

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

### CONTENTS.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| New Members and Associates .. .. .              | 81   |
| Meeting of Council .. .. .                      | 81   |
| Phantasms of the Living .. .. .                 | 82   |
| Cases Received by the Librery Committee .. .. . | 85   |
| Correspondence .. .. .                          | 94   |
| Supplementary Library Catalogue .. .. .         | 96   |

### NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

#### MEMBERS.

- CHAMBERS, MISS, St. Baldred's Tower, North Berwick, N.B.  
 STURGIS, JULIAN, 2, Gloucester-place, Portman-square, London, W.

#### ASSOCIATES.

- BERREY, WALTER F. M., Caius College, Cambridge.  
 BOUCHER, MRS., 44, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, Chiswick.  
 CAIRD, MRS., 29, Broadhurst Gardens, Finchley New Road, South  
 Hampstead, London, N.W.  
 CROWTHER, WILLIAM F., Watton Vicarage, Hull.  
 GREEN, MISS MARIAN, The High School, Spring Mount, Blackburn.  
 MURRAY, JOHN HENRY, late Captain 39th Regiment, Ashfield, Beau  
 Parc, Co. Meath.  
 OWEN, REV. HUBERT, Bucknall Rectory, Stoke-upon-Trent.  
 POWER, MISS HELEN, 19, Spring Street, Paddington, London, W.  
 RAILTON, CHARLES W., Woodlands, Alderley Edge, Cheshire.  
 ROBERTS, WILLIAM JOHNSON, 146, Pembroke Road, Dublin.  
 TURNER, H. H., M.A., Shurland House, 9, Humber Road, Westcombe  
 Park, London, S.E.

### MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At a Meeting of the Council held on the 4th of March, the following Members were present:—Messrs. Walter H. Coffin, Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, Frank Podmore, H. Arthur Smith, and J. Herbert Stack. Mr. Stack was voted to the chair.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and signed as correct.

Two new Members and eleven new Associates, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected.

One volume was on the table as a present to the Library, for which a vote of thanks was passed to the donor.

The cash account for the previous month was presented in the usual form.

The House and Finance Committee presented a report containing an estimate of the Income of the Society for the year, and a scheme of Expenditure. After consideration, the recommendations of the Committee were substantially agreed to.

It was agreed that a General Meeting be held in the latter part of April, on a day convenient to the President. [Saturday, the 23rd, was subsequently fixed on.]

The next Meeting of the Council was fixed for Friday, the 1st of April.

### “PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING.”

BY HENSLEIGH WEDGWOOD.

In the *Phantasms of the Living*, I., 165, Mr. Gurney, arguing for the general trustworthiness of the narratives received, incidentally remarks on the total absence of “marvels, which in the popular view are quite as likely to be true as the facts actually reported, and which the general traditions of the subject would connect with those facts.” “But our reporters,” the author continues, “one and all eschew them. To take, for instance, the group of cases which the reader will probably find to be the most interesting, as it is also the largest in our collection—apparitions at the time of death. Why should not [such apparitions] produce *physical* effects—shed tears on the pillow and make it wet, open the door and leave it open, or leave some tangible token of their presence? It is surely noteworthy that *we have not had to reject, on grounds like these, a single narrative which on other grounds would have been admitted.*”

The passage here italicised indicates the arbitrary limits within which those responsible for the book would seem to confine their field of inquiry. They investigate with unwearied diligence the evidence of any phenomena that can be forced, by whatever ingenuity or violence, under their elastic formula of telepathy, but the notion of physical effects produced by an incorporeal agent (whatever the evidence by which it may be supported) is as completely Anathema Maranatha to them as were the facts of mesmerism to the scientific professors of 50 years ago. It is true that, according to Mr. Gurney, they have not had to reject, on this *à priori* principle, a single narrative which on other grounds would have been admitted; but what chance would “other grounds” have had of a fair consideration, where the narrative laboured under the fatal blot of running counter to this foregone conviction of the superstitious absurdity of the narration? It would have been interesting to a large section of the Society to see a specimen or

two of the objectionable narratives which were rejected on "other grounds."\*

Fortunately one narrative (No. 321, II., p. 202) has by some unexplained chance escaped rejection, although it gives the clearest testimony† to the performance by an apparition of an act precisely analogous (as far as evidence of objective reality is concerned) to the wetting of one's pillow with tears, or leaving a door open.

