plug from the wall socket, behind a piece of furniture, and about 8 feet from the medium, the small spark, about 1/16 inch long, which usually accompanies the withdrawal of a plug of this kind when the power is on, was sufficient to create such a psychic shock that the medium immediately fell forward on the table in a cataleptic state. The same thing occurred when brilliant psychic lights were produced by her own mediumship, and this fact was known and remarked upon by Prof. Hyslop in his report. Upon another occasion the medium had been stripped, and the clothes supplied by the Research Group had been put on by two women members. Upon the back of the dress, in the vicinity of the neck, a small spot of phosphorescent paint had been secretly placed. There was no opportunity for the medium to see this by turning round, owing to the position in which it was placed, and although the sitting continued for over an hour, the medium did not once go into trance, and no phenomena occurred. She complained that there seemed to be something or someone behind her, which was the cause of the disturbance, but what it was she could not say. At the following sitting with the Research Group the same dress was put on, but with the spot of luminous paint removed, and the medium immediately entered the trance condition. It is important to know that the medium never failed to go into trance in any of her previous sittings, excepting on one occasion from another cause, which was quite understood.

These facts all go to show the curious and disturbing influence of light, and the necessity for darkness, and are sufficient refutation of the claim of the sceptic that darkness is resorted to by mediums as a means of covering fraudulence. Of course, it goes without saying that the charlatan is greatly assisted

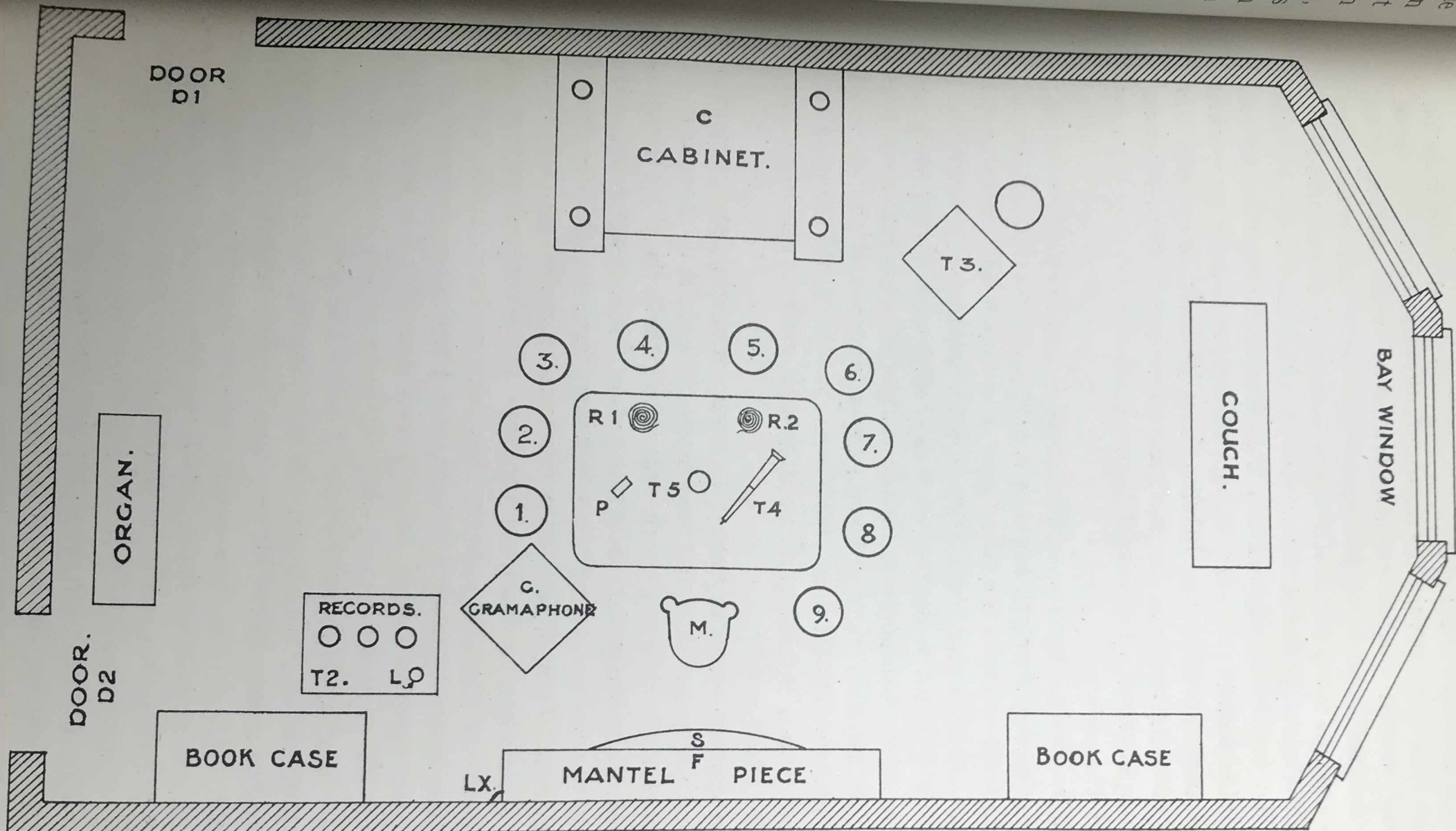
by darkness in perpetrating fraud upon an unsuspecting public, but such frauds are easily detected by the use of simple devices well known to capable students of the subject. In England there is very little hope of success for fraudulent mediums, as they are quickly detected and publicly exposed in the periodicals of the Spiritualistic press, and it is idle to suppose, as sceptics do, that there are many such mediums working in this way. Personally I do not know of a single case of a medium consciously practising fraud upon the public, although from time to time during my 22 years of investigation, several professional mediums have been exposed in what seemed deliberate fraud, yet that it was conscious and deliberate I am not fully convinced, as all of these were capable of demonstrating genuine mediumistic phenomena.

The more one studies the subtleties of psychic phenomena with their interplay of the mental and physical, the subconscious and super-conscious attributes of the medium, and of the various incarnate and discarnate minds working through and upon the medium's mind, the more one is faced with the difficulty of disentangling the various minds at work, and deciding which is responsible for certain physical actions.

The conjurer and sceptic who takes upon himself to explain psychic phenomena without taking into account these unseen and unknown powers of the human mind, only exposes his own colossal self-conceit and foolish presumption. The general public when meeting these difficulties has accepted these explanations too readily, as the conjurer is probably less capable of judging mediumship than is the ordinary man using common sense. The sooner the layman understands this the quicker will these self-constituted juggling authorities be ignored.

GENERAL NOTES REGARDING SEANCES.

The seance room was illuminated by a four-light electric pendant immediately over the table, at a height of 8 feet from the floor, the lower drop being a red light, which was used when light was called for by the "controls," with the object of enabling the sitters to examine the manner in which the medium was tied with the ropes when in trance. The red light, L, was only used at the beginning and at the immediate close of the seances, to enable the operator to find



D1, Entrance Door. D2, Door to adjoining room. C, Cabinet. F, Fireplace. G, Gramophone cabinet. L, Red light table lamp. LX, Automatic Indicator Light. M, Medium's seat P, Paper pad with pencil. R1 and R2, Cotton Rope. S, Anthracite stove. T1, Four-legged Table, measuring 5ft. long by 40ins. wide. 1 to 9, Chairs for sitters. T2, Table for Gramophone records. T3, Stenographers' table. T4, Cardboard trumpet about 26ins. long, in two parts. T5, Tambourine. W, Bay Window.

his seat after turning off the switch of the principal light, at the D1 doorway. The only furniture in the room was as shown on the plan. The floor was covered with an ordinary Brussels carpet square with lino surrounds. The room (No. 8) used in these experiments was on the first floor, and measured 30 feet long by 16 feet wide and 12 feet high. Door D1 led from the staircase landing, and remained locked during the sances, the key being in the possession of a member or visitor. Door D2 led into the adjoining room, but this was kept continuously locked and sealed with sealing-wax, which was always examined before and after the sittings by one of the sitters.

The room had been specially fitted for physical phenomena, but the Materializing Cabinet was not used by Miss Besinet in her work. The windows, three in number, overlooking the garden, were fitted with light-proof shutters, bolted from within. The anthracite stove was always out during sances. The sances were held in total darkness. The gramophone was continuously played from the beginning to the close of each sance. No. 1 seat was used by the conductor of the sance, who also changed the gramophone records from time to time when required.

The sances were conducted by various officials and members of the College on different occasions. Seats 2 to 9 were used by the sitters. They were requested to keep the palms of both hands resting flat upon the table. No. 9 sitter was able during the sance to rest his left arm against the medium's right arm. This sitter, however, was usually moved away some little distance from the medium, the "control" using her right hand to press him back, this taking place usually before the appearance of faces. The tambourine had a luminous spot of phosphorescent paint, about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch diameter, on both sides. R1 and R2 were lengths of soft cotton rope, each piece about 24 feet long and about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. The gramophone was the property of the College. A few records were brought by the medium, but many others were used. The medium also brought with her the two-piece trumpet, the tambourine and two pieces of rope. The tambourine, the ropes, the trumpet, pad of paper and pencil were laid upon the table and examined freely by all visitors.

General conversation was engaged in by the sitters, except when phenomena, such as singing, whistling and the appear-

ances were being produced. The séance usually took two hours or longer, but seldom lasted beyond two and a half hours. The medium was usually entranced within one to three minutes after the lights were extinguished, and remained in trance throughout the sitting. The trance was self-induced. At the close of the sitting the medium was brought out of trance by sitters No. 1 and No. 9 holding her right and left hand. A slight nervous tremor seemed to run through her body for a few seconds as she returned to consciousness. She seemed almost immediately to be quite her normal self, and only occasionally reported a slightly dazed condition after the control was removed.

Sometimes during the sitting Miss Besinnet would become normal for a minute, and this was indicated by her speaking or giving a slight nervous cough, as she became conscious. Immediately this happened all phenomena ceased. The trance state was usually more disturbed when the medium was suffering from headache, excessive heat or bronchial trouble.

Miss Besinnet did not request the use of hymns or prayers at the opening of the séances.

SEANCES ROUGHLY DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS.

In the *first* part about three-quarters of an hour were devoted to manifestations, such as Direct Voice, singing and whistling, moving lights and tambourine playing. The excellent quality and finish of the singing, whistling and tambourine playing, was remarked by everyone, and was infinitely superior to the kind of phenomena usually produced in physical séances. The singing voices varied from a very high soprano to that of a most powerful baritone. Most of these voices were produced by known and familiar "controls" of the medium. They were always at once recognizable, and never varied, as one might expect if produced by an attempt on the part of the medium to imitate various personalities. These voices were as distinct and clear, not only as regards the *timbre*, but the pronunciation of the words, as one would expect from entirely different personalities, and this was noticeably the case even when the medium was unable to speak clearly and suffering from a severe chest cold. It was testified to in Dr. Hyslop's report after investigation that Miss Besinnet neither sang, whistled

nor played the tambourine in her normal condition, and on no occasion did we have reason to doubt this statement.

The *second* part of the séance, about three-quarters of an hour, was usually devoted to the presentation of faces, these faces being illuminated by a bright light held in a left hand, and placed immediately under or above the face. The *third* and last portion of the séance was devoted to the production of low, whispering voices in the trumpet, purporting to give communications from deceased relatives and friends, and also in the production of writing upon the letter-pad which lay upon the table. This concluded the séance.

Physical phenomena were procured only so long as the gramophone played. When the music ceased, all voices, whistling and movements were as a rule suddenly discontinued, only a few exceptions being noted. Frequently during the séances the gramophone was stopped by other action than the hands of the No. 1 sitter, and records and needles were changed by what purported to be a materialized hand. It was frequently noticed by the conductors that the hand which operated the gramophone seemed to be smaller and more like a child's hand, and was said to be that of a "control," "Pansy," but no reliable proof of this was ever secured, as these touches were only felt in the dark, and occurred within easy reach of the medium. On many occasions this hand seemed very similar to that of the medium.

Generally speaking, all physical phenomena were produced within the field of the medium's physical body. Slight raps, when heard, proceeded from the surface of the table in her vicinity, and at no time were raps heard either upon the walls of the room or the furniture beyond her reach. The same remark would apply to the voices, the movement of the tambourine, and the lights.

While stating this frankly, it must not be misunderstood, for these manifestations frequently took place when it was physically impossible for the medium to perform them, such as when her hands were held or when the voices were produced above her head, or the lights appeared behind her back while her hands were in front of her. No previous preparation of the room could be made by the medium, as this was under the entire control of the College staff. Any member of the College at any time could inspect the room, both before and after the séances, and many did so. On many occasions Miss

Besinnet did not enter the seance room until sitters had examined the room and were seated at the table. In the provincial visits six different rooms were used.

Miss Besinnet gave no sittings to individual investigators, and her labour consisted in three ordinary sittings each week to members of the College and their friends, where the utmost freedom was given to the medium without any restriction upon her movements. Movements of the medium could easily be detected by the sitter No. 9 when he was in direct contact with the medium.

In addition one test sitting was carried out by the College Research Group each week while the medium was in London. These were conducted by myself, with the assistance of selected sitters suitable for carrying out Psychical Research work. During the general sittings the phenomena were maintained with a uniform steadiness. It was remarkable to notice how slight were the variations between one sitting and another. What slight variations did take place lay in the names and descriptions given by the "control," "Black Cloud," through clairvoyance, and the messages given through the trumpet, near the close of the sitting by new "controls," purporting to be deceased friends of the sitters.

REDUCTION OF PHENOMENA UNDER TEST CONDITIONS.

There was a great contrast between the phenomena produced in the "general" and in the "test" sittings. Such a result was to be expected, and has been long recognized by all who have devoted any time to the study of the subject. It may be well to consider the various causes that lead to such reduced effects.

It often happens that when any searching or tying of the medium is instituted, complaints from the "controls" begin, but in Miss Besinnet's case the chief "control," who was the master of ceremonies, as it were, behind the scenes, made no complaint and cheerfully agreed to carry out all the experiments suggested.

It is a strange thing to note that very little explanation of a satisfactory nature is ever volunteered by the "controls" of a medium as to why failure in securing results under test conditions is so frequent, but careful observation of psychic phenomena of a physical nature makes it evident how the

"controls" operate through the psychic mechanism they use. Certain psychic cord extensions are undoubtedly projected from the body of the medium, and these, being of an extremely sensitive nature, cannot be induced to protrude while they are subjected to foreign and unusual methods of control, which also tend to keep the medium's mind alert, and so disturb the trance. To touch these psychic extensions is to cause a severe nervous shock to the medium. Ignorance always laughs when such claims are made, but photographs taken with flashlight exposures, portray the reality of these things, both with materializing and trumpet mediums. Such photographs show two cords of some substance from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter, one extending from the region of the medium's solar plexus, and the other from the medium's throat. One would imagine that the mere tying of the medium into her chair would in no way interfere with the extension of these cords, but from long years of experience I have found that it does, though this difficulty may be overcome by continuing the practice of tying the mediums instead of allowing that freedom which they and their "controls" so naturally desire. Once having developed mediumship without tying, the sensitive finds that immediately her body is restricted, the phenomena diminish or cease, for a time at any rate, and owing to this disappointing limitation she may not have the courage to persevere, often because of economic necessities. I am quite sure that if mediums would continue to make the effort, the natural sensitiveness of the psychic cords would be overcome and extension secured in spite of tying restrictions, as has been known in several instances.

This method of psychic cord extension from the medium's solar plexus, and also from the throat, is only one of the ways in which spirit operators manipulate physical matter.

In the case of materialization of an arm and hand, which seems to have taken place upon certain occasions with Miss Besinnet, a different method is followed. My belief is that an extension of the soul, or astral part of the arm and hand of the medium, takes place, that an ectoplasmic structure is built upon this, the soul providing the energy from the medium's body, and the ectoplasm being the matter upon which the soul works, moulding it into the appearance of an arm and hand. This method is already well known to many students of psychic manifestation, and I suggest it here as another method of

manipulation which may account for some of the happenings in Miss Besinnet's mediumship.

The psychic cords are much too refined in substance to be felt by the touch of the hand, but are sufficiently real for such a touch to affect the medium, giving her a severe nervous shock. They are also particularly sensitive to the influence of light, and whenever flash-light photographs are taken in the seance room, while such manifestations are proceeding, the medium usually suffers very severely from the shock caused by the light impinging upon these cords, or upon the soul exteriorization in the case of materialized bodies. The light seems to act as a kind of irritant, and it can be imagined that these sensitive nerve extensions seek to protect themselves from such irritation, by suddenly withdrawing into the physical organism of the medium. Such sudden contraction creates the shock felt in the nervous system of the medium.

Several experiments which I made in America during a visit in 1920, with various trumpet mediums, enabled me to further confirm the reality of these cords, as several of the experiments were conducted in broad daylight, both in and out of doors. Upon one occasion the medium was sitting at dinner, with the sunshine streaming into the room, when a voice distinctly spoke to me from the region of the medium's neck, and at the moment when she was masticating her food. It was of very brief duration, only a matter of half a dozen words being spoken, and these very rapidly. My gaze at the time was directed upon the medium's face, as I was engaged in conversation with her. I was unable to detect any outward structure, but the voice seemed to proceed from a position about 6 inches from her neck, midway between her mouth and ear. I did not, on this occasion, detect any vibratory movement in the thorax, as I have done on several occasions, probably owing to the fact that the medium was masticating her food. While sitting in a garden, with another medium I held the trumpet in my right hand, about 6 inches in front of the medium's face and slightly to her left. While holding it in this position a distinct voice spoke to me out of the trumpet. It was extremely low in sound, resembling a kind of articulate whistle without tune to it. The medium's mouth was closed, and the lips compressed, while the voice spoke, and during the continuation of the phenomenon the throat of the medium

vibrated visibly. This throbbing ceased immediately the trumpet ceased, and started again as soon as the voice began. The conversation was carried on for nearly ten minutes. One other point of interest was to note that these voices, when in close proximity to the medium, had a very close resemblance to the medium's ordinary voice, but when they were produced in darkness, at a distance of from three to four feet from the body of the medium, a much greater variety of voices, both in intonation and pronunciation, was obtained.

The reader will be able to understand something of the peculiarities of these psychic cord extensions and their sensitive nature by observing the horns of the common black snail, which immediately on being touched will contract the extended horns into its head, and keep them there so long as the creature is interfered with, gradually extending them as soon as molestation ceases. Many other instances can be drawn from Nature.

It is to be regretted that Miss Besinnet was fearful of submitting herself to flash-light photography, as by this means there might have been obtained with her—as has been done with many other mediums—photographs of these psychic extensions. Prof. Hyslop was allowed to use the flash-light in Miss Besinnet's case during 1909-10, but these photographs only went to show *what seemed on the surface trick practices of the medium*, and due to what he called Hysteria. I think they are *demonstrations of artifice on the part of the "controls,"* as the medium was entranced when they were taken.

If Miss Besinnet had agreed to submit to flash-light photography, I have no doubt that the cord leading from her chest to her hand, while the psychic light was burning, would have been evident upon a photographic plate. This deduction I make from the evidence received at the final test sitting of the series, together with the accumulated evidence received previous to that experiment. I hope in a later number to illustrate, from flash-light photography, these psychic cord extensions.