In 1853 Dr. and Mrs. Gwynne were living in a house haunted by unaccountable noises—sighs and heavy breathing close to the side of the bed, for instance. One night they both awoke to see a draped figure passing along the foot of the bed towards the fireplace. "I had the impression," says Dr. Gwynne, "that the arm was raised, pointing with the hand towards the mantel-piece, on which a night-light was burning. Mrs. Gwynne at this moment seized my arm and the *light was extinguished*. The night-light in question was relit and placed in a toilette basin, and burned naturally. I tried to convince myself that it might have been a gust of wind down the chimney that put the light out." Mrs. Gwynne says that her husband's statement accords with her recollection, "but I distinctly saw the hand of the phantom placed over the night-light, which was at once extinguished. Dr. Gwynne, on the appearance of the phantom, in order to calm my agitated state, tried to reason with me and to persuade me that it might have been the effects of the moonlight and clouds passing over the openings of the shutters, and possibly that a gust of wind might have extinguished the light, but I knew differently. When we had both been awakened at the same moment apparently, and together saw that unpleasant figure, tall and, as it were, draped like a nun, deliberately walk up to the mantel-piece and put out the light with the right hand, there could be no mistake about it." It must have been a violent gust indeed that would have put out a night-light resting on the shelf of the mantel-piece; but it is obvious that Dr. Gwynne had no more real belief in the imaginary gust of wind than he had that the figure, which he jumped out of bed to seize, was merely the shadow of a passing cloud.

In another place, Mr. Gurney is so possessed by his theory of

\* The "other grounds" were simply *evidential*. When cases were rejected, it was not because of any particular facts which they contained, but because of evidential flaws and weakness, which would equally have excluded them however much their contents might have harmonised with the telepathic theory. The commonest ground of exclusion was the fact that the evidence was third or fourth hand.—E.G.

† If by "clearest" testimony Mr. Wedgwood means "most convincing," I must differ from him. Recollections, written down long afterwards, of a startling occurrence observed on suddenly waking from sleep in a semi-dark room, though they may be worth attending to, do not constitute evidence of a high rank.—E.G.

telepathy that he treats as out of the question a belief in the possibility of phenomena of clairvoyance, externally similar to those which he accounts for on that theory, but lying beyond the ground which telepathy can be made to cover. In Vol. I., p. 375, after narrating two instances where a lady in sleep had clairvoyance of the contents of notes that had not met her bodily eyes, he says that circumstances made it specially unlikely that the correspondence of the dreams with the reality was read back. "And if not," he continues, "the cases seem typical examples of telepathic clairvoyance; for no one probably will suppose that the percipient could have obtained a similar vision of notes with whose writers, and in whose contents, she had no concern."

As it happens, I have had indubitable proof in my own family of several instances of precisely such clairvoyance as the author here regards as beyond the bounds of rational belief.\* At one time my daughter-in-law, Mrs. Alfred Wedgwood, had frequently clairvoyant insight of the contents of letters on their way to herself or to others, and in one instance of the contents of the morning's newspaper, without any reference to the question whether they concerned her or not.

In the 57th number of *Light* (4th February, 1882), I had published an account of a night spent in a haunted house, and on the 17th, when I went downstairs about 8 o'clock to my study to dress, I found a letter on the hall-table, as usual, waiting for me, from a lady at Minehead, whose name I had never heard of, about the narrative in *Light*, which had greatly interested her. At that time my son Alfred and his wife were occupying different bedrooms, and when Alfred came down to breakfast at 9 he had not seen his wife, who was keeping her room. But soon after I had returned to my study Alfred burst eagerly in upon me, asking if I had received a letter that morning "all about ghosts," as his wife had seen such a letter coming for me the preceding night. On going up to her I found that before going to sleep she had seen a hand coming from behind the screen at the foot of her bed, holding a letter in more sheets than one, and in a hand she did not know. The next morning at post-time she was looking out for the letter, and wondering who it could be from, when something said to her, "It is not for you; it is gone downstairs; it is all about ghosts." When I showed her the letter she recognised it as the one she had seen, and

---

\* My remark was not meant to be taken in the sweeping sense in which Mr. Wedgwood has understood it. I meant that the mere fact of the percipient seeing these particular notes would not justify the supposition that she could see *any* notes. I have always thought Mrs. A. Wedgwood's experiences, which Mr. Wedgwood goes on to describe, exceptionally interesting, and have urged him to get them evidenced, whenever they occur, in as complete a form as possible.—E.G.

remembered the post-mark, Minehead, a town whose name she had never heard of. The previous afternoon, when reading her book, she had seen the word Minehead written across the page, but she had not connected it with my letter until she saw the post-mark when I showed her the cover. I wrote my memorandum of the occurrence early in the following May.