ARE THE CONTROLS SUBLIMINAL PERSONALITIES OR SPIRITS?

I do not propose to discuss in this article whether the "controls" calling themselves "Black Cloud," "Dan," "Leonore," "Pansy," "Mrs. Gurney," etc., were really spirits

or only secondary personalities built up by the subconscious mind of the medium. The report is rather devoted to supplying evidence that Miss Besinnet's mediumship could or could not produce physical manifestations by abnormal means. There has been in the past a great deal of profound nonsense talked about multiple personality. Most of this has been written by men who have no knowledge of spirit intercourse, and had they received some training through experimental work with developed mediums, they could have avoided many of the stumbling-blocks met with in their investigations. It seems to me that certain psychologists assume a pose in their writings, and discuss simple facts in an obscure manner, believing that no honour is to be gained by adopting the simple explanation of the humble spiritualist. This attitude is probably the outcome of the ignorant prejudice of a materialistic age, when it was the fashion to deny the possibilities of spirit communication.

These entities, to whom I refer as "controls," were able to manifest their presence throughout the various Besinnet sittings as very distinct personalities, with human characteristics quite unique and separate from the temperament and character of the medium. I have witnessed actors upon the stage, appearing in various rôles, who, in spite of studied efforts, have entirely failed to hide their personal characteristics, even when disguised and assisted by scenic clothing and surroundings. That a medium should be credited with a power and ability to act with such consummate skill, as these "controls" did, placing our best actors in the shade, is to ascribe to mediums qualities and gifts wasted in the séance room, and the possession of a very poor intelligence, when with the use of such gifts they might reap a rich financial advantage upon the theatrical stage.

SCENT OF ECTOPLASM.

One interesting fact is worthy of careful note—that where genuine materialization is produced, a peculiar odour is perceptible, seldom or never found with mediums producing phenomena by the mechanism of psychic cord extensions. This scent, which I have invariably found in the presence of materializing mediums, both when at work and at leisure, was conspicuous by its absence in Miss Besinnet's séances,

and led me to suspect either that little or no ordinary materialization was produced through her or that ectoplasm may be produced in some cases without the distinguishing scent that accompanies its production with other mediums. Upon several occasions I detected a slight ectoplastic scent arising from the medium's hands at the close of the séances, but this could only be sensed by placing the nostrils in immediate contact with her hands.

I have made experiments during twenty years with upwards of a dozen of the leading materializing mediums of the world, and in every case have found this peculiar scent accompanying their phenomena. It is difficult to describe, but it is easily detected when once known. It has rather a sweet odour, somewhat similar to that given off by a gardenia, plus a bodily odour perceived in healthy human flesh, such as one may detect by moistening the back of the hand with saliva. I fear this description will be difficult to understand, but it is well worth while for students of these subjects to endeavour to detect this scent in the materializing séance room. I have noticed it in the case of certain trumpet mediums who have the ability to project etherializations, but the scent is less powerful on these occasions, it is more fleeting and usually departs with the phenomena.

In the case of several good materializing mediums I have been able to recognize their presence in a crowd, by the scent exuding from their bodies, long before my attention was called to their presence by sight. Upon one occasion, while at a concert, I sensed this peculiar odour very strongly, and found later, when leaving, that a materializing medium had been sitting not far behind me. On another occasion, upon entering a tram car, I recognized the scent, and on looking round found a materializing medium with whom I had been experimenting some weeks before.

Wherever materializing mediumship is practised, the room is usually impregnated with the scent and must have been often noticed by those accustomed to visit such séances, although they might be unable to explain the cause. In the early days of my investigations I believed it arose from certain perfumes used by the medium, but, later, perceiving the same odour in the case of every materializing medium I met, I could only draw the natural inference that it emanated from the ectoplasm whilst in a volatile state.

AMATEUR CRITICS.

The previous description of the psychic mechanism probably used in the séances of Miss Besinnet may help some readers to understand something of the methods employed, for unless there is intelligent comprehension of these subtle structures by new investigators before entering the séance room, all sorts of complications will arise through misunderstanding and lack of knowledge. A demonstration of this has recently occurred in the case of Mr. Filson Young, editor of the "Saturday Review," who, at a sitting with a trumpet medium acted very much as a "bull in a china shop." He is the kind of student who wants to be a daring explorer before he has begun to study the A.B.C. of the subject. When experienced students endeavour to tell him something of the *modus operandi* by which psychic phenomena are produced, he talks exactly like an ignorant schoolboy, and sarcastically questions every statement made by them as to ectoplasm or psychic cords. It is just as well that all students should be warned against the would-be exposers of mediums. There is one gentleman at the present moment lecturing in London who tells the public exactly how materializing mediums and psychic photographers perform their tricks, showing trick results, by means of lantern slides, and yet by his own admission to me this man has never sat with any of the leading materializing mediums in England. I refer to Mr. Wm. Marriott. Such impertinence ought to be exposed. It is a wise plan for all students listening to these so-called "experts," to ask them the simple question, "With what mediums have you sat, and how often with each?" Their replies will be enlightening. In my opinion, there are no humbugs amongst mediums to be compared with the humbugs who publicly profess to expose fraudulent mediums.

In describing the phenomena produced in the séance room, one feels the handicap due to the limited nomenclature of the subject. Reiteration of certain well-known words and terms is unavoidable, but I trust the general reader will be able to follow my meaning in a rough way. The difficulty which any writer meets when dealing with a new subject, is peculiarly the case here, in endeavouring to describe subtle psychic structures with their various mental and physical tendencies, instincts and attributes. They are known only to a very limited number of investigators laboriously excavating their facts from

almost unworked mines. Many of the discoveries made within recent years as yet receive no acceptance by the more cautious scientific minds, who require continuous and satisfactory evidence of the facts. These proofs we shall seek to supply in later issues of the "Transactions."

An accumulation of such facts has been gathered by the B.C.P.S. during the past year's investigations, and readers will be provided with these in their own classification as time and space permit.

Miss Besinnet's mediumship has been only a small part of the work undertaken during the past year. During that time eight mediums, some of them continuously, have been demonstrating at the College, manifesting various forms of psychical phenomena. Members interested to know more fully the details of these investigations can secure these by attending the various classes held at the College.

"General" Séances with Miss Besinnet.

I do not propose to give any extensive descriptions of the phenomena produced at the "general" séances, as these, though interesting and appreciated most thoroughly by the ordinary investigator, are naturally of less evidential value than those secured under test conditions, conducted by the Research Group.

During the "general" séances a large number of names and personal messages were given to sitters by the chief "control," "Black Cloud," most of which were recognized as good descriptions of deceased friends. Particulars of these clairvoyant messages would take up too much space in this report, but many of these are attested in written records made by sitters and now on the College files. This mental phenomena, while interesting, was considered to be the least important part of Miss Besinnet's mediumship, and only demonstrates that she had clairvoyant faculties very similar to many mediums to be met with in England. Miss Besinnet rarely knew who her sitters were, and made no inquiries regarding them. She did not live on the College premises, and was only in the building for the performance of her duties.

ILLUMINATED FACES.

With regard to the faces shown, and believed to be materializations by many who witnessed them, a very large

number of these were claimed as recognized likenesses of deceased friends. Roughly 50 per cent. were accepted as recognitions, and the College possesses written testimonies to this effect by hundreds of sitters. These were claimed to represent both male and female faces of various ages. When it is recognized that these faces were probably the result of facial muscular control of the medium's face while in trance, or "transfigurations" through the use of ectoplasm built upon the face, this portion of her work is worthy of more prolonged study. The evidence which was ultimately obtained by the construction of a mechanical apparatus, proves that while in trance her body was taken out of the chair and brought forward over the table into the immediate vicinity of each of the sitters in turn. As to how far the likenesses were due to this facial muscular control or to ectoplastic "transfiguration," or whether they can be accounted for in part by the will to believe, emotional stress, hallucination and limited observation on the part of the sitters, owing to the extreme brevity of the psychic light which illuminated the faces, it is difficult to say. While many of them were viewed by sitters labouring under a high emotional strain, others were examined by quiet, careful and experienced observers. There is no doubt that the general time limit for observing these faces was only a matter of about two seconds, while the psychic light played upon the face, a space much too brief for careful observation of all the features. The same face was, however, usually shown two or three times to each sitter, but always for the same brief duration.

New sitters found difficulty in focussing their sight instantaneously upon the face which suddenly appeared out of the darkness, although due notice of these was always given by the "controls," and the sitters requested to stand up round the table in readiness. I noticed that those who had the opportunity of continuing their investigations through a series of séances were able to see the faces very much more distinctly on the second and third visits than was possible on the first, and the more frequently these were seen, the more distinctly the general characteristics of the medium's face were observed. Speaking personally, I was not able to recognize any face presented as like any deceased person I had known, except upon one occasion when I seemed to see a slight resemblance to the face of a relative. In my earlier observation I inclined to believe that these faces were purely mask productions of the

projected soul of the medium's face, as was frequently seen through the mediumship of the late Cecil Husk, and which invariably partakes more or less of the general contour of the medium's face and features. From later observation I was compelled to arrive at other conclusions.

The sitters were quite ignorant that the medium's body was used, as we ultimately found through the work of the Research Group, as it did not seem possible that her body could be raised from the chair and returned to it without her movements being observed by sitter No. 9, immediately on her right, and especially in view of the fact that the chair that she habitually used was one that creaked with the slightest movement, but which was never heard throughout the sances. This was one of the peculiarities attending Miss Besinnet's sance work, and it puzzled the late Prof. Hyslop throughout all his researches. This fact might have been learned earlier in our experimental work had we risked seizing the forms, a practice that no advanced student of Psychic Science would ever dare to use, in view of the disastrous results to mediums that have accompanied such clumsy investigation in the past. That the medium was in full trance during the operation of being raised from her chair, I am fully convinced. There were many clear demonstrations that this was so, though it is difficult to describe the exact grounds upon which I make the claim. When Miss Besinnet was in trance an absolute stillness in her neighbourhood was always recorded, while her return to consciousness was always made manifest by a slight cough, or a few brief words uttered by her. It was proved by Prof. Hyslop, with the assistance of medical men, that during these physical manipulations of the body of the medium, which had the appearance of intentional fraud, she was in full trance state, and dead to all sense of pain when her body was pricked by a needle. Her condition was not tested in this way at the College, but it was evident that she was in full trance, as the "control," "Black Cloud," spoke frequently through her organism during the proceedings; he was never known to speak through her when she was in a normal condition. I agree that the evidence is not conclusive, but I am personally convinced, as were also the other members of the Research Group that the medium was in deep trance during the manifestations.

Immediately before the faces appeared, slight groans were

heard from the medium—a common experience in trance mediumship where materialization takes place. These sounds I believed to be produced by the nervous strain placed upon the medium, while projecting any portion of the soul, but later evidence led me to the conclusion that it was probably the result of projecting the psychic nerve from the solar plexus for the production of the light which illuminated these faces. The “controls” of the medium gave no suggestion that her body was used and taken out of the chair to assist in the face manifestations.

LIGHTS.

The lights produced were of varying kinds. Those seen in the early part of each seance were small, luminous ovals, which darted rapidly about the medium's body, similar in appearance and action to fireflies. Others were of a soft, phosphorescent or foggy nature, with a slow, floating movement. No smell of phosphorus was ever detected. These floating lights were often produced at request, and would approach sitters, in one case resting upon a photographic plate exposed upon the table some feet away from the medium, and on another occasion they rested on the back of the hand of a sitter. No light effect was found upon the photographic plate when developed. These floating lights continued to revolve round the medium, even when both her hands were unexpectedly held by one of the sitters, for a space of thirty seconds. Later in the seance the lights which accompanied the faces were of a much more brilliant order, and altogether different in their position, movement and illuminating power. During the first three months these brilliant flashlights seemed to arise from the point of the little finger of the left hand of the figure which held the light, but in later seances, held during the last six weeks, the lights seemed to proceed from the interior of the hand. These lights would flash to their full strength almost instantaneously, remain burning for from one to two seconds, and instantaneously disappear, though on some occasions they extinguished gradually, going from the full flash to a dull red glow before disappearing. Several attempts were made to photograph the light and the face, and although some of these were particularly brilliant no effect was found upon the plates. Whether the rays were of some peculiar quality which could not affect the sensitive plate cannot be

finally affirmed from these limited experiments, as an attempt to take flash-light pictures with an ordinary electric flash lamp with a similar amount of illuminating power, and for a similar period of time, likewise produced no effect upon the plates. It is difficult to say accurately what was the strength of these psychic lights, but probably somewhere about quarter candle-power, or less, may be inferred. They were in colour of an ordinary electric blue, and always steady. As a rule, they only illuminated the face, but when particularly brilliant, would sometimes illuminate the faces of the sitters. This light was usually held immediately under the chin, over the head or close to the left cheek of the face. Judging from the final experiment at the last séance with the Research Group, I am of opinion that the light was produced by an extension of a psychic nerve from the breast of the medium, probably in the neighbourhood of the solar plexus, its extension being about two feet, that its terminal rested within the left hand of the medium, and that the power generated to create the light was drawn from the nervous system of the medium. A suspicion was aroused in my mind that an ordinary electric torch lamp might have been used upon one occasion, when the drapery which enveloped the head of the form had upon it a bright circle of light as is sometimes seen when light passes through a glass prism. Only upon one other occasion was this seen by another sitter. We have no evidence whatever for believing that such an instrument was used by the medium, as the lights were often produced after she was thoroughly searched before entering the séance room, and when no possible opportunity was given of secreting such a light about her person. Careful reading of the record will bear this out.

DRAPERY.

Surrounding the head and shoulders of the forms that were shown appeared a fine, white drapery, similar in appearance to a soft textile. These draperies were sometimes close around the head, while at other times they flowed loosely upon the head and over the shoulders, extending downwards sometimes to two or three feet, and on some occasions seemed to reach as far as the knees. It was only upon one or two occasions, and under unusual circumstances, that the light extended down the body of the medium, so that this could be seen. We had only one opportunity of securing evidence that these white

robes were produced in ectoplasm, that being upon the last test sitting, when the rays of the electric torch which we used seemed to dissolve the substance. These draperies were produced often after the medium had been searched, and upon no occasion could we find even a trace of muslin material hidden upon her person. Upon various occasions throughout the research sittings Miss Besinnet was stripped in the dressing-room by two women members of the Research Group, who testified that at no time was anything found upon her that could be used in her sances, either for the production of artificial drapery or electric or phosphorescent lights. (See Research Group Record.) The production of these white draperies is of frequent occurrence in all materializing sances, the same effects are noticed in psychic photography, and it must therefore be presumed that this was genuine. I might here say that the forms did not always have these spirit draperies upon them, but in the great majority of cases they were used.

INDEPENDENT WHISTLING AND SINGING.

This phase of Miss Besinnet's mediumship was the best of its kind that I have ever witnessed. The term "independent" is hardly suitable when describing these voices, as in my estimation there is no real "independent" manifestation in a sance room. I suppose the word "independent" is probably the best that can be found to describe loosely these singular psychic manifestations, which are separated from the physical organism of the medium by a considerable space, sometimes from 10 to 12 feet with good mediums and which yet have undoubtedly a psychic link with that organism. The whistling and singing produced at Miss Besinnet's sittings were always well within the immediate environment of the medium, probably at no time reaching a greater distance than 2 feet. These voices were produced by regular spirit "controls," calling themselves by various names. They were loud and clear, and heard distinctly above the music of the gramophone which accompanied them, the only exception to this being that of the "control," "Pansy," whose voice was often very indistinct, especially when the music was loud. There was a wide range of variation between each of these voices, which ranged from high treble to baritone. Some of the voices showed a high degree of culture and great proficiency, very

different from the raucous voices frequently heard at trumpet séances. It is important to note that though the trumpet was kept upon the table and used during the latter part of the séances, these "direct" voices were quite independent of its use. This was proved on many occasions when the trumpet was held in the hands of a sitter, while the independent voices continued to whistle or sing. In the closing portion of the séance, when the trumpet was to be used, this was distinctly stated, by the "control," and the sitters were asked to place the wide end to the ear when it came into their hands. The "direct" singing voices produced were claimed to be those of deceased friends and relatives of the medium. They formed a group of about half a dozen singers. As soon as the singing voices were heard, the individuals could at once be recognized, as there was no variation or change in the individual voices of these personalities throughout the sittings, as might have been expected if the medium was producing them in a normal way. Sometimes a strange "control" attempted to sing, with very poor results, suggesting that long practice is necessary before proficiency is secured. The pronunciation of the words in all the regular "independent" voices was very distinct. The difference between these singing voices by regular "controls" and the voices produced later in the séances through the trumpet, was very marked, the latter being husky and indistinct, and often almost inaudible. These trumpet voices claimed to be friends of the sitters, often stating that they had previously attempted to show their faces. They were obviously inexperienced in manipulating psychic forces. Spirits attempting to communicate for the first time often failed entirely to make themselves heard or understood. It is only reasonable to suppose that "practice makes perfect" in this work as in any other.

It is found both in mental and physical mediumship that when a deceased person has the opportunity of frequent communication through mediums that greater facility is gained with each attempt. The sceptic thinks he has good grounds for his scepticism when he hears voices speaking distinctly to old sitters, while the voices of his own deceased friends, attempting to communicate for the first time, probably fail to give any real evidence to prove identity. Usually a little perseverance remedies this limitation, which is inherent in conditions.

TOUCHES.

Numerous and repeated touches of sitters took place at every seance, and were one of the most frequently reported manifestations. Upon one occasion at a general seance, one of the sitters, a careful and rather sceptical observer, had laid his glasses on the table. These were lifted, and placed upon his nose by two arms, which came from behind him. He was nearly opposite the medium, and it was not possible for her to leave her seat close to the fireplace and proceed behind the sitters without detection.

On another occasion, while the medium's right hand was tied to the left hand of No. 9 sitter, he was asked to place his right hand on the medium's left hand which was tied to the arm of her chair. He then reported that he received a distinct push in the back, which no one could have done in the ordinary way. Other testimonies of a like nature as to "independent" touches were received.

VARIOUS "CONTROLS."

The principal "control" of Miss Besinnet was known as "Black Cloud," who claimed to be a North American Indian. His invariable method of communication was through the physical organism of the medium, *i.e.*, when he wished to speak he would use her mouth for such communication, giving his sentences in very brief and broken English, and in a low, gruff voice. The whistling control was known as "Pietra," a Spaniard. Another whistler, with a much gentler note, did not give a name. The singing "controls" were "Dan," an American soldier and "Mrs. Gurney," a deceased friend of the medium's. The name of a singer with a very high soprano was not given. "Pansy," a North American Indian girl, made herself a general favourite. The tambourine was controlled by one calling herself "Leonore," stated to have been a Spanish dancer. Each of these "controls" had entirely different personalities, and were always clearly distinguishable, quite as easily as mortals are distinguished. When the whistling was produced it appeared to arise at a point from one to two feet above the medium's head, sometimes moving from right to left, and when requested would whistle into the left ear of No. 1 sitter, and the right ear of No. 9 sitter—an accomplishment seemingly impossible for the medium. There is no question as to the

"independent" action of this whistling voice, in its being quite separate physically from the medium, as on several occasions I was able to put my ear upon the mouth of the medium while the whistling proceeded at least two feet above her head.

The singing voices were produced at a distance from the medium of from one to two feet, usually above the head, or slightly to the right or left. It has been claimed by the late Prof. Hyslop and many others, that singing and whistling could be heard at the same time. This was also claimed as taking place during some of the College sances, but it was not my good fortune to hear them together. There is no doubt, from the testimony of various sitters, that while the whistling and singing were going on, the medium rose from her chair and stood upon her feet. Whether this was done by the controls to secure better results, or was done with the object of creating an illusion in the minds of the sitters, I cannot say, but the fact that she moved out of her chair was never pointed out by any of her "controls." While the tambourine was being played immediately over the table, the same thing happened. She was found to be out of her chair by the sitter in No. 9 seat on several occasions, surprise being expressed that she was able to rise without his knowledge, as his left arm was usually more or less in contact with the medium through the sittings. Missing the touch of the medium's arm the sitter at No. 9 on several occasions put his left hand on the seat of the medium's chair, and found it vacant, proving she was on her feet. There is no doubt, that the chief "control" moved sitter No. 9 some six inches from the medium when certain manifestations were performed, thus giving him freer play to act as he liked with the body of the medium. While the tambourine was being played the opportunity was sometimes given for No. 9 sitter to hold the medium's right hand. It was usually stated that no movement was felt in this hand while the playing proceeded, which one would have expected to find if the left hand was being used for manipulation. A luminous spot of phosphorescent paint inside and outside the tambourine was placed on the parchment, so that its movements could be seen, these often continuing for five minutes at a time, extending from the extreme right to the left, and to the sitters on the opposite side of the table, but always well within the field of the medium's control by physical manipulation. On no occasion did the tambourine ever touch

anyone in the circle in any clumsy way, whether at the College table or at any used in the Provinces, although it moved with extreme rapidity and precision, often accurately touching the hands and heads of the various sitters when requested. No satisfactory evidence was ever received that the tambourine was moved by a materialized hand and arm, except upon one occasion when the tambourine was laid upon the hand of a sitter and a demonstration of a rather startling character was given. This happened at a "general" sitting, and not at a Research Group, therefore it should be mentioned at this point. While the tambourine was lying against the hand of sitter No. 5, with the permission of the conductor of the séance he gripped it with his left hand, and then with his right, passed his fingers round the edge of the tambourine, making a complete circle from the position of his left hand. As he did so, his four fingers on the outside edge of the tambourine passed through a substance which he states seemed like dough, that melted or yielded to the passage of his fingers with a slow disintegrating movement. His fingers passed through this substance, that seemed to him shaped like a hand in the darkness, the substance immediately closing in after the passage of his fingers, but making no attempt to part from the rim of the tambourine, which it held. I have only the testimony of this witness, who is, however, a careful and trustworthy observer, and therefore it is well worth recording. There was also, however, distinct evidence on some occasions that the medium's hand and arm, while she was in trance, were used in the manipulation of the tambourine.

It was never possible to follow the exact movements of the medium's body during the séances until the last week, when an electrical apparatus was constructed immediately below the chair of the medium, which enabled me to ascertain her movements, whether in or out of her chair, and was quite unknown to her. One rather remarkable point was the rapid movement of the medium while in trance, so different from her normal movements which were rather slow and lethargic. This rapid movement was particularly noticeable during the presentation of the illuminated faces. To accomplish this meant, that she must suddenly rise from her chair, which as I have previously pointed out was specially selected for its creaky nature, must extend her body well over towards the centre of the table, show the face with the illuminating

psychic light, and then return to the chair. The movement from the centre of the table to her chair must have been accomplished in something like a quarter of a second, for it sometimes seemed that she simultaneously coughed in her chair when the light was showing a face over the centre of the table. Many imagined that the light on the face was showing when the medium coughed in her chair, but by close observation it was noted that the cough came after the manifestation. This cough betrayed the medium's return to consciousness, and was probably due to the brilliance of the psychic light upon her face, which often had a tendency to bring her into normal consciousness, or to create a cataleptic condition. It is indeed a remarkable performance when one considers the closeness of the sitter in No. 9 seat, and the noise that was likely to be produced by the chair owing to its creaky nature as the medium's body was returned to it.

These actions could be cited as proof of conscious fraud on the part of the medium, but the reader must fully understand that we have no proof throughout this series of sittings that Miss Besinnet was conscious of these singular actions of her physical organism when entranced. Investigators who have any knowledge of abnormal trance phenomena will understand how a medium who is perfectly honest in her normal condition may produce a simulacrum of trickery while in trance. I have seen experiments carried out with non-professional and strictly honest mediums, who, while conversing, used their hands and feet to perform tricks, and were quite unconscious of these physical actions. This frequently happened when the medium's body up to the neck was in a cataleptic state while her brain seemed quite normal. The medium, Eusapia Paladino, was frequently detected in such actions.

We have here, for the inexperienced student, a very difficult problem. It requires many years of experimentation to accept the view that a trick, of which the medium is quite unconscious may be performed by controlling entities, and to be able to separate such actions from those that are consciously performed by dishonest mediums. The hasty critic naturally condemns the action of the medium, but fuller investigation may lead him to very different conclusions.

This peculiarity of mediumship is continually arising to disturb the student in his study of psychical phenomena, and

it is only through the help and guidance of trained investigators that something of these subtle difficulties can be understood, and a hasty judgment avoided.

I made many secret attempts, both during the general and test sittings, to feel carefully with my right hand exactly where the medium's body was during the manipulation of the tambourine, more especially to find her left hand. Upon every occasion but one, recorded later, the movement of my hand was detected by the "control," "Black Cloud," and without remark it was pushed back by a hand, probably that of the medium. It is important to recognize the supernormal power of the medium while in trance, demonstrated on dozens of occasions, to perceive at once similar silent movements by others. I made no audible remark regarding my intentions either to the medium or to the sitters, but it is possible that it was learned through telepathy or by a supernormal power to see in the dark. On the other hand, it was noted that the "controls" seemed unable to detect similar movements on other occasions.

Tests conducted by Research Group.

This group was composed of College members, persons of good standing in public life, and eminently fitted to act as careful observers from former study and experiment. They were sympathetic with the medium, but free from emotional bias, and all were keen and well read students of Psychical Research.

*First Sitting—Friday, 3rd June, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.
Nine Sitters. Weather—Rainy.*

At the first seven test sittings the medium was placed immediately in front of the cabinet. During the last seven sittings she sat immediately in front of the stove, as shown in the plan.

The medium was stripped, and carefully searched by three women members of the Research Group, in the dressing-room adjoining the séance room. Neither during this search nor the search made at each subsequent sitting was any object found upon the medium's person, such as phosphorescent material, electric lights, or any other paraphernalia that might have been used to produce phenomena artificially. At the

first series of sittings with the Research Group, the medium was allowed to resume her own clothing after careful examination. The medium's abundant hair was carefully felt, but not taken down. In the second series it was taken down and brushed.

The séance room was carefully inspected both before and after the séance. The medium at this first sitting was left entirely free, the object being to secure wax moulds or finger prints. A large jug of melted paraffin wax was placed by the right-hand side of the medium, two feet from her chair. By the side of this was placed a pail of cold water. The wax was kept in a liquid state by an electric heater. Upon the table was placed an ink pad and several loose sheets of paper.

RESULTS.

LIGHTS.—Numerous lights were seen, both of the firefly type and of a luminous floating cloudy nature, which appeared at various distances from the medium, most of them being produced immediately in front of the medium's body, about a foot above the table. Others appeared from two to three feet behind the medium, some of them being within a few inches of the floor. While a face was shown, a brilliant light of a bright electric blue nature was shown immediately above, below or by the left side of the face, this flash-light usually burning from one to two seconds. The light proceeded from a left hand, and appeared to take its rise from the point of the little finger of the hand, its appearance being something like a small, incandescent gas mantle, and measuring about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. This flash-light was sometimes sufficient to illuminate not only the face of the appearance, but two or three of the faces of the sitters in its immediate neighbourhood. This light would show a full brilliance at the moment of its appearance, and go out quite as instantaneously. At other times it would die out slowly, tapering off from the ordinary incandescent blue light to a gradual dull red, and then disappear.

INDEPENDENT VOICES AND WHISTLING.—The usual whistling and singing independent voices were distinctly heard. These were not of brief duration, but in the case of some voices would sing continuously from five to seven minutes, with the accompaniment of the gramophone music. During this evening,

while the control, "Dan," was singing, it was stated that another voice, that of "Pansy," accompanied it, but this latter voice was not heard by all the sitters, and, personally, I did not hear it. The whistling during this first test sitting was loud and clear, and equal to what was received at the ordinary sances.

TAMBOURINE.—The tambourine was played in an accomplished manner to several records during the evening, but these movements of the tambourine were quite within the normal physical field of action of the medium.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS.—About twenty of these lay upon the side table, in three piles, quite out of reach of the medium. Several were lifted up during the evening by me, and the "control," "Pansy," was asked to tell what tune it was, and each time the correct name was given before the record was placed on the gramophone. Many of these tunes were used regularly during the sances, but they were not always in the same order, and upon this occasion I took the precaution of taking one of the lower ones in the pile. I was quite unconscious, when selecting these tunes promiscuously in the dark, as to what they really were, so that thought transference could not account for it. This ability of "Pansy" to tell beforehand the records selected, frequently occurred throughout the general sittings, as well as during the test sittings.

ILLUMINATED FACES.—Several faces appeared over the centre of the table to various sitters, some of these being claimed as good likenesses of deceased friends.

THE EVIDENCE OF CLAIRVOYANCE AND CLAIRAUDIENCE.—Several names were given by the "control," "Black Cloud," and recognized as the names of deceased friends.

WAX FINGER.—The sance, so far as the wax hand production was concerned, was a failure. During the sitting a wax finger stool was produced, and found upon the table at the close of the sance. This seemed to have been produced from a finger of the medium's right hand, its length being about two inches, reaching from the tip of the finger to the first joint. It was probably produced by the medium dipping her finger in the bowl of wax in a normal manner, and is of no evidential value. It may be well to state here that on five succeeding sittings, when liquid wax was provided, no further moulds were procured, nor did there seem to be any attempt on the part of the "controls" to try for this. Complaint was

made by "Pansy" that the wax was either too hot or too cold. In succeeding experiments, efforts were directed to secure phenomena of other kinds.

FINGER PRINTS.—We failed to secure any finger-prints throughout the whole series of test sittings, although paper and ink pads were provided on all occasions. A saucer of soft clay was also provided on some occasions, but without result.

Second Test Sitting—Friday, 10th June, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.45 p.m. Ten Sitters. Weather—Bright and warm.

CONDITIONS.—The séance room conditions were the same as before. The medium was carefully stripped and searched by two lady members of the Group. Music was tried with the organ for part of the séance, but discontinued, as the "controls" preferred the gramophone. With the consent of the medium a phosphorescent cross was pinned upon the front of her dress on the upper part of the breast, to enable us to see her position and movement in the dark while the phenomena lasted.

RESULTS.

Miss Besinnet showed some difficulty in entering into trance.

LIGHTS.—During the early part of the séance, numerous brilliant lights appeared, shooting away from the medium, towards her right and left hand, sometimes reaching within a foot of the floor, where they disappeared. These lights were of the brilliant firefly appearance. The more brilliant flash-light appeared about a dozen times during the séance, illuminating the faces that were shown.

WHISTLING AND SINGING VOICES.—These were loud and clear, at a point about 18 inches lower than usual. These voices, however, appeared to be produced at 18 inches to 2 feet above the medium's head, and sometimes slightly to the left and the right. There was no doubt that the medium remained seated throughout this séance, as the luminous cross made this perfectly clear. The singing and whistling, though good, was not quite up to its usual standard of excellence, being somewhat curtailed in duration and in strength. It was evident that the phosphorescent light disturbed the

medium, and she came out of trance many times during the evening. It was noticed when the medium was normal that the phenomena entirely ceased.

TAMBOURINE.—This was played upon several occasions during the evening, but with rather less excellence. Its movements were low, and in a field of action well within the medium's physical control, and nearer to the surface of the table. It was observed by several sitters that some dark object frequently passed between the luminous cross upon the medium and the observer's line of vision. What the diameter of this dark object was could not be determined, owing to the rapidity of its movement. It may have been caused by the medium's arm holding the tambourine, but, if so, the dark object seemed much too thin for her arm, and had the appearance of a cord about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in thickness.

While the tambourine was played to the music of the gramophone, it was accompanied by distinct whistling, which seemed to take its rise from a position about 18 inches above the medium's head.

THE "PANSY" "CONTROL."—The "control," "Pansy," spoke frequently by "independent" voice during the evening, at some distance in front of the medium, but never beyond two feet, usually towards the sitters, and close to the surface of the table. "Pansy," as before, gave the titles of records which were taken up promiscuously from the table before being played.

FACES.—During the earlier part of the sitting a face was shown illuminated by the usual flash-light, this light being flashed three times upon it, remaining from one to two seconds, with an interval between each of the three flashes of about ten seconds, but during its appearance the phosphorescent cross disappeared. These faces appeared in the immediate neighbourhood of the medium's chair, whereas usually they appeared over the centre of the table. Another face was shown half an hour later, with the light showing four consecutive times, with the usual one to two seconds' duration, with an interval between each of about ten seconds. One of the faces was claimed to resemble a deceased friend of a sitter, but so far as I was able to observe, the faces seemed to strongly resemble the medium's. Later, another face was shown to one of the sitters, which was claimed to have a resemblance to a deceased friend. This face was illuminated by the flash-light for a brief

interval. A further face was shown which had the appearance of that of an Indian or an Easterner, the features seeming to be dark in colour. While these faces were shown, the luminous cross was not seen, and when this was mentioned to the "control," "Black Cloud," he stated that the cross had fallen off, but that it would be replaced. The sitter on the medium's immediate right had his left hand taken and guided to the lap of the medium, where he found the luminous cross. Later the cross was replaced by the "control" upon her breast, probably by use of the medium's hands, but no further faces were shown after the cross was replaced.

MEDIUM'S SENSITIVENESS TO LIGHT.—During this seance, about an hour after the sitting had started, the plug of the electric connection which heated the wax, was withdrawn, causing a small flash at the plug terminal about eight feet from the medium. This electric flash was of a very ordinary character, usual in such withdrawal of plugs when power is on, and was not in the direct line of the medium's vision, but she immediately collapsed, her head falling with a heavy blow upon the surface of the table, her body being found to be in a cataleptic state. This peculiar result always followed any sudden and unexpected flash of light. The medium, after I had made a few passes over the head, returned to normal consciousness, which in turn was followed by the ordinary trance condition. The seance continued and no subsequent indisposition followed.

*Third Sitting—Friday, 17th June, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.
Nine Sitters. Weather: Dry and Sultry.*

CONDITIONS.—The medium was stripped and searched, other conditions being the same as before. The luminous cardboard cross was this time sewn upon the front of the medium's dress. The medium again showed difficulty in going into trance. "Black Cloud" later stated that the luminous cross disturbed the medium and brought her frequently out of trance.

RESULTS.

LUMINOUS SLATES.—An effort was made at this seance to procure illumination of the faces by the use of prepared phosphorescent "slates." The "control," "Black Cloud," agreed

to try these, which were prepared cardboard squares, about 8 inches by 5 inches, with a cardboard handle glued to the back. The upper surface was covered with phosphorescent paint. The object of using these was to try and secure a more continuous light to illuminate the faces, so that by a prolonged exposure a better view of the head and features could be obtained.

It is well known that these phosphorescent "slates" have been used by materializing mediums in the past with success, as their illuminating power does not seem to be so detrimental to the ectoplastic forms, as is the use of ordinary white or red light. After going under control the medium pushed her chair back into the cabinet and sat immediately behind the curtains, drawing the table after her. This was the first and last occasion when the cabinet was used. While sitting behind the curtains the phosphorescent cross was completely obscured. Several faces were shown, illuminated by the psychic flash-light during the evening, but these were not seen at the same time as the luminous cross, so that it was quite impossible to tell exactly where the body of the medium was during their production. It was quite easy for the medium or her "controls" to draw forward the curtain a certain distance, and show the head and face of the medium while the cross and the breast were obscured by the curtain. We have no satisfactory evidence that this was done, but, judging from the evidence produced later, I am of the opinion that this was the plan resorted to by the medium's "control." A very fine form was shown later, and one of the luminous "slates," which had been placed upon the table, was picked up, and a form showing a quantity of drapery was seen, but the slate dropped almost immediately. It was used again a second and a third time, each with a little more strength, but not enough to distinguish the features. Complaint was made by the "control," "Black Cloud," that these "slates" were too bright, and that he found difficulty in keeping the medium under control when they were exposed upon the faces, and their use was discontinued. It was quite evident during this séance that Miss Besinnet was disturbed, as was shown by her frequent coughing and speaking from time to time. "Black Cloud" also complained that the cross upon her breast caused disturbance. A request was made by one of the sitters that the cross should be removed, but this was not done,

and it was seen later, when the medium moved forward from behind the curtains.

"Black Cloud" said he desired to give the evidence of the faces, and at the same time show the luminous cross, but he did not succeed. The faces shown during this evening bore, to me, a striking resemblance to the medium, though some of the sitters thought they had a very different appearance.

LIGHTS.—These appeared as usual in various positions near the medium, a few, however, showing at a distance of about five feet, both to the right and left of her, and sometimes behind.

THE "PANSY" "CONTROL."—While the luminous cross on the medium's breast was in view, the voice of "Pansy" spoke from various positions immediately over the surface of the table.

SINGING AND WHISTLING VOICES.—In the early part of the sitting the "Pansy" "control" asked the sitters to sit quietly, as they were going to try to play the tambourine, and whistle and sing at the same time. She then seemed to pass round the circle saying, "I am here; now I am here; now I am here"; from locations which seemed to proceed from a position about two feet in front of the medium, and slightly to the right and left of her. During the next record on the gramophone they accomplished their efforts, and produced whistling, the playing of the tambourine, and the "Direct" Voice simultaneously, while various sitters were touched in turn. The touch to some felt cold, while others remarked that it was warm. Not all of the sitters, however, heard the whistling and singing at the same time. The whistling was loud and clear, but the singing voice, if any, was extremely indistinct.

INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT OF THE TRUMPET.—Near the close of the sitting, the trumpet, which had fallen under the table, about four feet from the medium, was lifted up and placed upon the table. Its movement was of a peculiar character. It seemed to climb up the leg of the sitter at No. 2 seat, as if using the leg as a support, rising by a sliding movement on to the surface of the table, immediately by his hand. It would be quite impossible for anyone to use an instrument, such as an extension rod, to act in this way, as the trumpet passed over the edge of the table and moved along its surface some little distance. After the trumpet had reached the surface of the table it was then

raised and a message given through it to a stranger from abroad who was present, who claimed to recognize the message and the name given.

Fourth Test Sitting—Friday, 24th June, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. Nine sitters. Weather—Extremely hot and dry.