The following instance was told me by Mrs. Alfred in the presence of her husband, and taken down by me in January, 1882. About two years previous she dreamt that she saw a trial going on in a court full of people, and the names of Liardet and Nyvele (anagram of Evelyn) written up in the air. She was very much struck with her dream, and made her husband go four or five miles for a newspaper after breakfast. In this she found a report of the trial of Liardet *v.* Evelyn, and she recognised the names of counsel employed as having been made known to her in her dream. At that time she lived at East Horseley, and had never even seen Mr. Evelyn, who lived six or seven miles off on the other side of the Downs. Her only very feeble link with him was that he was a neighbour of her sister-in-law Mrs. Farrer. The quarrel between him and his steward Mr. Liardet was not of the slightest interest to her. I spoke of the subject to my son a few days ago. He well recollects the dream of the trial (though not the details) and his driving off for a newspaper, either to Cobham or Leatherhead, he does not remember which.

---

### CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

---

S.—340.

#### INTELLIGENT AUTOMATISM.

From MISS GREEN, The High School, Blackburn.

*January 22nd, 1887.*

At other times than that which I am about to refer to, I have had what appeared to me indisputable proof of the existence of some unknown force which manifests itself in very unusual motions produced in a small table by the placing on it of the hands of several persons, under such conditions that fraud was impossible, and muscular action, consciously or unconsciously, seemed equally an impossible explanation of the phenomena. (I mean that the kind of movement could not be produced by muscular action.)

But in the year 1878, when I was spending my holidays in Ireland, the phenomena then experienced proved to *me*, at least, that the force could become a means of intelligent expression by means of spelling out words; that the utterances so produced were almost always the latent consciousness of the operators, but that the ideas expressed were uttered absolutely without volition, and in some instances *against the will* of one of the operators.

The experimenters were the daughters of Mrs. M., of Kinsale, sometimes some of her nieces, and myself. Mrs. M. often took part herself. Her daughters

have a liking for botany and other branches of natural science. I had previously lived for three years in her household, teaching the girls. I therefore knew them very intimately, and knew that our experiments were *bonâ fide*; that one of the three young ladies, who had evidently more power than any one else over the unknown force, was, and is, of a singularly simple, true, and *strong* character—very intelligent and absolutely free from affectation, vanity, or any other morbid tendency. All who know her have the same trust in her, and I, who know her perhaps best, feel this most strongly. She was then about 19.

So much for the operators. Now for the facts. I was told by the girls that they had found that they, with their cousins, could make the table move, and even spell out a word. I was absolutely incredulous, but gave way to the evidence of my senses when I saw and felt under my own hands the table tipping up and down, and then moving with a double motion, rotating and revolving, round the room. Now and then we had to move very fast to keep our hands on the table, which seemed, so to speak, to be running away from us. The most interesting part of our experiments was the spelling out of sentences. At first we tried simple words. Four of us, perhaps, would place ourselves at the table. After a few minutes, the customary tilting movement came, as a sign that the table was "magnetised." (We used the word for want of a better.) Then, one of us fixed on a word to be spelt. The question was put, "What is So-and-so thinking of?" The table then began to tilt up and down; we spelt out the alphabet, till suddenly it would stop at a certain letter. In this way the word would be spelt out. Sometimes a letter was wrong. I recollect once that one of the girls was to think of a word. The letters came "L a p n i e r e." She said she had thought of a picture called "La Prière."

Soon, however, we passed out of this stage, and tried to get answers to questions, and to get what we called "messages" to any one of us. (I do not mean that any of us had any superstitious notion about it, but this was our *modus operandi*.) Some of these I have written down. The remarks were generally very common-place, and the language often vague and not well chosen. But of this I am absolutely sure, that the phrases were spelt out without any consciousness on the part of the operators of what was being spelt, and on more than one occasion one of the operators would have prevented the utterance if she could. Often we could not see the drift of the utterance until the whole was spelt, having been led astray at first by taking a part of a word for a whole.

The "table" was asked to give an opinion of the Earl of Beaconsfield (then living). The words were spelt out "self-lauding hypocrite, with many good merits, deserving esteem." Now, if it were possible to entertain the notion of fraud (which to me is impossible), one would expect a more consistent opinion than the above, which doubtless arose from the differing views of the operators. On the reception of this opinion, we asked, "Where did you acquire your style of speech?" in a joking way. The answer was spelt out, "Trinity College." Asked to give a "message" to all, the words were spelt out "Pursue your inquiry in subjects not yet fathomed by sages, steadily prosper."

We inquired whether a certain marriage had taken place. The answer

was spelt out “ ——— wedded, testified by proxy.” What this meant we had no notion, but these words were spelt out. We inquired whether the marriage would be a happy one. Answer: “In many ways, such a marriage must prove happy for both.”

Once, to test the unknown force, I asked that some incident of my own life, known to no one else, should be uttered. A sentence came out, referring to an incident of my girlhood, of which I was rather ashamed than otherwise, which could not have been known to any other operator, and which I should not have voluntarily told. On another occasion, a question was asked, “Who has . . . ?” I knew the answer, but no one else could possibly know. To let the answer come out would have been to betray a confidence. I set my will steadily against the answer. I \*willed hard that it should not come. But the Christian name, a common one, came out, and I felt so sure that the surname would follow that I took my hands off, and made an excuse for stopping. Perhaps it may be thought that I was unconsciously in a semi-hypnotic state. I can only say I was to my own consciousness in a perfectly normal condition of mind, quite aware of my social responsibilities, and with perfect control over my own actions. I had no difficulty in taking my hands from the table. I do not know whether the name in question could or could not have been spelt out after my leaving it. Naturally my friends would not try when they saw the question troubled me.

It will be seen that our *modus operandi* was not exactly that of a scientific society, but though our questions and answers, &c., were often put partly as a pastime to some of us, certain conditions were carefully kept. We were in full daylight or gaslight, and placed ourselves carefully so that our feet or dresses should not touch the legs of the table.

We sometimes asked to have “messages” spelt out from distant friends (always living). Then the utterances would be such as we should suppose it likely those friends would send. At one time I was inclined to think there might be some power of getting hold of the thoughts of those absent. I came to the conclusion that there was no trace whatever of this.

So far as my experience went, I never saw any proof or indication of any communication with people not sitting at the table, though I have heard of experiences which indicate such a possibility. One instance of a “message” from a friend I will mention. A message purporting to be from Mr. X., at whose house I was going to spend a few days in the following week, was spelt out. “Come, Miss Green, here’s a chance.” “Explain yourself further.” “Politics.” “Something more.” “Lucy.”

We declared that the “table” was silly, as we could make no sense of this. One of the cousins of my pupils was named Lucy, but she had no interest in politics, and was not going to the house with me. We “gave it up” as a failure, when one of Mrs. M.’s sisters, the mother of “Lucy,” said she knew what it meant. She had been staying at Mr. X.’s and he

---

\* I am not sure that my mental attitude is rightly described by the word “willed,” which seems to connote a belief in the agent’s mind in his power to accomplish his wish, not merely the concentration of thought on the wish. I had by this time seen so much of this strange power of apparently getting at the operator’s thoughts by the unknown force, that, though I tried hard to resist, I doubted very much whether my resistance could counteract it.

had remarked that I was going to visit his house, and should be there just at the time when Mr. and Mrs. Lucy would be there too, and we could have some fine discussions, or some trivial remark of this kind. One of this lady's daughters—I am not sure whether it was the owner of the name "Lucy" or her sister—had been at Mr. X.'s with her, and was then one of the operators at the table, and, when she was thus reminded, recollected the occurrence. I remember feeling some doubt in this case whether it was possible that Mrs. M.'s sister in the room, though not at the table, could have influenced the utterance, as the trivial remark had evidently made a very slight impression on her daughter's memory. Still, though weak, it was there, in her latent consciousness.

If we asked a question which required a definite answer, of which no one could have any knowledge, an answer would generally be given, without any relation to facts, but not without relation to the psychological law of association of ideas. In fact, if once the unknown force be granted, this law of association seems to explain much of the rest.

In relation to the marriage about which we had asked a question, we asked the Christian name of the lady, which none of us knew. The table spelt out "Sophie." This was afterwards proved to be *not* the name. But a mutual friend named "Sophy" had recently married, and her name was naturally connected with the idea of marriage; the bride about whom we were inquiring was known to be a Frenchwoman, which accounted for the French form given to her name.