CONDITIONS.—As usual, the medium was stripped and searched by two women members. The use of the luminous "slates" was discarded, as the "control" objected to the brightness. A new method of controlling the medium was practised for the first time. Each wrist was enclosed in a leather wristlet with double strap and buckle. These were padded with soft felt so as not to hurt the wrists. The ends of the leather loops were pierced, and a fine cord inserted through the right and left wristlet so as to link them at a space of about 12 inches from each other. The knot of this cord was sealed with sealing-wax. A further cord was attached to the right and left wrist of the medium, and wound one complete circle round the right and left arm of the chair upon which the medium sat, leaving the ends of the cord to be held by the sitter immediately on her right and left hand, so that any movement that might be made by the medium's hand would be felt. The medium showed some slight resentment, after the searching, to the proposal that the double tying process should be resorted to, but she quietly agreed to have the test carried out. The medium during the séance came out of trance several times for a few minutes.

RESULTS.

LIGHTS.—These were seen on various occasions in front of the medium, and several were observed to float over the table some distance from the medium, but at no time did they exceed a distance of two feet from her body. Several of the firefly type were seen in rapid movement both before and behind the medium. Once a face was shown brilliantly illuminated, but this was of very short duration, probably about a quarter of a second.

VOICES AND WHISTLING.—These were, as usual, quite distinct, but of short duration, and somewhat less full in volume, and appeared to proceed at some little distance on the right

and left of the medium and about a foot above her head. It was perfectly obvious, however, that these voices and whistling were produced at a lower level than was usual in the ordinary uncontrolled séances. Here the singing and whistling appeared to proceed about 24 to 30 inches above the table, while normally they appeared to come from a height of about 3 to 4 feet above it.

The whistling as a rule proceeded from a point further away from the medium than the singing voices.

FACES.—Only one face was shown during the evening, illuminated as previously stated, for a quarter of a second. This face was in the immediate neighbourhood of the medium, directly over the chair, and about the same position as the medium's face was likely to be. Owing to the brevity of the flash the features were not distinguishable. Judging from later experiments it may be inferred that the face seen was that of the medium.

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.—Various members of the circle were distinctly touched upon the head, hands and shoulders throughout the evening. The sitter at seat 9, a Doctor of Science and a careful psychic student, who was holding the cord attached to the medium's right hand, stated that he was touched upon the top of the head quite distinctly, and, later, he felt a distinct pressure upon his back, as if someone just behind was leaning upon him, and also pressing upon his shoulders. During the playing of the tambourine just over the table, a slight friction was felt upon the left cord which extended across the table surface, as if some object of a soft nature moved over it. The movement of the tambourine was much more restricted than usual, and played only in shorter periods and with much less proficiency. No attempt was made by the medium to draw away her hands from the arms of the chair to which they were attached by the sliding cord, as such movements would have been easily detected. The tambourine movement could always be easily followed, as it had upon its outer and inner centre a small, luminous phosphorescent spot of paint.

THE "PANSY" "CONTROL."—"Pansy" spoke frequently throughout the evening to all the sitters, and seemed able to move about over the table, as her voice was distinctly heard about 18 inches in front of the medium, and sometimes at a distance of 2 feet on her right and left.

This "control" touched various sitters describing to them silent actions that they performed in the darkness, such as when they closed their eyes or yawned silently, or took their hands from the table. I was distinctly touched by what seemed to be a small hand of a child while I was removing one of the gramophone records.

The left hand cord attached to the medium's wrist was held during the evening by my left hand, this being released by me and left in the control of the No. 2 sitter, while I operated the gramophone upon several occasions, but at no time was the right or left arm of the medium free. Upon examination at the close of the séance, the wax seal over the knot joining the two wristlet straps was found unbroken.

*Fifth Test Sitting—Friday, 1st July, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.20 p.m.
Nine Sitters. Weather—Dull and hot.*

CONDITIONS.—Same as before. Medium was stripped and searched previous to the sitting by two women members. A special effort was made this evening to get movements of objects beyond the medium's control while closed within a cage. With this object in view a steel and wooden framework was prepared, and the same built around the medium's chair. These frames were lashed together with fine cord and sealed with sealing wax where knotted. It was impossible to bend or twist the frames in any way, and the whole structure was thoroughly rigid. Fishing net was thrown over the top, back, sides and front, so as to enclose the medium completely within it. The size of the mesh was $\frac{7}{8}$ inch. The net extended and enclosed the legs right down to the floor. This front net was left open so that the medium could enter. Upon entering, each of the strands of the net was linked to the opposite strand with strong cord, and tied in such a way around the framework that the medium had no opportunity of passing a hand out at this point any more than at any other.

RESULTS.

LIGHTS.—Several were seen of various kinds, both within the cage and without. Some of these outside were of the firefly nature, but their movements were in close proximity to the cage. A bright flash-light was produced within the

cage illuminating a mass of white drapery, and displaying a face, which may or may not have been that of the medium. The flash was much too brief to distinguish the features.

Immediately following this flash, which occurred about an hour after the beginning of the séance, the medium collapsed, her head falling forward on the front network of the cage. After a few minutes' magnetic treatment of the head, without



opening the cage, the medium recovered consciousness, and in less than half a minute returned once again into the trance condition.

SINGING AND WHISTLING.—The singing and whistling voices were clear and loud, but of much shorter duration than that during the ordinary, uncontrolled séances, and in this case the voices were nearer to the medium. Whistling was distinctly produced at a distance of one to two feet above the medium's

head and outside of the cage, while the singing voice seemed to be close in front of the medium, either within the cage or just outside.

The "independence" of the whistling was proved in a most satisfactory manner during this sitting. My right ear was placed immediately in front of the medium's mouth, only the string of the network being between my ear and the medium's lips. While the whistling proceeded above her head, at a height of about 18 inches, her tongue was heard moving within her mouth as if an endeavour was being made by her to sing or speak at the same time. The movement of the tongue within the mouth was distinctly heard in immediate proximity to my ear, and the warm breath of the medium was felt while whistling was going on. This was continued for about the space of a minute. There is no doubt that the medium's mouth was not used in the production of the whistling sound.

At the request of the "control," "Black Cloud," the sitters on the immediate right and left hand sides were asked to place their heads in front of the netting, and while both heads were placed in that position with their ears against the net, whistling was again produced above the medium's head, and well above the top of the cage.

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS.

Distinct raps were produced upon the table immediately the lights were extinguished, and while the medium was sitting quietly within her chair. Several of the sitters were touched by the trumpet, which lay upon the centre of the table, its nearest point being from 12 inches to 18 inches beyond the front network of the cage. One sitter, about 4 feet away, was touched by what seemed a cold hand. After several attempts to move the tambourine, it was finally raised and gently shaken, and then allowed to drop upon the table. It was held suspended for only a matter of about 10 to 15 seconds.

Whilst the tambourine was being manipulated about 6 inches from the front of the network, it was noticed that the network was violently agitated, as if by some object that was producing the tambourine movement, but what that object was is obscure. As the medium had been previously searched we could only judge that no object was used

by her in the way of mechanical contrivance, and must therefore conclude that it was produced by some abnormal means. The movement of the net was much too forceful to be the result of the use of a slight psychic cord. It may have been produced by a slight ectoplasmic arm, but of this we have no direct evidence.

The trumpet, which had dropped upon the floor, was lifted up from the ground by an unseen power, its upward movement being made against the leg of No. 9 sitter, and then gently moved on the table surface.

The "PANSY" "CONTROL."—"Pansy" was heard to speak frequently throughout the evening, but usually in the immediate vicinity of the cage. Several times the voice seemed to come just over the table, about a foot beyond the front of the cage, at other times just within it. It was a peculiarity of this "control" that the voice was always somewhere near the surface of the table, about 6 inches, and at its highest about 18 inches above it. Sometimes it seemed to proceed almost from the surface of the table itself.

WRITING.—A short letter was written upon the paper pad lying upon the centre of the table. It was torn off and placed upon the hand of No. 2 sitter. This pad was about 18 inches from the front of the cage. The writing of this was quite decipherable, but the message was not recognized. Another letter at the conclusion of the séance was found written upon the pad, and was signed by "Dan," one of the medium's "controls." After some few minutes the medium again collapsed into a cataleptic state, from which she gradually recovered, and the séance was closed at 9.20 p.m.

*Sixth Test Sitting—Friday, 8th July, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
Nine Sitters. Weather—Extremely hot.*

CONDITIONS.—Same as last. The medium sat within the prepared cage as before, but upon this occasion wooden bars were placed in front instead of the network. These bars were perpendicular, without any cross struts upon them so as to enable any psychic cord that might be extruded to find free play without friction. There were no results.

The medium, though apparently happy and in good health, did not go into trance. The sitting continued for an hour,

but no phenomena of any kind took place, either in the way of lights, raps or voices.

This non-trance condition was subsequently explained by "Dan." See Report of Seventh Test Sitting.

*Seventh Test Sitting—Friday, 15th July, 7.30 p.m. to 9.45 p.m.
Nine Sitters. Weather—Hot and dry.*

CONDITIONS.—No test conditions were imposed upon this occasion to see what the effect would be on the phenomena, the sitters preferring to observe results. The medium was suffering from a swollen thumb. This sitting was well up to the standard of the "general" sittings, and in fact excelled them in some respects, the chief one being that the face and drapery—which usually appeared in normal sésances about 5 feet from the floor—appeared about 5 feet above the table. The light on this occasion was extremely brilliant and lasted for a good $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds, illuminating the form right over the table, the light shining upon at least three-quarters of the form, which was enveloped in white drapery. The medium upon this occasion took from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour to recover consciousness at the conclusion of the sitting, which would suggest that she was in much deeper trance than usual.

"Black Cloud," the "control," had promised to make a special effort during this sésance to put the medium into deeper trance.

To succeed in producing a figure at this height, by ordinary physical means, would have necessitated the medium standing upon her chair or upon the table. It was difficult to judge the height, but it appeared to the sitters, from ordinary observation, that the form was well over towards the centre of the table, the height being about 5 feet above it.

After the "control" "Dan" had sung in his remarkable baritone voice, and the sitting was about to end, a voice at about the same height as the singing was heard to say, "Good evening." It was recognized as "Dan's," and was the only occasion on which he spoke to the group. He proceeded to say that the reason why the medium could not go into trance on the previous week was due to the fact that a white light had been accidentally turned on by the conductor of a "general" sésance on the day previous. The medium did not know, and he did not want her to know, but it had upset her, although

happening when she was bound in the chair during the rope-tying, it had not outwardly produced at the time any serious result.

The medium being in a deep trance took longer than usual to recover, and was surprised to find herself laid upon a couch instead of at the table when she returned to consciousness.

Second Series of Sittings by College Research Group.

After the medium returned from Scotland, the Research Group tried to secure results by stripping the medium and placing her in an entirely new set of clothes provided by the College for this purpose.

Eighth Test Sitting—Friday, 7th October, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Six Sitters. Weather—Very dry and hot.

CONDITIONS.—As before. It was decided to discard the use of the cage, and depend upon other methods of a less trying nature for testing the medium. During this, and the succeeding test sittings, except the last, the medium was stripped, searched and dressed throughout in a new set of clothes, provided by the College. Her hair was let down and examined, and her hands washed; she was never alone until taken into the seance room next door to the dressing-room. The results obtained during this sitting were similar to those usually procured in the "general" sittings. Lights of various kinds appeared, including the brilliant flash-light; voices and whistling of good quality, and physical manifestations, such as touchings, were also noticed. As these results are known, it is not necessary here to detail them in full, as they are of less evidential value than the other test sittings.

Ninth Test Sitting—Friday, 14th October, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. Seven Sitters. Weather—Dry and warm.

CONDITIONS.—As usual. The medium was stripped, searched and provided with the new clothes supplied by the College, with a luminous spot attached.

To enable us to test the accuracy of the statement made by the "Black Cloud" "control" that the luminous cross upon the medium's dress, used in the earlier sittings, affected the

phenomena, unknown to the medium, there was placed a small luminous spot of phosphorescent paint, about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, upon the neck band of her dress, immediately at the back of her head. This was placed upon the dress some hours before the experiment. To avoid attracting the attention of the medium, the dress was placed over her head by one of the lady searchers, in such a way that the folds covered the spot from view until it was properly fitted to the body and fastened. There is no shadow of doubt that the medium was quite ignorant of this luminous spot behind her.

RESULTS.

The medium was unable throughout the séance to enter into the trance condition, and seemed very puzzled to account for it, as she was apparently well and happy, and anxious for results. After patiently waiting about 40 minutes she complained that something or someone seemed to be behind her giving her a disturbing sensation, and this trouble increased to such an extent that she would not be pacified until I had turned on the red electric light to convince her that no one stood behind her. After waiting about an hour and a half the sitting was closed.

No lights, raps or mental or physical phenomena of any kind were produced, and there seemed good grounds for believing that the failure was due to the phosphorescent light placed on her back. The medium said she felt there was sufficient power for a successful sitting. She reported the next day that she had gone through a severe nerve strain during the night, for which she could not account.

Tenth Test Sitting—Friday, 21st October, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Nine Sitters. Weather—Dry and cold.

CONDITIONS.—As usual, but no luminous spot was placed upon the medium. The medium was stripped and searched as usual, and dressed in the clothes provided by the College. Her hair and hands were attended to. An endeavour was made during this sitting to secure photographs of the luminous cloud lights, by requesting the "controls" to place these upon sensitive photographic plates, which were placed upon the table at about three feet from the medium, and also if possible

to use one of the flash-lights in a similar manner. A phosphorescent cloud was placed upon a plate, but when this was developed no markings appeared as a result. The second attempt made to secure a flash-light effect also failed, although an extra brilliant light was produced immediately over the plate, and within three inches of it. This light, being of a very brilliant character, threw the medium into a cataleptic state, which usually occurred when any excessive light was shown.

The usual phenomena which occurred at unimpeded sances were produced.

The "control," "Black Cloud," spoke immediately at the beginning of this seance, when the medium went into trance. As he seldom spoke at such an early stage, this was interesting. Addressing me he said, "Me not see with eyes, Chief. No matter whether front or back. Remember always, no see with medium's eyes." As his words were usually few and far between, and these were spontaneous and early remarks, it showed a consciousness that the sitting of the previous week was disturbed by something of an unusual character, and we could only conclude that he referred to the phosphorescent light upon the medium's neck band.

None of the sitters had informed the medium during this and the previous sitting that we had used a phosphorescent light upon her dress.

Four further Research Groups were held on October 28th, 1921, November 4th, 11th and 18th, at 7.30 p.m., but as these contained no further exceptional manifestations suitable to be recorded, particulars of the last sitting only will be given here.

Fourteenth Test Sitting—Friday, 18th November, 1921, 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Eight Sitters. Weather—Warm, damp.

CONDITIONS.—The medium on this occasion was not searched and wore her own clothes. It was mutually agreed between the members of the Research Group that during this seance an attempt would be made with the assistance of a red electric torch lamp, to perceive exactly what amount of ectoplasm, if any, was upon the face and head of the form shown, when appearing with the spirit light over the table. In discussing this matter, it was felt that the most suitable time to

carry out this experiment was during the last sitting of the Research Group, and at the completion of Miss Besinnet's engagement at the College, as in case of any serious nerve strain she would have some weeks to recover before continuing her seance work in America.

So that no unnecessary shock might be given to the medium, an electric torch was used of about a single candle-power, which was further reduced in strength with the use of a red film over the prism. It was arranged that each member of the Research Group would direct his or her attention to one particular object when the face appeared. Member No. 8, who sat upon the seat immediately at the right-hand side of the medium, was to observe the exact position of the medium's body; No. 7, the exact appearance of the face; No. 6, the psychic light; No. 5, the drapery over the head; Nos. 4 and 3 were sympathetic visitors; No. 2, the hand holding the psychic light; and No. 1, who was holding the red torch light, the general spectacle as a whole, and who would immediately inspect the hand holding the light, the arm and the dress of the medium, for any electric apparatus or white drapery, that might be concealed thereabout. It was agreed that the light should be flashed upon the face at a given signal by No. 1, when all the members would be upon the alert to carefully observe what happened.

RESULTS.

The usual phenomena occurred during the seance, such as "independent" voices, singing and whistling, and tambourine playing, the "Pansy" control speaking from various points across the surface of the table.

The first face which appeared, and which is believed to have been surrounded by white drapery, came to sitter No. 3. It was accompanied with the usual psychic flash-light, and had a very general similarity in appearance to the medium's face. This appeared well over the centre of the table. No torch was flashed upon this. Upon the appearance of the second face, which approached close to sitter No. 5, and well over the table, it was noticed that the head was enveloped in white drapery, close to the hair. The psychic light illuminating the face was, as usual, held within a left hand, close up to the face. Just before the illumination of this same face for a second time the signal was given by sitter No. 1, the signal

being of a nature that would not disturb the medium or the "controls," or arouse suspicion in any way. Upon the face being illuminated with the psychic light for a second time No. 1 sitter held the electric torch well up above the table, directed upon the face, and pressed the switch, thus clearly illuminating the face, head and shoulders of the medium, whose body was up out of the chair and bending well over the table towards sitter No. 5. With her right hand resting upon the table, she held in her left the psychic light, which was then shining upon her face. The red torch light, as it illuminated the face and the head, immediately affected the white drapery over the head, which instantaneously disappeared like a fog. The medium stood silently while the red torch remained upon her, for the space of about two seconds, while her right hand rested upon the table, and she continued to hold her left hand at her face, the light within this continuing to show for about a second before it began to fade. The left hand then dropped upon the table as the medium fell in a peculiar rigid manner backwards into her chair, without a cry, groan or sound, and then instantly falling forwards her forehead struck the surface of the table. Miss Besinnet's body seemed to be somewhat violently contorted as she fell backwards, the chest and centre trunk protruding in rather a singular manner, while the back was extremely hollowed, as if the whole frame were under a muscular strain. At the moment of falling backwards, and while the light remained still upon her, sitter No. 1 immediately grasped her left hand, but found no substance of any kind within it, neither did he find any wire upon her arm, batteries or electric bulb anywhere about her person, although the interior of her dress bodice was searched as she fell with her head upon the table. No fabric or drapery of any kind that would produce the muslin-like effect around her head was to be found. No resistance was offered during this search, as the medium was still entranced. The first appearance of returning consciousness was shown about 10 or 15 seconds after the red light had been flashed upon her, this returning consciousness being expressed in slight groans, and a twisting of the trunk, as if the medium was in pain. She then spoke, and asked, "What is the matter?" the reply being given that she was suffering from a slight shock as a result of a light being flashed. She showed no surprise or resentment, but complained of violent pain in

the region of the solar plexus. One of the sitters, pressing his hand upon this region, seemed to alleviate the spasmodic pains which shook her frame. The muscular contraction came in spasms of about a minute's duration, which relaxed, and returned again and again for some minutes. She found that by standing up a certain ease was secured, and an endeavour was made to take her to the couch, so that she might lie down, but it was only with difficulty she could recline, and that only for a few seconds, as she found the pain in the reclining position worse than while standing. After waiting, and treating her body with magnetic passes, the spasms gradually abated, but the pain continued. As soon as she was able to be removed, she was taken to her rooms. The pain continued throughout the whole night, always in the region of the solar plexus, and the only relief she seemed to find was by the application of hot water bottles. During the night she did not sleep, and required continuous attention until next morning. Though the pain continued after this time it was much less acute, and in three days she became to all outward appearance quite normal, although still complaining of weakness.