Another time I inquired where a certain friend of mine, then travelling in the Tyrol, was on that day. In answer came the name of a small town, which, I afterwards found, my friend had not visited, but at which I had once stayed for some days, when in the Tyrol.

I will add a few of the sentences spelt out by the table as general "messagcs." The vagueness and awkward language which the operators would not have consciously used appears to me to make for the unconsciousness of the utterance.

"Look to outward signs concerning what you have notified." Further explanation asked. "Table." "Go, search for further enlightenment in subjects recognised by you."

"True judgment concerning a great statesman."

"All people are at times crack-brained."

"Trust, and before long things will side with your truer judgment. Hold to the beaten track. You will right yourself."

Of course, one cannot give to any one else one's own feeling of absolute security from fraud, conscious or unconscious, arising from one's intimate knowledge of the persons concerned. I do not think, however, that any one could have observed the phenomena I have briefly described (there were many other examples that I have not spoken of) without coming to the conclusion that some unknown force was at work. I may say that some of the operators did not consider that the answers given were always the latent mind-contents of those who were taking part in the experiment; but I do not think they distinguished between questions to which a definite, and others to which an indefinite, answer might be given. In the latter case, one *appeared*

to receive information ; but it was a vague remark that could not be proved to be either right or wrong. It seemed as if, when once the "*rapport*" between the force and the operators' minds was established, the minds were separated into two parts, the combined latent consciousness being passive under the action of the force ; at the same time the volitional consciousness gave the direction to the action of the force by the simple process of willing, expressed by a question.

I have not, since 1878, had any experience so interesting. Though I have spent some of my holidays since then in Kinsale, I have not been able to make any further tests. On one visit, the young lady who had the most power was away ; at another time, she said she had been asked to turn tables so much for merely frivolous amusement that she felt quite tired with it. And once when we tried again there were other visitors in the house who would regard the matter as the work of spirits.

It needs a little patience at first, and a little earnestness in keeping the pre-arranged conditions, before the "force" can be got into working order. But in 1878, when we devoted a good deal of time to the pursuit, we found that the movement in the table would set in after a moment or two when we had practised for several days.

Though I have spoken rather definitely of my theory, I am, of course, aware that the experiments I have mentioned are not sufficient to establish it. There are numerous tests I should like to apply which we did not think of then—I mean tests as to the limits of the action of the force, &c.

MARIAN GREEN.

P.S.—I should like to add a few words on the question of unconscious muscular action. I do not think the movements we witnessed could have been produced by this means, for two reasons. Firstly, some of the movements were of such a nature that we could not voluntarily reproduce them by *conscious* muscular pressure. We tried once to reproduce the tilting motion of the table, used in spelling. In this slight movement, with the table we generally used, the difference was not very marked, though we decided, I know, that the "magnetic" action was lighter and more elastic. I do not think, however, that I should have felt satisfied that muscular action was excluded, had we only experienced this movement. But the wilder movements which sometimes occurred we could not reproduce at all. When the table, as we said, "went mad" it would rock from side to side while careering about the room, poising itself for an instant on one leg, at an angle with the perpendicular at which it seemed it must fall over. This movement suggested strongly some connection with our hands analogous to magnetism. Sometimes, however, the table did fall and, freed from our hands, seemed subject to normal conditions. Another movement which, though we did not test it, I do not think we could have reproduced, was the usual tilting motion in a different table, with which Miss Mary M. and I once or twice experimented, each time with complete success. The table was small and of an oval shape, with four legs close to the edge, and the square frame for a drawer (which of course was removed) under the top. I do not think that two persons could have tilted this table, unless the hands of both had been at one side, and ours were lightly placed near the middle.

Secondly, if the movements had been caused by muscular action, even though unconscious, we must, I think, have had a feeling of local fatigue after spending, as we did sometimes, a couple of hours at a time in obtaining the movements. By our method, the table tilted for each letter, and stopped at the right one. I am sure that the amount of pressure needed for the spelling of one of our longer "messages" would have produced some kind of ache in our hands. I do not remember that any one ever complained of anything but a certain amount of chilliness after the hands had been for some time in one position. I have not spoken of knocks apparently within the table, as I have had very little personal experience of these; but I believe Miss M. M. has sometimes obtained these very successfully since the time I write of.