GENERAL REMARKS REGARDING THE LAST TEST SITTING.

It is regrettable that such drastic measures have to be taken from time to time to elucidate some of the more difficult problems of Psychical Research, but every honest truth seeker will appreciate the value and importance of such work. The results should provide sufficient evidence of the seriousness of such acts as suddenly flashing a light upon a sensitive in darkness, when in an abnormal condition, and should be a warning against all indiscriminate use of such methods. There is no doubt that much more serious effects would have resulted from the use of a white light of stronger power, while the psychic cords were extruded. Upon one occasion during a general sitting, when the "control" had asked for a red light to examine the tying of the medium, a white light was accidentally turned on by the conductor of the séance. No serious result accrued on this occasion, This was probably due to the fact that no psychic cord extensions were then protruded as the "control" had prepared the medium for the red light. We sought to accomplish our ends by reducing the light to a minimum, and still further protecting

the psychic organism of the medium by filtering the light through a red pigment.

Several important facts emerge as a result of this experiment. There was unquestionable evidence that the face shown was that of the medium ; that the brilliant light illuminating the face was of a psychic origin ; that the drapery around the head of the medium was an ectoplasmic structure ; that the psychic light was probably produced from a nerve extension drawn from the solar plexus of the medium, the terminal of which was held in her left hand ; that the medium when out of her chair, and lying over the table to show her face, was in full trance, and that even a reduced red light, when projected upon the medium when the psychic cord was extended, produced a great nerve strain.

GENERAL SURVEY OF MISS BESINNET'S MEDIUMSHIP.

To those who have carefully read the results secured during the fourteen test sittings with the College Research Group, several puzzling problems are presented, and that the reader may be enabled to understand more fully the exact standard and quality of Miss Besinnet's mediumship, I will endeavour to illustrate some of the most difficult and puzzling phenomena, in the light of nearly a quarter of a century's research work in these fields of subtle matter.

It is a puzzling thing to understand why the "controls" of such mediums as Miss Besinnet are unable to describe the psychic mechanism used by them in the production of physical phenomena.

There are many simple-minded believers in the reality of spirit intercourse who think that a question regarding these matters has only to be put to the "control" to receive an adequate answer, especially when so many questions on various subjects dealing with matters of a less intimate nature are apparently capable of being answered. If the *modus operandi* were known to the medium, it would be a simple matter for the "spirit controls" to give the explanation. It does not necessarily follow that the "control" is ignorant of this mechanism, but to get the facts through the uninstructed consciousness of the medium is very difficult. When once a medium dimly understands how the spirit operates these subtle forces, there will be less difficulty for the "control" to explain the matter more

fully, and this explanation will be still easier when once the observer understands something of the psychic mechanism. It is the exception and not the rule that spirits can ever get new and unknown facts through unenlightened mediums. That they can get a kind of a message through is quite obvious to all students of psychic communication, but the operating intelligence on the spirit side of life has to give the explanation by a circuitous route, using certain ideas within the consciousness of the medium or the sitter, to express the new fact he wishes to describe.

This throws every student upon his own resources, and the more quickly he understands that all advanced knowledge in this subject has to be secured by painstaking effort, observation and reflection, the quicker and more rapid will be his progress. It is well always to remember this simple fact, that the thought of a spirit has to penetrate the thought of a medium. It can never get to us direct, and as Miss Besinnet knows nothing of the mechanism by which her "controls" work, they can throw little or no light upon the matter. When we have learned to know how it is done, and ask them if that is the means by which they work, their answer will quickly be yea or nay, and by questioning, further light may be thrown upon obscure points.

I have already described the psychic mechanism for the production of the "independent voices," as deduced from a series of experiments conducted with upwards of twenty different direct voice and trumpet mediums.

It is surprising how very little progress has been made by science in establishing on a sure foundation the reality of the psychic cord extension from the body of the medium in the production of various supernormal phenomena, and to the great majority of students the whole subject remains a mystery. This lack of knowledge must give place to a clearer understanding that all production of psychic phenomena is governed by natural law. This law may be called supernormal, but certainly not supernatural.

I am led to the conclusion from the results of the research work carried out with Miss Besinnet, that in no case did there occur what could be termed materialised faces.

There is, however, no doubt that the features of the faces, shown on hundreds of occasions, were considerably altered in appearance from those of the medium. In some cases the

light burned while the medium was seated, but was extinguished immediately her body was raised from the chair. On the first evening when this indicator was used, the light, though a dim one and unseen by all the sitters, seemed to create a disturbance too powerful to allow the medium to go under control, and it was only after waiting for half an hour while the medium could not become entranced, that it was switched off, quite unknown to her, when she immediately sank into the trance condition and phenomena began. By reducing this light still further, and bringing it to a point so dim that it was with difficulty seen by the controller, I succeeded in using it without any disturbing influence upon the medium.

Through the use of this indicator light, I was able to perceive that the medium was standing practically at least half the time during the sances, a fact that until then was not fully realized, as there was little evidence of the medium moving from her chair during these sances. The deduction must therefore be made from this week's experiment with the use of the indicator, that during the whole of the previous experiments Miss Besinnet was in all probability out of her chair for half the time. If this was so, it explains why the singing voices and whistling were at a higher point in the darkness than was the case when the medium was tied to her chair, the difference in height being about the difference between the standing and sitting position. When sitting, voices were produced about 3 feet above the table; when standing, they seemed to be about 5 feet above the table.

The movement of the tambourine also took place at a higher level from the surface of the table when the medium was apparently standing, and much lower when she was confined to her chair.

It is quite a miracle in itself to consider how often the medium rose during the evening in this way, without her movements being known or felt by the sitter immediately on her right, and the question will naturally arise in the minds of all critical students as to how far the medium was culpable, and conscious of her physical movements. From accumulated evidence I can only conclude that the medium was in deep trance upon every occasion when these physical actions took place. How far the unseen controlling operators are to be condemned, especially "Black Cloud," the chief "control," it is also difficult to say, but I do not hesitate to record my conviction

that "Black Cloud" was the culprit, and was prepared to use the cover of darkness to hide, not only this illegitimate method, but several others practised by him throughout these seances. The sitters were always led by him to infer that the medium was continuously seated in her chair, and during the seances he frequently allowed and invited the sitter in No. 9 seat to hold the medium's right hand. This, however, was usually done when he could procure results of a supernormal type while the medium remained in her chair, but on other occasions, when he wished to make use of the medium's physical body he took due precautions to push the sitter in No. 9 seat some little distance away from the medium. We have further evidence of this tendency of his to produce effects by trickery in the rope-tying manifestation.

THE ROPE-TIED MEDIUM.

This demonstration was exceedingly interesting, and showed how easily a trick knot could deceive the ordinary inexperienced observer and even some who considered themselves experienced, as was done throughout this series of experiments. The medium was supposed to be tied into her chair by supernormal means with the use of the lengths of rope lying upon the table. The performance of tying her into the chair took about seven minutes to accomplish. "Black Cloud" at the end of the time would ask for the red light to be turned on, and invited two of the sitters to inspect the ropes and see that the tying had been properly done. Examination of this tying showed that both legs and wrists and body of the medium were lashed to the legs and arms and back of the chair, in such a manner as led one to assume that the medium could not have accomplished the tying by her own unaided actions. The red light was then turned out, and within a few seconds the tambourine was played: the light was called for again by "Black Cloud," only to show the medium still seemingly securely tied in her chair and in deep trance.

Whether this tying was done entirely by the two hands of the medium, or by one of her hands assisted by a materialized hand, is scarcely worth discussing, for if a materialized hand had been used in the manipulation of the rope there would have been no necessity to make a trick tie, as was undoubtedly resorted to. This false tie enabled the medium to slip her

left hand from the rope and manipulate the tambourine with it, as was certainly done from evidence procured towards the close of her engagement. There is no doubt that the tying of her legs to the chair, and her back to the back of the chair, and, finally her right hand to the left hand of sitter No. 9, was also done with the use of her left hand, leaving a loose triple link upon the arm of the chair into which she slipped her left hand, passing it inwards from the front, and twisting her hand and arm in such a way as to tighten the tie by this complete half-circle twist. Upon several occasions I endeavoured to release the hand from this twisted tie by bringing the arm round towards the front, but this was always strongly resisted by the "Black Cloud" control," who held possession of her body at the time of these experiments. I only refrained as an act of diplomacy from further verifying the matter by using greater force, for to have done so would have only created war between myself and the "control," and have probably led to a discontinuation of all further opportunities of investigation. Prof. Hyslop, in his experiments with this medium, found that any effort on his part to expose the artifices of the "control," "Black Cloud," led to serious difficulties in research work.

My suspicions having been aroused that the medium's left hand was confined by this twisted knot, and which could be freed by a turn of the wrist, I secretly extended my hand while the tambourine was being played, and after several efforts I finally succeeded, and found that the medium's left hand was out of the rope, supplying me with undisputable evidence that my conclusions were right. Accompanying and following the rope-tying performance was the fixing of a handkerchief, supplied by a sitter, over the mouth of the medium, to show that her lips were not being used when whistling took place. This was a very easy thing to do, with practice, when it is known that the left hand could be freed. The sitter No. 9, whose left hand was bound to the right hand of the medium and to the arm of the chair, was frequently requested to place his right hand upon the handkerchief over the medium's mouth, and while this was done the "independent" whistling was produced at some distance from the medium, conclusively proving independent action.

It is idle to charge the medium in these actions with a tricky "secondary personality" of her own. Either she was

deliberately and consciously cheating, or the work was that of "spirit control." There is no need to talk of a mythical, subconscious or tricky "secondary personality" to account for the manifestation. The only satisfactory explanation of these "controls" is to put them down for exactly what they claim to be, viz., spirit beings.

It is quite reasonable to suppose that this Red Indian, "Black Cloud," had the same weaknesses as are frequently to be found amongst mankind, *i.e.*, a desire to play upon the credulity of his fellow-creatures, not for financial gain, but for something which is quite as real to him, viz., praise.

It is also evident from the test sittings that when the medium was tied in her chair, whistling and singing voices, though still slightly above her head, were lower than in the general run of the ordinary séances, which would suggest that during the ordinary séances, when the medium was not tied in her chair, she was standing. Whether it was easier for the "controls" to work with the medium standing it is difficult to say, but it seems to me that it was the duty of "Black Cloud" to have informed us that he preferred to use the medium standing.

Here we have a good example of that curious intermixture of what seems genuine and artificial psychic manifestation, which is so frequently found in mediumship, and leads to so much misunderstanding and confusion of thought. There is no doubt that these "controls" set out to procure as marvellous a spectacle as they can, by genuine psychic means, and only adopt artificial means when there is lack of power or suitable conditions to produce genuine phenomena. The hostile opponent reading this account may reason that as part of the phenomena is acknowledged to be artificial, the other part quoted as genuine may also be so, the only difference being that the explanation of the latter has not been found out. He is quite welcome to his conclusions, which are not unnatural, and it is only by personal and careful experiment that such an opinion can be proved erroneous.

With regard to the playing of the tambourine, it was quite impossible for me to say whether this was manipulated by a materialized hand, or by a psychic cord extension, or by the physical hand of the medium, as there is no conclusive evidence as to how it was produced. If the tambourine was manipulated by the medium's left hand during the rope-tying process, it

is quite possible that her physical hand manipulated it throughout the séance.

I am of the opinion that the physical hand was probably the means by which the tambourine was played on many occasions. We did not receive any imprint of a materialized hand upon the pads of paper throughout the whole of the test sittings, which seemingly would have been quite a simple matter if a materialized hand were used. If the materialized hand could handle the tambourine, it could touch the pad and make an impression on the paper.

Upon several occasions, however, "independent" hands of some sort seemed to have been produced, especially as testified by one sitter, who states that he passed his hand through the hand that held the tambourine; also there is the case of the "Pansy" "control," when small hands would sometimes manipulate the records. These I have felt in the darkness on many occasions, and they seemed from their touch to be similar in size to those of a child. As anyone can be easily deceived in the darkness regarding size, I am not prepared to say that I am fully convinced they were really small hands. These hands usually touched the back of mine, but if any ordinary hand uses say, three fingers and taps lightly in the darkness, it is very difficult to say whether it is the touch of a large or a small hand. If these hands of the "Pansy" "control" were really materialized hands, I cannot understand why they failed to imprint themselves on the pad, for if the handling of records was possible, and the changing of gramophone needles, it seems to me it was quite as easy a matter to make an impression upon paper. At other times sitters testified to a powerful hand, like that of a strong man, touching them on various occasions. Miss Besinnet's own hands were particularly soft and of ordinary size. The question arises, "If a face can be transformed, can hands also be made expressive of the personality controlling the medium?" There are records from the mediumship of others, that this is possible, satisfactory proofs having been provided that both expansion and contraction of a limited kind may take place.

WRITING ON LETTER PADS.

The writing on the pads which usually took place towards the close of the "general" sittings may, or may not, have been done by "independent" hands. "Black Cloud,"

when questioned, asserted that the writing was "independent." During all the "general" sittings I never received any evidence that the hand was other than that of the medium, with the exception of one case, as mentioned in test séance, No. 5. While the writing proceeded, the medium would sometimes give her right hand to the sitter on her right, but it is not a difficult matter for the left hand to be used for writing, and this was always free. Upon one or two occasions, I am told, both hands of the medium were held during the writing, but I doubt very much if we can accept this as a genuine test, in view of the smartness of our "Black Cloud" "control," who could very easily have written on the pad before the experiment, and when asked to produce independent writing while the medium's hands were held, it was quite possible for a movement of the medium's elbow upon the table or the pad to reproduce the sound in imitation of writing, and, later, to produce the previously written paper as the work accomplished while held. The written messages were often of an evidential character, and were, in my opinion, produced by the physical hand of the medium under the guidance of one of her "controls."

The writing produced in test sitting No. 5 provided proof of "independent" psychic mechanism, unless it is believed that the medium or her control drew towards her from the centre of the table the pencil and pad and wrote upon the latter the two brief letters there produced by the use of her own hands working through the network.

The test sittings supplied evidence that when the medium was tied to the chair, the faces were shown immediately in the chair, about the position where the medium's face would be, whereas in the ordinary séances, when she was free to move from her chair, the faces were brought over the centre of the table towards the sitters. The objection also that "Black Cloud" made to the phosphorescent "slates" would lead us to suppose that these luminous "slates" would reveal too much of the medium's face, head and shoulders, as it is not generally found that the phosphorescent light produced by these is detrimental to the phenomena.

There is abundant evidence provided in test sitting No. 5 that some independent psychic projection was used to lift the trumpet and tambourine while the medium was enclosed within the cage.

DEDUCTIONS.

From the above careful experiments under test conditions I have arrived at the conclusion that Miss Besinnet provided satisfactory proofs of the following :—

- Genuine Phenomena.* Independent singing voices.
 Independent whistling.
 Independent speaking.
 Independent movement of objects.
 Psychic lights.
 Materialized drapery.
 Clairvoyance.
 Facial muscular "transfiguration."
- Doubtful Phenomena.* Ectoplastic faces.
 Materialized hands.
 "Independent" writing.
 "Independent" trumpet voices.
- Artificial Phenomena.* Rope Tying.
 Tambourine Playing.

The writing of this report has been no easy task in view of the fact that many scores of members and friends have received striking proofs of spirit manifestation through the mediumship of Miss Besinnet. These experiences have been to them very sacred, and the report will read, I fear, somewhat cold and formal, and some deductions contained therein will probably be repudiated by many, in whose minds the question will surely arise, "Was I deluded in believing that the face I saw was that of my loved one, and that the smile of recognition that played upon the features was due to a trick?" Let not your heart be troubled. You know the evidence you have received; stand by that. The face of the medium was in all probability controlled by your deceased friend, and not by an impersonating spirit foisting upon you a trick presentation. If my report leads you to infer that it was otherwise, it has failed to accomplish its purpose.

The report is an analysis of the phenomena produced, and may, in some respects, be likened to that of a surgical operation. Many do not desire to inspect too closely the phenomena of psychic manifestation, but had this important work been undertaken by intelligent students 2,000 years ago, the Western world would have understood something of the nature of that body which the noble Founder of the Christian Church pre-

mented to His followers after His death, and much wrangling and misunderstanding would have been saved.

The dusty volumes of printed sermons which have come to us, right down through the centuries, upon this subject, are little better than so much waste-paper. They have served no useful end, because they are founded upon idle speculations and unverifiable statements made by earnest but unenlightened mortals.

The officials and members of the College are deeply indebted to Miss Besinnet for her excellent work. She cheerfully undertook a difficult task in so bravely leaving her home and friends to labour on behalf of those who, with the exception of myself, were entire strangers to her. We hope that she may grant us the advantage of her services again in the near future, so that we may still further continue the investigation of her remarkable gifts.

In view of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's early departure on a visit to the United States, a proof of the above article was submitted to him, and the following reply was received, which we have pleasure in publishing.

Many other letters as to recognitions are, as has been stated, in our possession, but the following must suffice for the moment (*Editor's Note*).

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I have read the report of Mr. J. Hewat McKenzie, and should be glad if I might, on the strength of four sittings with Miss Besinnet—one of them in my own home—add a small note to it. Let me say at once how much I admire the honesty and sympathy and knowledge which are shown in this document, with the insight which perceives that because all things are not exactly as we would have them, that does not prove the medium to be a cheat, nor does it invalidate the supernatural character of the phenomena. No doubt by such a report we give material to our opponents, who will use it in the familiar fashion with no regard at all to our qualifications, quoting all our admissions, but suppressing all our claims. None the less I am convinced that an unflinching honesty is our only course, and that our difficulties as well as our successes should be frankly published.

On the whole, my own experiences, and those of my wife, tally very well with the findings of the Committee. We have the same absolute confidence in Miss Besinnet's personal character, the same

assurance of the reality of her trance, and the same doubt as to the face value of some of the phenomena. We are both very clear, however, that Mr. McKenzie's report is unduly conservative on one point. He has naturally been affected by the fact that the faces which he has seen have not been convincing, and could have been produced by muscular change in the medium's own face. I cannot be too emphatic in my assertion that in several cases which came under our notice this was entirely impossible as an explanation. There were certain faces which I may call neutral, resembling the wax models of a hairdresser's window, but in three cases, that of my mother, of my wife's mother, and of my nephew, the likeness was absolutely startling, and was seen so clearly and so coolly, that I could take my oath upon it in any Court of Law. My mother's type of face was remarkable, and there could not be the slightest question that it was a life-like reproduction. The same applies to the others. These were quite different in character to the neutral ones already mentioned.

As to whether these faces were independent materializations, or whether they were ectoplastic masks built over the face of the medium, is a matter of detail. I can only swear with the most absolute certainty that they bore no relation to the medium's features, and that they were living presentments of the dead. In the case of my mother it seemed to me that the face was tilted back at an angle which would be impossible for the physical face of the medium. I have wondered, therefore, whether the medium's etheric body may have sometimes been the mould, since we cannot argue that because she sometimes projected her own face, this was necessarily the case in every instance. I do not insist upon the point, for in the utter absorption caused by so wonderful a sight one might carry away a false impression as to the angle at which it was presented.