Ardnacarrrie, Bandon.

February 21st, 1887.

We have carefully read over Miss Green's paper on the subject of table-rapping, and can thoroughly corroborate all that she has stated.

MARY M.

MRS. M.

---

#### NOTE ON THE FOREGOING CASE.

I am anxious to call the attention of readers to Miss Green's account, as given above. It shows how much matter for interesting discussion may be gathered from phenomena of no very rare order, if they are intelligently observed.

In the first place I may remark that the safest way to begin our consideration of messages derived through tilts of a table is to treat them as simply a variety of the messages given by automatic writing, which we have already considered. So far as their purport goes the *tilt-messages* ("typtological" is almost too pompous a name for them!) are closely analogous to the written messages; and we had better begin at least by assuming that tilt-messages are due to unconscious muscular action of the sitters, giving expression to thoughts which they unconsciously entertain. But here we find that two difficulties, which appeared indeed in the case of the written messages, but in a fainter form, start at once into prominence.

I. There is a difficulty in supposing that the movements, often very violent, are really caused by the automatic action of sitters who are doing their best to keep perfectly still.

II. There is a difficulty in assigning the origination of the tilted message to the unconscious intelligence of any one given sitter; since often no message will come unless several persons sit; and the message, when it does come, is a sort of compromise between views held by the various sitters.

The *first* of these difficulties, as will be seen, was strongly felt by Miss Green and her friends. And judging from a wide experience of these tilt-messages, I do not think that their impression can be dismissed as obviously illusory. It may be remembered that Mr. and Mrs. Newnham received the same impression with regard to the movements of the planchette, which they both thought such as Mr. Newnham's muscular force could not have originated. We are here at the point of contact between automatic

messages and the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism. This is not the place to deal with those alleged disturbances of matter. If they are to be proved, it must be by cases less ambiguous than these movements of planchette or table, while actually touched by the experimenters. One remark alone seems needful, in order to show that I may justifiably continue to discuss on the same terms as the rest these messages where there is a certain suspicion of physical force communicated to table or planchette in a manner which muscular action will not explain. The remark (which, though tolerably obvious, and not new, is often ignored in the discussions,) is as follows:— Assuming for the sake of argument that a force X is manifested which does not proceed from the muscles of the sitters, it still by no means follows that X proceeds from disembodied spirits. We do not know how either the sitters or the spirits can originate X, but we know that the sitters at any rate exist and are on the spot; and they have, so to say, the first claim to being considered as the originators of X, until the spirits do or say something which seems beyond the reach of the sitters' unconscious mind. In short, to repeat in this case also what I have often said already, it must be to the *content*, not to the *mechanism*, of the message that appeal must be made, if we are to establish its extra-human authorship. In Miss Green's case there seems to have been nothing in the *contents* of the message which pointed to the spiritual hypothesis; so for present purposes we may neglect the question as to the precise mode of origination of the table's movements.

The second difficulty—as to the apparent co-operation of more than one sitter in the production of the message—has been already observed in cases where planchette needs to have more than one person's hand upon it—say, A's and B's hands—in order to begin to write. (See *Proceedings*, Vol. II., p. 233.) The simplest suggestion will, of course, be that B's hand merely gives unconsciously the initial shove to the planchette, which A's hand then guides. This explanation, however, is not altogether satisfactory with regard even to planchette, and it becomes still more difficult to apply when the movements are of so marked a character as in some table-tilting experiments. A puts his hands on the table and nothing happens; B adds his hands and nothing happens; C adds his hands and the table tilts violently; but nevertheless it will never tilt with C alone; and when it tilts with A, B, and C, the messages may contain matters known to A or B, but not to C. Or again, in some cases I have seen a frequently-changing group of persons round the table—sometimes A, B, C; sometimes B, D, E; sometimes A, C, E, &c.,—and nevertheless the tilts continued to give distinct messages throughout. If we are to suppose that one sitter's mind alone was originating the messages at each moment, it is difficult to understand how it was that the automatic action (say) of A and C kept itself in abeyance when B's was to be the guiding mind, and did not so interfere as to confuse the tilted messages.