I cannot agree with Mr. McKenzie's estimate of this miracle being the "least important part," nor do I think that he would have said so had he shared the thrill of recognition. It is an impersonal thing that ectoplasm should form rods, should raise objects, and should obey directions. But it is a sacred and personal thing when our eyes rest upon the dead once more, and when we find notes signed by their intimate and private pet names lying afterwards upon the table. That must always be the consummation and the fine flower of all phenomena, and it is a question whether all the rest was not a device for obtaining a proper atmosphere and state of mind for the final display.

A. CONAN DOYLE.

WINDLESHAM,
CROWBOROUGH.

March 14th, 1922.

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY.

By Major R. E. E. Spencer.*

DURING the past three years I have been permitted to come into contact with varied phenomena, particularly in connection with photographic experiments, produced apparently by the action of some force or power other than normal, and I venture to put before my readers a theory as to the method by which it seems possible that some of the results I mention may have been produced.

The experiments I shall refer to were made in connection with effects upon sensitive films supported either by glass, celluloid or paper, and the results therefrom cannot be accounted for by normal explanation. The fullest details of each experiment have been recorded, and every care taken to render fraud, conscious or unconscious, impossible.

I will state my theory first, and then endeavour to give reasons for deducing my conclusions, but before I do so, and in order that any reference I may make may be better understood, and that the intense seriousness of the matter to me may be realized, I will ask permission to make a more or less personal statement.

Beyond having slightly studied the question of Spiritualism some twenty-five years ago, I was practically without knowledge of the subject until the past few years. My mother died in June, 1916, and in November of the same year, my second son was killed in air action in France. A relative, a great uncle, died in 1876, but not until the end of 1917 did any investigations or experiments relating to the question of survival of personality, and the possibility of the communication with such personalities, take place at my home, as we were entirely unaware that any members of my family possessed the qualities that are apparently necessary for anything of that nature to occur. After it was accidentally discovered

* NOTE.—Major R. E. E. Spencer is one of the most careful students of Psychic Science to-day. He has devoted much time to experimental study of the problem of Psychic Photography, and it is peculiarly fitting that a record of such valuable private experiments should precede accounts of work done by the so-called professional mediums, which will appear later in the "Transactions."

that such qualities did exist, many recorded experiments were carried out, chiefly through table movements, taps upon pieces of furniture in various rooms, and later through automatic writing.

In 1919 the younger of my two surviving sons was demobilized and returned home, when it was found that a greater amount of phenomena took place if he was present, amongst them being the affection of sensitive films when held in his hands or in my own.

Later, definite instructions were given to us by automatic writing above the signature, "John Hewlitt" (a name entirely unknown to any of us), who, we were informed, had been a photographer when living on this earth. Detailed instructions relating to static electrical experiments were also given to us by the same method. It is, however, with the photographic experiments that I wish to deal.

From very careful examination of the plates affected, it seemed as though hints were being given to us as to the method followed in the production of the results, and from these hints I came to the conclusion that "*something*" was being placed upon the surface of our films, and it was by the use of this "*something*" that the effects which we could not explain were obtained. I therefore suggest that the operators on the other side prepare a psychic representation of whatever they wish to produce upon our plates by building it up with a substance possibly similar to the plasm referred to by the late Dr. Crawford, Dr. Schrenck Notzing and Mde. Bisson—the image of this built-up object is impressed upon a psychic transparency, which transparency is in its turn superimposed upon our sensitive films. Some kind of radiant or form of vibration is then caused to pass through the psychic transparency, and this radiant acts upon the silver salts in the films, similarly to X-Rays, so that a latent image can be developed out in the usual way.

I do not suggest that this method is invariably followed when psychic pictures are produced upon sensitive films, but I am inclined to believe that it is always so when no camera is introduced. Possibly even when a camera is used the system I have indicated is sometimes followed. The idea of such a method being adopted, though it occurred to me when studying the results of our experiments, is, of course, by no means a novel one, and my reasons for advocating it are:—

1. It is obvious that something has protected portions of the surface of the films, as all parts are not evenly affected.

2. Either a focussed image of (in most cases a face) has been projected on to the film, or that image has been printed through some sort of a transparency. If the former had been the case and light as we know it had been used, the rays of that light would have been visible to us. Also when a plate, in a closed dark slide, was used, nothing could have been impressed upon its "surface" by the use of ordinary light, that is, at the time of making the experiment, and it must be remembered that the automatic writings specified the times at which the experiments were to be carried out, and gave the necessary exposures.

3. In many cases plates and sheets of bromide paper taken from my own locked-up stock were used. In some experiments these plates and sheets were the first taken out of new, unopened packages, bought and opened by myself immediately before the experiments were made, and after the dark room door had been locked.

4. In some instances no one but myself was present in the room.

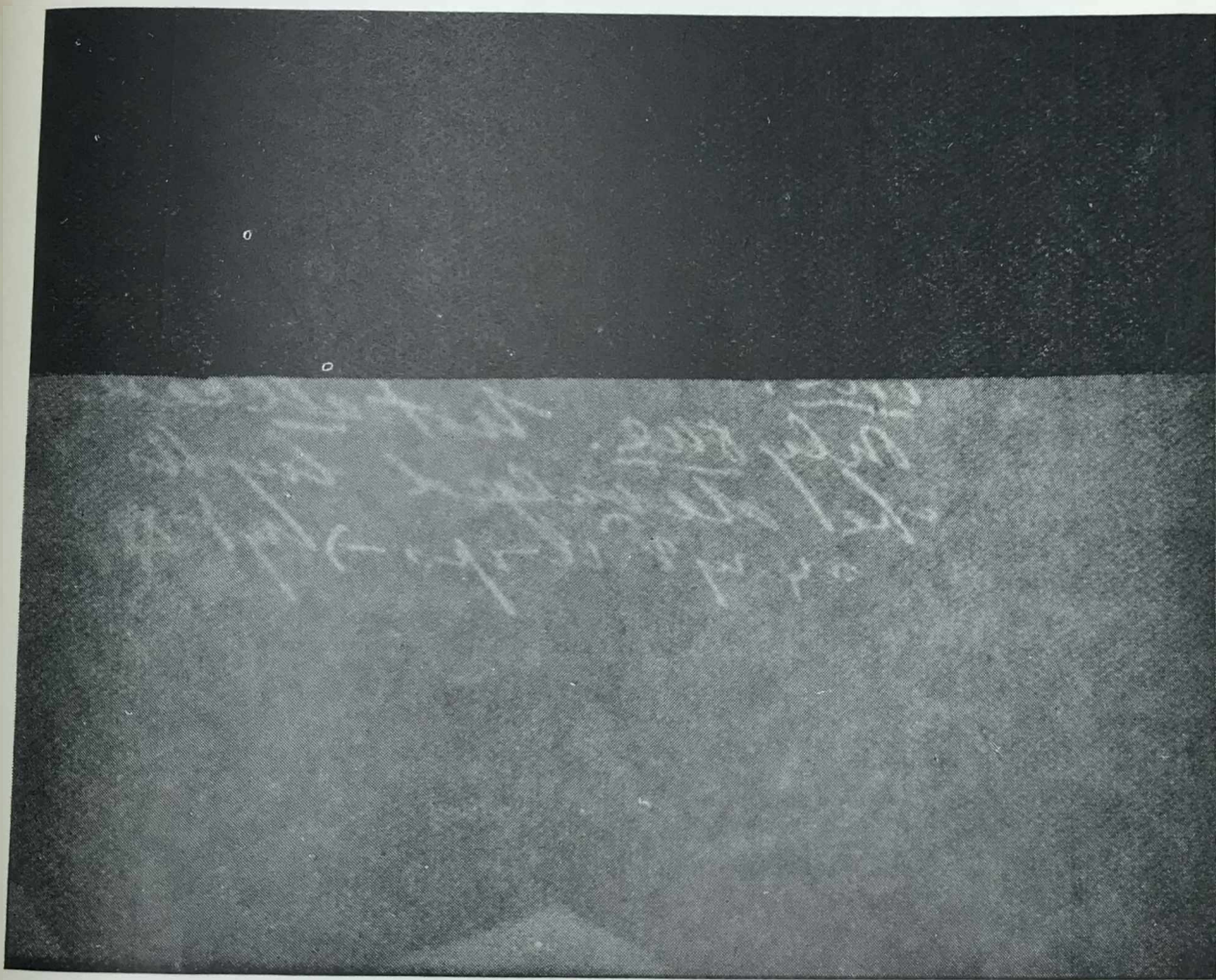
5. The developed image upon a sheet of bromide paper, when photographed with considerable magnification through a microscope, shows a distinct *structure* which is quite foreign to that of any normal photographic result that I have examined in the same way. I have found traces of this structure in psychic negatives or prints lent to me, which were obtained by other sensitive people living in different parts of England, and it is significant to find a structure having a similar appearance recorded in Dr. Schrenck Notzing's book.

6. Professional photographers who have examined the plates have, in most cases, been unable to explain how the results have been produced. I admit that it is possible by normal means to produce a few of them, but if the conditions that obtained at the time of the experiments are followed, this is not the case.

7. The writing of the photographically produced messages is the handwriting of my great uncle, and the signatures are his. The words are, with the exception of two messages, written in mirror writing—the subject is one of great privacy, and is in relation to some property left me in his will, mentioning facts and figures known only to myself. I should not be

able to show these messages (they are all originals), to anyone were they written in direct writing, owing to their private nature, but as the words are written backwards, this is possible.

8. In one case rather a long letter was produced on two sheets of bromide paper, held by myself separately for sixty seconds, in accordance with the instructions received, one immediately following the other. On both sheets the *same* letter appears, but in one instance the writing is direct, the other is in mirror writing. The position of the words is the same in both, and the outline of whatever they were written



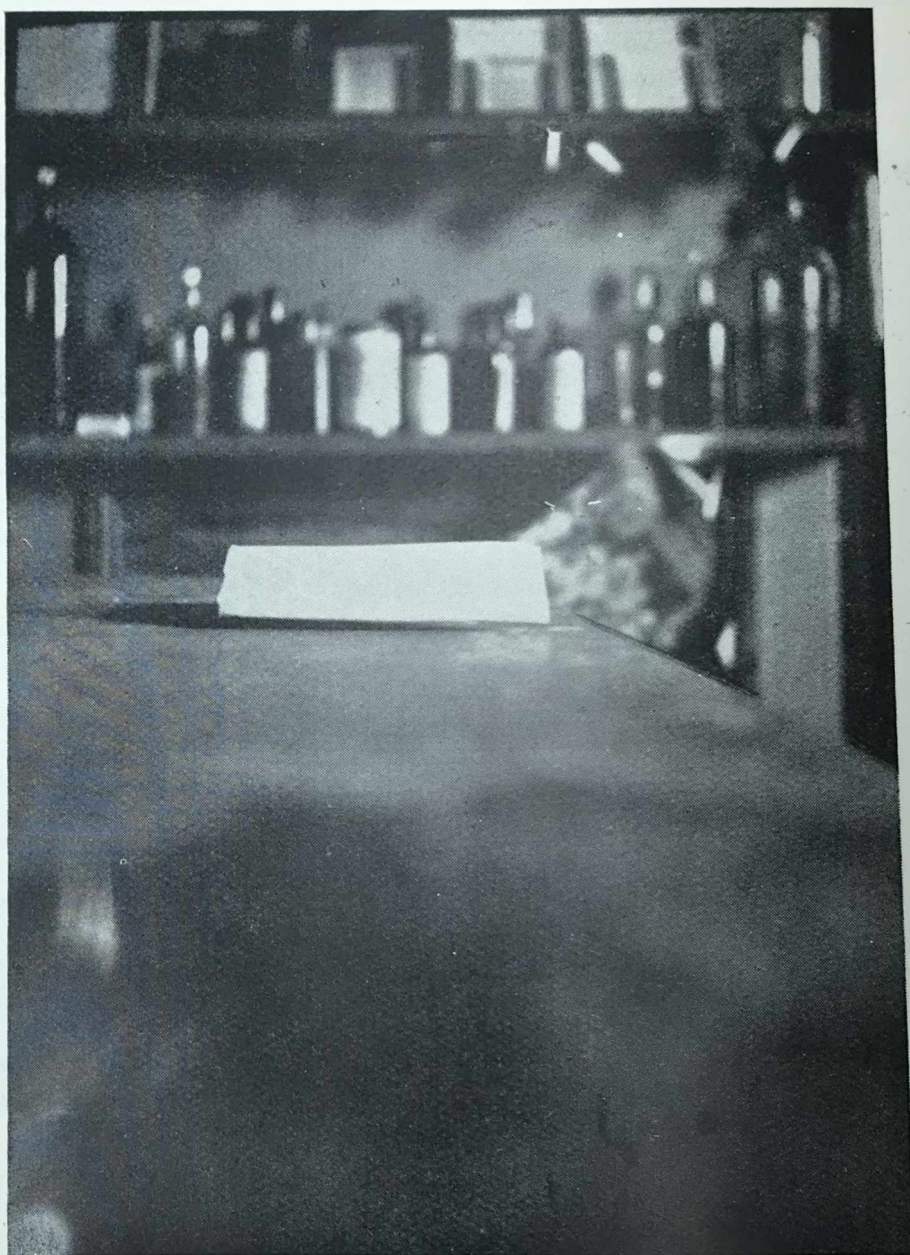
No. 1. Print showing portion of original bromide sheet, held in hands, on which a letter was received.

upon (I call it the psychic transparency) is absolutely identical. Inset in one letter is a very small portrait of my boy who was killed in France. There is no doubt whatever but that in this case a transparency was used from which the photographic letter was produced, and this transparency was reversed upon one sheet of bromide. There are but two explanations possible as to its origin.

- (1) That it originated from a supernormal source.
- (2) That I made it myself.

9. In one experiment the instructions stated that, as well as a sheet of bromide paper being held in my hands for a period of ten seconds, a plate was to be exposed in a camera for the same period at the same time, and a photograph taken of the operation of the bromide sheet being held.

The *bromide sheet* (plate 1) contained another letter from my great uncle, referring to a conversation that had taken



No. 2. Print from original plate, showing bromide sheet and substance, and background, but the person who is holding the sheet in his hands does not appear.

place that morning between my eldest daughter and myself, no other person being present. We had been speculating as to the meaning of two very strange results of another experiment. *The plate* exposed in the camera at the same time (plate 2) showed the sheet of bromide paper with something in the nature of a thin substance covering it and projecting

over its edges. The bromide sheet and the "substance" are seen to be floating in the air some distance above the surface of the table I work at, and they cast a shadow upon that table. There is no trace of my hands which held the bromide sheet, or myself, to be seen, but the shelves, dishes and bottles, which were directly behind me, are clearly shown, and also cast shadows. The exposure was ten seconds, and there was absolutely no light in the room but the red light from my developing lamp (a lamp I have used for more than twenty years). The plate was the first one taken by myself from a box, bought by myself and never opened till the door of the dark room was locked immediately before the experiment.

I regard this result as one produced by the operators on the other side, in order to show the actual process of the system they had followed and hinted at, in operation, and they had arranged the details of the picture upon the camera plate so that all the points were clearly brought out, showing the psychic transparency actually *in situ* upon the sheet of bromide paper.

I was anxious that whatever resulted should be as evidential as possible, and therefore purchased a new box of plates, which box I kept locked up, and did not open till the dark room door closed at the time specified for the experiment. I then lit my ordinary red lamp, and took out the top plate from the new box, put it myself in the dark slide, placed the slide in the camera, which I had focussed upon the spot over which I intended to hold the sheet of bromide paper, about five feet from the camera lens. I set the shutter to time, and drew the dark slide myself. The only action that was not performed by myself was that the shutter of the camera was opened by my younger son, upon saying "Right," and closed by him when I had counted the tenth second aloud. Everything in the room could be seen distinctly by the red light of the lamp. These details were followed absolutely, and the dark slide (a single one) closed and removed from the camera by myself.

I at once developed both the bromide sheet and the plate, no one leaving or entering the room till both were fixed. The bromide sheet contained a letter from my great uncle, signed by him and bearing the double triangle that invariably appears upon his messages. The last line is in strange char-

acters, some of which I am told by the British Museum authorities are Phœnician and Samaritan.

I would draw attention to the following points:—

1. The sheet of bromide, which is mounted in my collection, is whole-plate size, and still shows the square edges as bought from the makers.

2. It is still whole-plate size, therefore it has not been trimmed.

3. The edge of the substance upon it is crinkled and uneven.

4. At the end opposite to that which is crinkled, the substance appears to project beyond the bromide sheet, and is narrower than that sheet.

5. The letter seen upon the original bromide sheet is obviously written upon something narrower than the sheet itself, and this something certainly extends to the full length of the bromide sheet. It might quite well project still further.

6. No living person save myself knew where in the room I intended holding the bromide sheet till after the door was locked, and yet the plate shows the position absolutely correctly. (I mention this point because members of the Royal Photographic Society have stated that the photograph has been produced by flash-light, and a plate has been substituted for the one I myself placed in the camera.)

7. There is not the slightest appearance of my hands or any portion of my person, and all objects that were behind me, as far as the camera lens is concerned, are clearly seen.

8. All the shadows are cast in one direction, and this would appear to be from my head, and solar plexus, or chief nervous centre.

9. A similar plate exposed in the same camera, in approximately the same position, for six times the length of exposure, using the only electric light in the room, produced a very thin negative of a totally different appearance to the photograph.

Those are my reasons for stating that I believe the process followed by the operators on the other side in these cases to have been:—

First.—The production of a psychically built-up object or picture.

Second.—The manufacture of a psychic negative of that object.

Third.—The passing of a radiant, possibly obtained from the person of the sensitive, through the psychic negative after the latter has been placed upon the surface of our sensitive films.

That something is placed above our films I am certain of, because I have exposed bromide sheets to electric light, and upon development there has been no action whatever.

That an invisible radiant is sometimes used, I am equally sure of, because I have exposed bromide sheets to darkness, and yet, when developed, the paper has turned black all over.

The above may perhaps be regarded as my most important experiment, but some particulars of other results may be of interest to my readers interested in photography.

"*The Aperture.*" I do not call the following matter evidence, because the original plate was one that was taken from a box which had been in my house for some time, and access could have been obtained to it—therefore I cannot state that, to my certain knowledge it had not been tampered with. The plate was bound upon the forehead of my younger son when he went to bed at 11 *p.m.*, and removed when he awoke at 3.30 *a.m.* the following morning. It showed curious markings surrounding an irregular shaped aperture. In most of the examples of supernormal photographs you will notice apertures of various shapes and sizes.

Although the previous experiment, for the reasons stated, cannot be taken as evidence, a second experiment, showing a similar aperture, confirms it sufficiently. The original plate was taken by myself from my locked up stock, and the box containing it was never out of my own hands before, during or after the experiment, until I had fixed it. I should have stated before that all developments and fixing operations relating to these experiments have been performed entirely by myself. The box containing this plate was held closed, in bright electric light, between the hands of three persons at the same moment, for sixty seconds. All left hands were placed below the box and all right hands above it. There appears to be a confusion of outline of more than one aperture, and there are faint radial lines to be seen in the original plate (plate 3). These lines bear a resemblance to lines seen in some of the photographic illustrations of Nasmyth's book upon the moon, and it is

worth noticing that my younger son (one of the three persons experimenting) had been reading that book during the day. I suggest that the photograph may have something to do with his thoughts, but that the clearness may have been interfered with by radiations from the hands or persons of the other two experimenters.



No. 3. An "aperture": from original plate held between the hands.

The plate used in this experiment was also taken from the same box as the first slide, and therefore cannot be taken as evidence for the same reason. The experiment was, however, carried out entirely in my presence, and the instructions for it were given to me by a message being spelt out by taps upon the dark room walls. The aperture is a very curious one, and there are strange markings upon other parts of the plate. Notably a few small, four pointed stars, which when examined under the microscope, appear as though they could be accounted for by some protecting material placed above the sensitive film having been pierced by pressure, some kind of radiant then passing through the minute puncture. In the aperture is a *positive* image of the face of a man (plate 4). The features are still entirely unknown to us, but the name of "John Hewlitt," who in this life was a photographer, has been given by tapped out messages, and all automatically written messages we have received concerning photographic experiments bear the signature of "John Hewlitt." (In passing, it is of much interest to note that the respective handwritings of the various communi-

cators never change. Thus the writing of "John Hewlitt" in February, 1919, is the same as that in his messages of many months later, and this applies in every case.) I have said that the psychic result is a *positive*, therefore there must have existed a negative, psychic or normal, from which this plate was produced. No one of my family has any knowledge of the face at all, and efforts to trace the original have so far failed. The most careful microscopic examination of the plate does not reveal any screen-process marks or structure of any paper, but as I have said, there is clear evidence that something has been placed over the sensitive film, and a radiant of some kind has passed through portions of that "something." During development the parts of the plates affected blackened *very* quickly, and this rapid action I have noticed in *every*



No. 4. Print from the "John Hewlitt" original plate.

psychic plate I have developed, whether a face, a written message, or some other subject has been produced—and whether the psychic experiment has been made at my house by members of my family, or at Crewe, London, or elsewhere. From that fact I think we may say that probably the radiant used has been of the same nature in all places.

On another occasion a plate was exposed upon myself, when sitting reading in my library—nine inches of magnesium ribbon were burnt at seven feet from my chair, the lens of the camera being open the whole time. After the exposure had been made, a sheet of bromide paper was placed in the camera instead of a plate, and exposed to the same length of burning magnesium ribbon, my object being to

ascertain whether the radiant that was used by the operators on the other side would affect the slow bromide paper.

The results of this double experiment seem to show that in this instance only a portion of the psychic transparency was used when the bromide paper was exposed, because, as will be observed, the screened off corner of the plate and the markings upon my head and face do not appear



No. 5. Result on a sheet of bromide paper exposed in camera following the exposure of a plate.

(plate 5). The psychic face is the same in both plate and bromide paper, but the aperture in which it appears, though similar in both cases, is not quite the same.

I deduce from these two results, that the radiant used by the operators is very much quicker in its action upon a sensitive film than ordinary light, because the psychic portion of

plate and paper is strongly acted on, but the slower bromide paper is not affected by the light from the magnesium ribbon after it has passed through the camera lens.

I also suggest that the corner of the plate was purposely protected by the operators to show that they could place some substance upon the sensitive film that was impervious to ordinary light.

The face is so far unrecognized by us, but some who have seen it consider it to be Paulhan, a French aviator, and a reproduction of an illustration in a book. There are, however, no process screen marks to be seen in the psychic photograph.

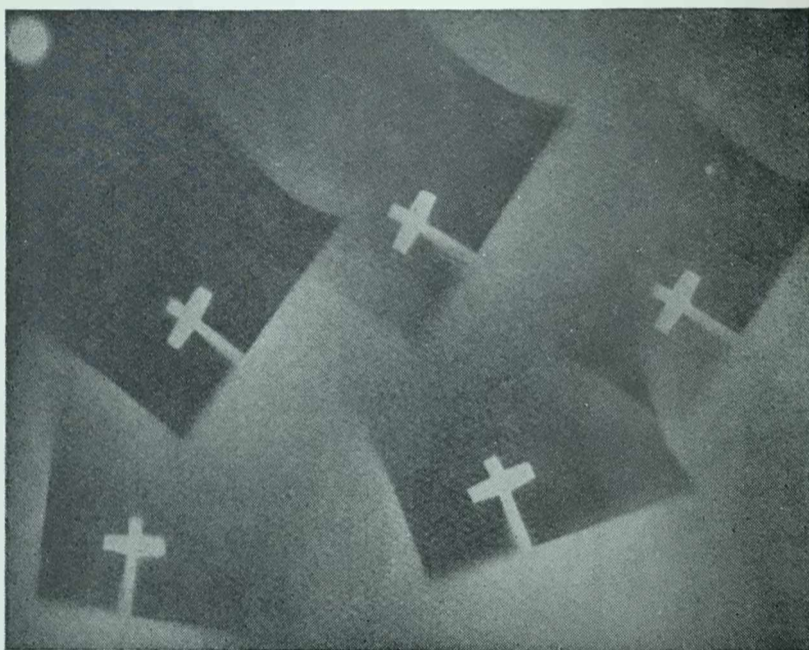
On the 22nd January, 1919, my younger surviving son was unwell, and had gone to bed early. Upon my going to his room after dinner I found him in a very curious condition—half asleep, and half awake. He told me he thought if I tried an experiment with a plate alone, I should obtain some result; I therefore took a plate from my locked up stock and went alone to the dark room, locked the door and held the plate, uncovered, in both hands, in the dark for sixty seconds; this was in accordance with suggestions from my younger son. I at once developed it, and a portrait appeared. Now there is a very interesting point in connection with this photograph. It is an exact copy, and to the same scale, as a photograph taken of my second son when he was once home on leave. The man in the street would, without doubt, say that fraud had taken place in its production, and had the plate used not been from my own private stock, I admit that he would have had good reason for saying so. However, you must take my word for the truth of what I have told you, and as the next instance is a test one, and confirms the above, the opinion of the sceptic does not concern me.

A plate was supplied and marked by a friend of mine—Col. J.—who brought it to my house, and with his wife was present during the experiment.

The instructions were given by a message spelt out by taps, and the plate (which was of a size I have never used) was marked by Col. J., and placed in a whole plate dark slide by him, the dark slide having been first carefully examined. The slide was then held by each of us present in turn—Col. J., his wife, my younger son and myself—all standing round in a circle with no table or any piece of furniture in front of us. The plate was at once developed,

and a picture of a Scotch terrier sitting upon a tree trunk came out. The photograph appears to be in a sort of frame, and is an exact reproduction of one taken by my eldest daughter when doing war work in London during the early part of the war. Although the picture may exist somewhere (we have never found it), had any ordinary light been used for its production during the experiment such light must have been visible to us; and that the plate is the one supplied by Col. J. is proved by his initials appearing on it.

Unmounted copies of the human photograph of the dog had been given by my daughter to her hospital matron, and it is thought that she placed one of them in a frame, and that the psychic picture has been printed through a psychic transparency prepared from that framed photograph.



No. 6. Symbolic result: From original plate.

A plate was placed in the dark slide, and the slide, closed, was laid upon the centre of a small round table in my library. Four of us—my wife, my younger son, and daughter and myself—knelt round the table, placing our hands upon its surface but not touching the dark slide, for the space of one minute. We then used the alphabet, and by taps carried on a conversation with the intelligence of my late son. I then took the slide to the dark room, and developed it. It would seem that a psychic transparency had been prepared, and moved to five different positions on the surface of the plate, as the crosses are absolutely identical in each case. I believe them to be symbolic, and to represent the number of intelligences present, namely, four in this

existence, and one from the next world. The evidence is again clear that "*something*" had been placed upon the surface of the sensitive plate (plate 6).

A packet of six sheets of bromide paper was held as a pack of cards in both of my hands in the dark for sixty seconds. The first sheet was blank, the second contained a psychic result, the third was blank, the fourth and fifth showed two different portraits of my late son, and the sixth a small irregular black mark near the centre. Upon examining these bromide sheets under a microscope I found that the second showed a distinct structure of what I will call "Threads and Spores," and there seemed to be cells containing a substance of varying opacity.



No. 7. A Micro-Photograph showing "Threads and Spores" effect.

The accompanying photograph shows the result (plate 7). The opacity increases at the edges till it is sufficient to prevent whatever radiant was used from passing through it, and the bromide paper is unaffected. I suggest that this result was produced to give us another hint that the process followed was that of placing a psychic transparency upon our sensitive films and that the structure of the transparency was purposely shown.

I trust I have not wearied my readers with descriptions relating to so much personal experience. If I have been able to interest anyone in the practical side of psychic photography, and to some extent indicate the lines upon which experiments can be carried out, I shall feel repaid for the time spent in gathering and recording my experiences.

GENERAL LAWS UNDERLYING TRANCE COMMUNICATION.

By the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas.*

THAT our friends who have passed from earth into the next life should be able to converse with us in words is capable of experimental proof. The delight and wonder of it remain when the first surprise and novelty have passed away. To many of us our friends have been able to give such manifold evidence of their identity and recollection of earth memories that no room for doubt remains, and we are inspired by a desire to bring within the reach of others an experience which has meant so much to us. But it is not easy to answer some of the questions arising from our experience, and we may easily mistake the inferences to be drawn from apparent misstatements, failures of memory, and the silence of spirit friends upon matters about which we expected to hear them speak. A study of the laws underlying communication will enable us to better understand our experiences, and make it possible to show others the direction in which may be sought the answer to their questions and doubts.

When the incredulity with which many approach the subject yields to evidence, it is often replaced by an unwarranted assumption that spirits can say anything they wish, and give whatever evidence may be asked for. Some apparently even suppose that their friends have become omniscient, and can tell all mysteries, not only those relating to the past but also to the future. These forms of credulity cannot but result in disappointment. The carefully garnered fruits of experience, whether our own or that of other students, are the best corrective and guide in an inquiry where there is so little known and so much to learn. The time will come when what is now but a series of tracks into the unknown, made by pioneers, will be a broad high road wherein all may walk.

* The Revd. C. Drayton Thomas, who is a well-known clergyman in the Wesleyan Church, and a Psychic student of many years' standing, has had a unique and privileged opportunity during the past two years for sustained investigation of the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard. He can therefore speak with marked authority as to the methods employed in trance mediumship. Mr. Thomas' "Times" and "Book" tests are widely known, and a book on the subject from his pen is on the eve of publication.

The following hints about the method of communication employed in trance will throw some light upon the problems arising where different means are used, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, inspirational writing or even table-messages. Trance communication is perhaps the most complicated and the most efficient of the methods at present known; but the very complications which make for efficiency when essential conditions are present, render it liable to checks and imperfections when one or more such conditions are lacking. A poor trance-sitting is likely to yield less result than a good table-sitting, although when both are at their best the trance method is incomparably superior.

Let us assume that we are studying the working of a sitting in which a spirit friend gives messages through the lips of a sensitive in trance. These messages pass through two intervening minds, in either of which they may be modified, so that it is not surprising if the resulting spoken message by the human lips is less clear-cut than when it was formed in the mind of the communicator. The first intervening mind is that of the "control," who receives the message from the spirit communicator and passes it on to the entranced sensitive; the latter catches the thought and expresses it audibly to the sitter.

It is not necessary to enter here upon a discussion as to the exact nature of a "control"; it will suffice to assume that this is a spirit who by practice has acquired facility in passing messages into the mind of the sensitive in such manner as enables the latter to speak them aloud. There is sufficient evidence that practice is required, and that "controls" differ in ability; by the term "a good trance medium" is implied a sensitive whose fellow-worker in the unseen has become capable of receiving and transmitting messages with fair accuracy; it implies co-operation between the one seen and the other unseen.

How does the communicator make the "control" understand what he wishes to transmit? I think we are safe in assuming that the method is "telepathic." We may not be able to explain what exactly telepathy is, but can in a measure grasp the idea conveyed by the word. We are informed that it is one of the usual methods of transmitting thought among the inhabitants of the spirit world, and that therefore the "control" is familiar with it.

We have now to consider how the message reaches the sensitive. And here we encounter our chief difficulty in understanding the actual procedure; for the sensitive, being in trance, is in a condition sufficiently different from our normal consciousness to present a problem which we are far from unravelling with present knowledge. This problem I do not here attempt to explain, it is sufficient to state that the condition of the sensitive is one of *heightened receptivity*, and that the "control" probably telepaths the required message, which is understood and translated into words by the sensitive.

Thus the message has passed from the communicator to the "control," from the "control" to the sensitive, from the sensitive to the sitter. Both "control" and sensitive in turn have had to receive and then to transmit. It is a double process. To these double processes we may look for most of those errors and limitations which bewilder the inexperienced sitter. It is not necessary always to assume that errors are due to lapse of memory on the part of the communicator; they may easily have origin elsewhere.

We will now consider the difficulties facing the communicator and the "control"; afterwards touching on the parts played by the sensitive and the sitter.

The communicator's task. We may assume that were the communicator and the "control" together in the normal conditions of the spirit world they would have no difficulty in making their exact meaning understood. But they have for the time being entered into conditions which are to them abnormal; they assert this, and it seems reasonable to suppose it could not be otherwise. Into their attempts to explain what these abnormal conditions are we need not enter; they are perhaps comparable to the limitations experienced by a clairvoyant who is using faculties seldom employed, and which are but partially under control of the will.

Both communicator and "control" have in some degree re-entered earthly conditions, and thereby partially taken on limitations incident to that state. The "control" especially has come into a close relationship with the sensitive and may be considered, for the time being, as almost an earth person. Communicators may find it easy to transmit *impressions* to persons on earth, while finding it difficult to transmit *words* to them. It is the latter which the "control" has now to do. I have occasionally had long messages, given a few

words at a time, which have every appearance of having been transmitted from dictation ; but it is not often that messages are thus received. On the contrary it seems to be a transmission of *thought* rather than words, the words being finally chosen in the mind of the sensitive at the sitter's end of this line of communication.

The spirit friend may come to the sitting prepared with many things to say, but when he has once commenced transmitting them to the "control" his attention must be focussed upon this task, so much so, indeed, that I suspect he not infrequently fails to notice in what form the message is emerging at the sitter's end, and thus some unsuitable word is permitted to pass uncorrected which blurs the sense of the whole. It by no means follows that he will correct a mistake which he happens to notice ; for experience has probably taught him that in attempting this he may make matters worse by confusing the "control." He may elect to let it pass in the hope of partially correcting it by subsequent repetition ; alternatively he may find that it is impossible to make the correction desired.

That there is sometimes a difficulty, perhaps an impossibility, in making his meaning clear to the "control" is, I think, certain, and this particularly the case when he wishes to give some special word or name. A word or a name is an arbitrary symbol, and when it cannot be expressed visually or audibly there must be difficulty in transmitting it. Consequently, if a sitter demands that a name be given, there is frequently an attempt to indicate the name by a roundabout description, which is a little irritating to those who have no conception of the difficulties which the communicator is trying to surmount.

The temporary condition of the communicator's memory is yet another possible source of bewilderment. Examples of the marvellous retentiveness and accuracy of this memory are frequent, and these make yet more conspicuous those instances where there is failure to give some simple recollection for which we ask. As a critic once remarked, the things which the communicators fail to say are as surprising as the unexpected things they succeed in giving. A somewhat long experience of trance sittings with the same communicator has convinced me that if a fact is not recollected this forgetfulness is only temporary ; that the fact is within his memory becomes evident when it is alluded to on some later occasion,

or while some other method of communication is being employed. I incline to believe that just as with us there are conditions—say, bodily fatigue—which interfere with recollection at the moment of things well within memory, so, during the conditions of a sitting, communicators are not able to command their normal access to the storehouse of their memory. Hence a sudden question may fail to draw the appropriate reply.

The task of the "control." This consists of reception and transmission. If aware that a message has been imperfectly understood the "control" may ask to have it repeated, but when unaware of the error will, of course, pass it on in an inaccurate form. There is the further possibility of not clearly realizing when the first message is completed, and so uniting it with a second in a manner which entirely spoils both. I have previously alluded to the difficulty of catching some one particular word or name to which the context gives little aid. There are thoughts which, for reasons we do not understand, the communicator tries to express in symbol or visually; herein lies a fruitful source of error; for the "control" may transmit the supposed interpretation and not the symbol itself. In many cases the "control" is less likely to interpret the symbol with accuracy than would be the sitter. It is to be desired that a "control" should state the symbol as seen when giving its supposed interpretation, for this halves the responsibility and doubles the chance of correct interpretation. Akin to symbol is dumb-show; I have known instances where the "control" remarks that the communicator is doing so-and-so, and then hazards the probable meaning. We are at a loss to know why the dumb-show is necessary; possibly it is resorted to when direct transmission of thought or words is found to be impracticable.

The part played by the sensitive. Notwithstanding some faint light thrown upon the trance condition by experiments in hypnotism we are largely in the dark as to the exact changes produced by trance in the relation between the sensitive's mind and brain. Nor do we know more about the temporary relationship between these and the "control." Avoiding technicalities we may say that the sensitive's brain and mind are in a condition which renders them specially susceptible for the time being to the thoughts of the "control."

It will simplify the explanation if we assume that the

"control" transmits to the sensitive in much the same manner as the communicator transmitted the message to the "control"; for I think it would be misleading to picture the latter in full possession of the sensitive's brain.

The personality of the sensitive and his habitual thoughts, as well as the mental preoccupations immediately preceding the sitting, all have their influence. The "control" is in some very real way limited by the sensitive's mind; what cannot be expressed on one occasion may be easily given on another, and it would seem that certain types of thought run more smoothly with one sensitive than they would do with others. It is the customary explanation of a failure that the message "cannot be got through"; yet this failure is sometimes turned into a success later in the same sitting. It was once remarked (either by the communicator or the "control") that they often found the brain would not "take" a certain line of thought, and that they had to leave it and go on with something else, then, later in the sitting, if they noticed that the former thought was beginning to "take," they went back to that subject. One thinks of the way in which, when we wish to write upon a certain theme, one's brain may seem eager to work upon a quite different subject, and will do so easily, whereas if we insist upon following our first choice, the brain works heavily and badly.

The part played by the sitter. There is some reason for believing that when we are unwell, weary or distracted in mind, our condition acts detrimentally upon the success of the sitting.

During the first few conversations it may be wise to leave the choice of subjects to the communicators, but, later, when the sitter has felt his way, he should exercise some discretion in suggesting new topics if he observes a tendency to dwell too long upon one thing. Also he might remember that there are probably several of his friends present and the "control" may not realize with which of them he most wishes to be in communication. The "control" will naturally take messages from the one who seems most insistent, or best able to make his presence conspicuous; some indication from the sitter may be helpful in ensuring that the one he most desires to hear from is at least given a chance to speak.

To sum up:—Conditions depend upon Sitter and Sensitive on this side, Communicator and "Control" on the other.

The Sensitive

May limit success by giving insufficient "power."

May allow his conscious thought to interfere when the trance is insufficiently deep to prevent it.

Much depends upon his physical and mental condition.

His normal intellect will set limits beyond which the communications can rarely reach.

The "Control"

May misunderstand the purport of a message received and transmit it wrongly.

May unwittingly unite two separate messages, or blur the sense by using a misleading word.

May fail to catch a name or some important precise word, perhaps giving a wrong one in its place.

May misinterpret something given in symbol or dumb-show.