This is pre-eminently a question which calls for abundant experiments, and I would urge readers of the *Journal* to try to get their messages tilted by a table (one tilt standing for A, two for B, and so forth, with conventional signs for yes and no), and to record and analyse results. I believe that this is the most easily obtained of all automatic phenomena, perhaps one person in three having some capacity for inducing tilts. I need

scarcely add that it is perfectly easy to simulate tilts and table-movements of many kinds, and that no one must suppose that such movements can be made an independent proof of automatic action, still less of the action of spirits. But a group of experimenters, acting with good faith towards each other, and without superstitious prepossessions, are likely to get results which will at least interest themselves, and which may very possibly, like Miss Green's, deserve a permanent record.

In Miss Green's case, as we have seen, apart from the mechanism of the messages, there was something in their *substance* which suggested a kind of fusion or compromise between the minds of the various sitters.

It is, of course, logically possible to suppose that a spirit read the minds of the sitters, and endeavoured to please them all impartially by recording a judgment on Lord Beaconsfield as a "self-lauding hypocrite, with many good merits deserving esteem." But before considering this hypothesis here, we shall, I think, need to have a pretty large collection of messages in which the intelligence of an independent spirit is more strongly marked. It seems less improbable that the message may be, as Miss Green conjectures, a kind of fusion of the latent mental action of the persons present. Mr. Gurney and I have repeatedly suggested that it is the unconscious rather than the conscious elements in our mentation which seem to be most subject to telepathic impulse or intercourse; and, though such experiments as Miss Green's are at once too slight and too obscure to *prove* any such theory, I confess that they do seem to me to point that way. Or, somewhat varying the conception, they fall in with a kind of analogy from the bodily organism which I have elsewhere suggested.\* In this view, the minds of the sitters may be likened to corpuscles swimming about in a kind of *liquor sanguinis* which forms our psychical environment; or say to the "secondary larvæ" of the Hessian fly, modifying by their development the juices of the primary larva in which they are embedded. This sounds fanciful; but he who speculates on these matters will find that he needs whatever help analogy can give him to form and to communicate the conception of an intelligence, modified by personalities, but itself perhaps without personality—of mind-stuff not made up into minds like ours, yet capable of occasional spurts of rudimentary mentation.

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

G.—481.

From Mr. John E. Husbands, of Melbourne House, Town-Hall-square, Grimsby.

September 15th, 1886.

DEAR SIR,—The facts are simply these. I was sleeping in a hotel in Madeira in January, 1885. It was a bright moonlight night. The windows were open and the blinds up. I felt some one was in my room. On opening my eyes, I saw a young fellow about 25, dressed in flannels, standing at the side of my bed and pointing with the first finger of his right hand to the place I was lying. I lay for some seconds to convince myself of some one being really there. I then sat up and looked at him. I saw his features so plainly that I recognised them in a photograph which was shown me some days after. I asked him what he wanted; he did not speak, but his eyes and

\* *Phantasms*, &c., Vol. II., p. 315.

hand seemed to tell me I was in his place. As he did not answer, I struck out at him with my fist as I sat up, but did not reach him, and as I was going to spring out of bed he slowly vanished through the door, which was shut, keeping his eyes upon me all the time.

Upon inquiry I found that the young fellow who appeared to me died in that room I was occupying.

If I can tell you anything more I shall be glad to, if it interests you.

JOHN E. HUSBANDS.

The following letters are from Miss Falkner, of Church-terrace, Wisbech, who was resident at the hotel when the above incident happened.

October 8th, 1886.

The figure that Mr. Husbands saw while in Madeira was that of a young fellow who died unexpectedly months previously, in the room which Mr. Husbands was occupying. Curiously enough, Mr. H. had never heard of him or his death. He told me the story the morning after he had seen the figure, and I recognised the young fellow from the description. It impressed me very much, but I did not mention it to him or anyone. I loitered about until I heard Mr. Husbands tell the same tale to my brother; we left Mr. H. and said simultaneously "He has seen Mr. D."

No more was said on the subject for days; then I abruptly showed the photograph.

Mr. Husbands said at once "That is the young fellow who appeared to me the other night, but he was dressed differently," describing a dress he often wore—"cricket suit (or tennis) fastened at the neck with sailor knot." I must say that that Mr. Husbands is a most practical man, and the very last one would expect "a spirit" to visit.

K. FALKNER.

October 20th, 1886.

I enclose you photograph and an extract from my sister-in-law's letter, which I received this morning, as it will verify my statement. Mr. Husbands saw the figure either the 3rd or 4th of February, 1885. Would it not be exactly a year from the death?

The people who had occupied the rooms had never told us if they had seen anything, so we may conclude they had not.