The spirit communicating

May experience difficulty in making his meaning clear to the "control."

May have to battle with temporary forgetfulness, especially when suddenly asked for name or fact.

May remain unaware of a slip made by the "control," or the sensitive, by which his message is distorted.

We should rather wonder that so many sittings are successful than that some should fail. It is certain that sympathetic understanding of the difficulties to be overcome, and the possible sources of error, will go far to make us more successful than we might otherwise be. It will explain why we do not hear our friend's own voice as of old, and why the phrasing is often different from that used by him in earth life. It will enable us to be more understandingly fair towards the sensitive whose gift is placed at our disposal, but who is powerless to ensure that the sitting shall be a success.

I have said nothing about occasions when a communicator dispenses with the services of the "control" and elects to transmit his messages direct to the sensitive. This is usually most difficult on the first occasion, but a high degree of skill can be attained with practice. Even in its earlier stages what is lost in accuracy is gained in intimacy, and it is a sacred experience when one achieves this renewal of acquaintance with those returning from the other side of death.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE College Quarterly "TRANSACTIONS" is extremely fortunate in securing the services of Mr. F. Bligh Bond as Editor. He has made himself known to a world-wide public by his books, "The Gate of Remembrance," and the "Hill of Vision," in which the story of his collaboration in a series of automatic writings with his friend, "J.A.," constitutes one of the most remarkable of present-day scripts, and should be known by all students of Psychic Science.

Mr. Bligh Bond is also a lecturer of no mean power, and his services in this capacity are in great request in philosophical, ecclesiastical and other circles, which would close their doors to others.

A calm judgment, a wise toleration and a crystal clear sincerity of outlook on all the great region of psychical investigation make Mr. Bligh Bond a most valuable editor for the "TRANSACTIONS," and all readers will welcome his collaboration in this important step.

The next issue of the "TRANSACTIONS" (July) will be largely devoted to an article on "Psychic Photography," specially dealing with the work of the Crewe Circle and of Mrs. Deane. This will be written by the Hon. Principal, J. Hewat McKenzie, and will be illustrated by some remarkable photographs.

Readers who are not College members should order their copies in good time, so that they may not miss this important number.

* * * * *

The College albums contain what is probably the finest collection of psychic photographs in existence. These contain examples by Bournsell, the Crewe Circle, Deane, Vearncombe, and by various American photographers.

A collection is also made of many amateurish attempts obtained at the College classes, or sent in by outsiders for examination. Many of these bear a close resemblance to the mature results of others.

It is seldom appreciated how few persons in the world possess

the gift of Psychic Photography. Only three or four persons in Britain, who are willing to demonstrate publicly, can secure results with any measure of regularity. France and other Continental countries seem to possess no one, and are constantly inviting English mediums to visit them. Dr. Gustave Geley, of the Paris Metapsychical Institute, calls it "an English phenomenon," as it seems to flourish chiefly in Britain and U.S.A. No wonder such a "*rara avis*" is denounced both by outsiders and many insiders as being produced by fraud and trickery; the complaint of those who are firm believers in the genuineness of the phenomena is that the verdict is passed before the Judge has investigated the case. Those who have had the widest experience with the mediums available are the most convinced of their sincerity.

These investigators are not foolish and credulous, but amongst their number are many who are keen photographers, and who know all the methods by which fraudulent results can be secured. The evidence secured by them in both its external and internal aspects is far beyond anything which could be accompanied by such methods.

Sustained scientific research on Psychic Photography is difficult, owing first to the scarcity of mediums, and, second, to the fact that neither the Crewe Circle nor Mrs. Deane are particularly interested in the scientific aspect of the subject. They are much more interested in supplying comfort to a mourner. They instinctively know that as a rule the power flows easily and freely upon them to meet the mourners' need, while in the presence of a casual curiosity or before the often cold advances of the scientific investigator, the forces are chilled and inhibited, and extra strain is realized before a result is obtained. Spontaneity, coupled with an earnest desire to assist someone to whom the medium is attracted, produces the very best result in mediumship. The College which has been so remarkably helped by the gifts of Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton, and Mrs. Deane, has found them ever ready to meet all reasonable demands, though sometimes they feel it impossible to meet the unreasonable demands made by those who have no experience of the delicacy of the conditions surrounding the human instrument—the only instrument we have in psychic science.

Well-developed voice mediums seem to be almost as rare as photographic mediums.

The College is fortunate in having the services of Mrs. Blanche Cooper, who gives excellent satisfaction to many investigators.

Her gift was developed in conjunction with Mrs. Osborne Leonard about two years ago, and after it had reached a certain stage Mrs. Cooper began work at the College. A special group continues a weekly sitting with Mrs. Cooper, for the purpose of sympathetically helping her further development in physical mediumship, and of learning how the voice results are obtained. Some account of the work of this group may be given in a later issue.

"The Revue Metapsychique," the organ of the Paris International Institute, is a most valuable contribution to the literature of the subject. Both in matter and manner it is admirable, and Dr. Gustave Geley, the director of the centre, is to be warmly congratulated on the record of the remarkable series of experiments carried out both in Paris and in Warsaw, with the Polish physical medium, Frank Kluski. Many years ago similar results in securing wax moulds of materialized members were obtained, by a private group in this country, the records of which are extant, but probably none of the moulds is in existence. So does science follow in the footsteps of the humble pioneer.

* * * * *

The utterance of Prof. Chas. Richet before the French Academy of Science seems destined to become historic. The learned Professor has bravely acknowledged his position, in regard to demonstrated facts of psychic science, but withholds any view he may hold as to the origin of these facts.

The strongholds of materialistic science are receiving such sledge-hammer blows from various quarters that resistance cannot much longer be sustained.

Such institutions as the College and other centres provide the ammunition which is used in the onslaught.

COLLEGE INFORMATION.

THE College was opened on April 12th, 1920, as a centre of Instruction, Demonstration and Research in all that relates to the great subject of Psychic Science.

The promoters of the College are J. Hewat McKenzie (Hon. Principal) and Mrs. McKenzie (Hon. Secretary), who are wholly responsible for the organization and upkeep of the work. They have been practical students of the subject for nearly twenty years, and Hewat McKenzie is the author of a widely read book "Spirit Intercourse, its Theory and Practice" (Simpkin Marshall), and of the largely circulated pamphlets, "If a Soldier Die" and "First Steps to Spirit Intercourse."

Their united desire has long been to provide a suitable and well-equipped centre for the practical study of a great subject, which, at the present moment, and inevitably more so in the future, promises to exercise a profound and modifying influence upon science, religion and the general outlook of humanity. This desire has been partially realized by the establishment of the College, and it will be fully attained when the work grows and develops and the College becomes a recognized centre of study and experiment. Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie offer freely to members of the College all the experience gained during years of patient study and investigation, both in Britain and America.

Psychic science, relating as it does to man's soul, or finer body, is so far but little understood by western nations, and the forces which are studied under this title are capable, like other great natural powers, of being grossly misused. By wise instruction and guidance the College seeks to direct and use these forces for the good of mankind, and in this effort the promoters seek the hearty co-operation of the students and all who enter the College doors.

More than any other subject perhaps, the study and practice of psychic science demands from its students a consistently ethical and generous spirit, for in dealing with occult forces and their development, both the virtues and the vices of

humanity are intensified and their influence exercised in a most subtle fashion. All therefore who propose to become earnest students are asked to keep this in view, and within the College, and especially in contact with the sensitives engaged for the work, to place a careful watch on both word and motive. This advice is tendered by experience, both in the interests of the individual and of the science as a whole.

THE AIM OF THE COLLEGE.

The aim of the College is not to enquire whether life continues beyond death, but to demonstrate that it does. Agnostics, sceptics and believers are equally eligible for membership. The College will not attempt to deal with religion as such, but will endeavour to study the subject scientifically. Any suggestions as to the plan of work and study made by members will receive careful consideration.

Those who recognize the profound importance of the work and feel that they would like to assist financially, are invited to do so. Such assistance will be greatly appreciated, as, until the College is fully established the expenses are very heavy. It has been the general experience of promoters of such work, both in this country and in the United States, that monetary help for research work has been sadly lacking. Considering the great importance of the subject to humanity, this should be rectified by those who have the means and have benefited by the study.

SPECIAL DONATIONS earmarked for particular purposes, such as research work, ministrations to the poor, bereaved or sick, the training of sensitives or scholarships for suitable students, will also be welcomed and will be placed under the charge of trustees by members.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLEGE BUILDINGS.

The house, which is the property of Mr. J. Hewat McKenzie, who generously provided the rent for two years, is situated in a good residential position in West London, and can be reached quickly by Tube or 'bus from any part and from the main railway stations. It is in a quiet neighbourhood, large and commodious and well appointed in every way, and takes its place as the best equipped centre for Psychic Research work

in the country. The possession of such a house makes it possible to carry on many branches of the work at the same time, and to secure for each branch the appropriate atmosphere and environment so essential in psychic study.

On the GROUND FLOOR is THE LECTURE ROOM (No. 1). A handsome, airy room, containing organ, capable of seating a hundred persons comfortably; when not in use for lectures this can be used by members and visitors for reading and conversation.

THE STUDY (No. 2). A large and comfortably furnished room reserved for members for quiet reading and study. All the best and latest magazines dealing with the subject may be found here.

THE LIBRARY AND OFFICE (No. 3). The excellent loan and reference Library contains nearly 1,300 volumes, comprising all the older and best known books on the subject (now very scarce), also an excellent selection of the very newest literature which is being constantly added to. (Catalogues, price 1s. 3d.). Matters of *general office routine* and enquiries are dealt with here by the Office Secretaries. There is also a gentlemen's cloak room and dressing room.

The FIRST FLOOR contains a ladies' cloak room and dressing room (No. 4), the Healing Room, which is entirely reserved for this work (No. 5), the Assistant Secretary's private office (No. 6), Séance Room, used only for private clairvoyance and classes for psychical development (No. 7), and another Séance Room for physical phenomena, which can be quickly and adequately darkened and in which will be gathered apparatus suitable for this branch of study (No. 8).

The SECOND and THIRD FLOORS are devoted to the private apartments, excepting a Séance Room (No. 18), for Voice Phenomena and Development Classes for same, and a Photographic Room and large Dark Room (No. 19), reserved entirely for experiments in psychic photography.

ADVANTAGES OF FULL MEMBERSHIP.

The use of the College as a convenient centre both for town and country members for the serious study of psychic science under the very best possible conditions.

The free use of the Reading Rooms and current literature, and of the extensive Loan and Reference Library.

The opportunity to join classes for study under competent instructors, and to attend demonstrations in all branches of phenomena available, at moderate fees, and under admirable conditions.

The privilege of being able to introduce friends (for whom members must be personally responsible), to such classes and demonstrations at an increased fee, and to be able to bring such to a centre which recommends the subject in every way—an important point with beginners.

Free attendance at all public clairvoyant demonstrations and many lectures. (Only those lectures are charged to members whose expenses are too heavy to be met otherwise, and these will be noted on lecture programme.)

An opportunity is afforded for qualified students to investigate various phases scientifically, and for all students to have access in one building to the best Mediums that the promoters can obtain from any country.

The College Quarterly Transactions are sent free to members, and intelligent and sympathetic advice from the Hon. Principal and Secretary is given, together with assistance in private development.

For COUNTY MEMBERS a free Catalogue and the use of the Library (monthly parcels free outward postage), and every attention when in town, if notice is given, so that the best use of a visit may be made. Advice by correspondence on matters of difficulty.

The Reading Rooms are open daily to members between the hours of 10.30 a.m. and 9 p.m.; Saturdays, 1 p.m. The Library is open between 10.30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday till 8 p.m.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP. (Estab. 1922.)

Since the opening of the College a large number of earnest and interested students have expressed a desire to become more closely associated with the work now carried on by the College, for the advancement of Psychic Science, on terms somewhat easier than have been offered to members.

The Council, after serious consideration announce that they have agreed to admit Associate members to the College,

on payment of an entrance fee of £1 1s., with an annual subscription of £1 1s., either for Town or Country. This concession has been rendered possible through the improved financial position of the College during the past year.

ADVANTAGE OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP.

Associates will have the full use of the extensive College Library and of a Reading Room (Catalogues free to Country Assoc. Members), also admittance to free public lectures and to public clairvoyance, and free use of rooms for private development and experiment can be given to approved applicants. They will also receive favoured application for sittings after members' needs are met. Associate members will, however, for the present be expected to pay FULL FEES (as non-members) for all experiments with mediums.

By these arrangements it is hoped to increase the scope of usefulness of the College, and provide to a wider public valuable assistance in understanding the baffling problems met with by all students in Psychic Science, but it is pointed out that for those who wish to use the College for experimental work full membership is much more advantageous and economical than Associate.

Application for Associate membership with suitable introduction should be made on the official application forms, which can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary.

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING CLASSES FOR STUDY AND EXPERIMENT.

Class Work in many branches is arranged for *both Day and Evening Students* under the best instructors, and no student need lack for personal advice at any moment. Particular information will be found in the College Syllabus on application to the Hon. Secretary.

CLASSES FOR PSYCHICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Psychometry, Clairvoyance, Clairaudience and Trance Control, are the usual avenues first opened in psychical development, and it is important that this should take place under experienced sensitives and the development proceed in an orderly fashion. It is no credit to the person seeking to develop

such gifts if these appear in a disorderly manner, although sometimes these may develop as the result of severe physical or mental shock. Such disorder is often a serious trouble, both physically and mentally, and a means of creating much prejudice against the subject. By following experienced advice this can be entirely avoided.

Classes for the above are small—ten persons—so that personal attention can be given. Individual development can also be undertaken or advice given on home development or on particular aspects of mediumship.

No one should join these classes hoping for quick returns, unless they are natural mediums and already have their psychic powers partially developed. All the best known public workers have spent long patient years in developing their gifts to the present high degree of usefulness, and just as one may, before taking up any course of study, look forward to many days of patient, regular work, so ought those who undertake psychical development. Irregular attendance at such classes will not be permitted, as it affects injuriously the development of other members.

GENERAL ADVICE. Regularity of attendance during a course, regular, clean habits of body and mind, and an endeavour to co-ordinate the physical, the psychical, the mental and spiritual aspects of the personality, will greatly assist right development, and will give stability to the whole nature. Only in this way can mediumship be used for the good of others. Without this attitude to the matter, the Hon. Principal and Hon. Secretary do not recommend psychical development, and all volunteering for such are first examined as to suitability by one of the instructors. Such are also recommended to attend a course of study on the mental or ethical aspects of the subject provided by the College, and are specially encouraged to attend the lectures by the Hon. Principal on "Problems of Psychic Science."

Those developing different phases of phenomena will as far as possible be taught separately, but this depends on the number volunteering for any particular class.

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

Under *Physical Phenomena* are grouped such phases as movement of articles without contact, slate writing

without hands, direct voice, psychic photography and materialization.

There are few public demonstrators of physical phenomena in this country, or, indeed, in the world, although the better climatic conditions of some countries may assist an easier development of such gifts. The use involves a great strain upon the medium in most instances, and attacks by inexperienced or insincere investigators, entirely ignorant of the subject, are common. All this makes mediumship scarce in these phases, but it is hoped that the College, by providing every possible sympathetic condition for such sensitives, will restore confidence and courage to any having such gifts and who may be willing to exercise them for the public good. On the foundation of demonstrated *physical* phenomena the orthodox scientific world will be first reached. Mr. Hewat McKenzie has recently twice visited the United States to make arrangements for physical mediums to visit this country during the next year or two.

Since the opening of the College, the work has been much assisted by the visits of the Crewe Circle, the well-known demonstrators of psychic photography. Much comfort has been given to bereaved persons by means of this gift, and scientific investigation is also being undertaken. The College, in association with the "Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures," is specially directing its attention to this phase.

CLASS FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY.

This is arranged at the College under the direction of Mrs. Deane. The class is limited to six members, and any who believe they have such power are encouraged to experiment. Help will be freely given to those who can show the slightest evidence of such manifestations. Psychic photography, in its initial stages at least, seems to be the result of the right combination of the forces of two or more individuals. Therefore regular and painstaking effort is necessary. A knowledge of photography is not essential, but is desirable, so that students can carry out their own experiments. It is also an advantage to possess one's own camera, which becomes magnetized by use in the class.

A class for the development of any phase of *Physical Phenomena* will be begun if a medium showing any sign of such power is found.

PRESENT EXPERIMENTAL WORK AT THE COLLEGE.

Many mediums have given their services to the College during the past two years, and at the present moment the following are available :—

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY. The "*Crewe Circle*" (Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton) pay periodical visits, and the College is the only centre in London where their valuable work can be tested. (Applications require to be made well ahead.)

Mrs. Deane, who has a well developed gift for photography, is also a valued worker and is at the College every Monday and Wednesday. (Bookings necessary.)

TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP. Privileged appointments are available for members with *Mrs. Osborne Leonard*.

VOICE MEDIUMSHIP. *Mrs. Blanche Cooper* is the College medium for this gift, and is in constant attendance, both for group and private appointments. Both her private and group work has given great satisfaction to many.

CLAIRVOYANCE AND PSYCHOMETRY. *Mrs. Annie Johnson* is engaged by the College for the above, and private and group appointments can be made at short notice.

Special attention in arranging appointments is given to Country Members when visiting town, if due intimation be given.

Non-members can make appointments with any of the above, if suitable introductions be provided, and the appointments are not required by members or associate members.

MAGNETIC AND MENTAL HEALING. Mr. W. S. Hendry and Mr. A. Raffin are in attendance at the College.

Amongst other sensitives who have demonstrated their gifts at the College are : Mr. Evan Powell ; Mrs. Etta Wreidt, Detroit, U.S.A. (Trumpet Medium) ; Miss A. M. Besinnet, Toledo, U.S.A. ; Mr. Wm. Phoenix, of Glasgow (Trumpet Medium) ; Mr. Will Thomas (Physical Phenomena) ; Mrs. Stansfield (Crystal-gazing) ; also Mrs. Wesley Adams, Mrs. Annie Brittain, Mrs. Jamrach, Mr. Vout Peters, Mr. A. Punter, Mrs. Marriott, Mrs. Podmore, and many others (Clairvoyance and Psychometry).

HEALTH CULTURE AND HEALING.

This department is under the guidance of Mr. W. S. Hendry, whose experience covers many years of study and practical experiment.

Day and Evening Classes for instruction are organized and these are of the greatest value to all who wish to understand the natural resources of their own being, how to keep themselves in health and how to assist others to health. Mr. Hendry's instruction covers all aspects of healing—vital magnetic, suggestion and auto-suggestion, mental and spiritual.

The College earnestly desires that these classes shall be freely used by clergymen, doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers, and all who come in contact with suffering humanity. Wise understanding of the interplay of body and mind and soul, would often enable help to be given when ordinary medical assistance is unsuccessful. Medical Science as represented by all its most advanced men is now dealing with these subjects seriously, and a better era will dawn for humanity when the trained physician and surgeon and the natural healer can work in co-operation.

Personal Instruction for those who wish to get through the course quickly is also given. Treatment is undertaken either at the College or at the house of the patient, under or without a doctor's attendance. *Free Diagnosis* and advice as to whether treatment will be beneficial is given to members.