K. FALKNER.

The following is Miss Falkner's copy of the passage in the letter:—

"You will see at back of Mr. du F——'s photo the date of his decease [Jan. 29, 1884]; and if you recollect 'the Motta Marques' had his rooms from the February till the May or June of 1884, then Major Money at the commencement of 1885 season. Mr. Husbands had to take the room on February 2nd, 1885, as his was wanted.

"I am clear on all this, and remember his telling me the incident when he came to see my baby."

I have received a full account of this case *vidæ voce* from both Mr. Husbands and Miss Falkner. They are both thoroughly practical, and as far removed as possible from a superstitious love of marvels; nor had they any previous interest in this or any other class of abnormal experiences. So far as I could judge, Mr. Husbands' view of himself is entirely correct—that he is the last person to give a spurious importance to anything that

might befall him, or to allow facts to be distorted by imagination. As will be seen, his account of his vision preceded any knowledge on his part of the death which had occurred in the room. He has never had any other hallucination of the senses.

E. G.

The following additional information has been received from the Rev. J. Barrow Matthews, as to the recent epidemic of excitement in the Bahamas.\*

The Rectory, San Salvador, Bahamas, West Indies.

November 10th, 1886.

1. In most cases the attack was the result of being present at the meetings, but there were a few cases where the girl knew nothing of the affair, *i. e.*, girls at work in the pine-apple plantations in the midst of work would be seized.

2. No. The girl whom I saw begin to twitch, &c., could not possibly hear or see anything. The meeting was more than a quarter of a mile away. I knew the meeting was on, because I had just come from that way.

3. Very likely a guess, as you say, "considering the morals of the place." But the guess (if such) was remarkable for its correspondence of the minute details of the ins and outs of the secret sin. The man, on being told, declared the "girl a witch or devil, for none but God and himself and the devil saw."

4. The magistrate in question has left this Island now, but should I ever meet him, I will ask him to write his idea of the matter. Both daughters, unfortunately for further inquiries, have gone to live in Florida, U.S.A., and one is now married.

5. The girl was at Rum Cay Island, 45 miles by sea from San Salvador. Most likely a guess, but a remarkably shrewd and accurate guess.

6. The resuscitated man is dead. He had heart-disease, as I wrote you, and I knew his days were numbered.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

SIR,—I almost regret that I allowed my letter to Mr. Gurney to appear in print. I cannot quite regret it, because my criticisms have drawn from Mrs. Sidgwick so very able and instructive a reply. I had not the slightest wish to impugn that lady's competence as an inquirer, which is above question, or her essential impartiality. I wrote in the interests of the Society to criticise a tone, apparent, as I thought, on the surface of her paper, which might alienate good and efficient friends of the Society's work, and for that purpose I took that paper as it stood, not as it might stand when supported and elucidated, as it now is. In matters of feeling first impressions are much, subsequent explanations count for much less than their real worth.

To enter fully into the questions raised by Mrs. Sidgwick's letter is simply impossible for me. If I have the ability, I certainly have not the leisure. Two or three brief remarks I may be allowed to make.

(1) I fail to see why Mrs. Jencken, unless otherwise convicted of deception, may not be credited with a genuine belief that the drippings on the drum were "spirit" raps. If she were consciously and fraudulently produc-

\* See Vol. II., p. 485.

ing raps, I should rather expect her to be very shy of claiming sounds she must have known she had not made, and which might be not accidental, but a trap laid for her ; the more so because she was not dealing with chance visitors, but with members of the Society for Psychical Research in the rooms of the Society, and *ex hypothesi* must have been a practised deceiver of nearly 40 years' experience. To me the whole incident seems to make for the honesty of the medium ; to Mrs. Sidgwick clearly against her ; of such force is the " personal equation " of the observer.

(2) In the case of the experiments described by Mrs. Sidgwick, I should say that the raps not only appeared to be made, but actually were made on the various objects, though mediately and not directly, just as I should say that I had received a blow on the back, though the force of the blow had, in fact, been passed on through the clothes that covered my back.

(3) With regard to the investigation of Professors Flint, Lee, and Coventry, my argument stands thus : Doctors of ability and repute in Elliotson's day, professedly on scientific grounds, scouted phenomena of hypnotism which have since been established as genuine. It follows that the bare fact that doctors of ability and repute have on investigation pronounced against the genuineness of novel phenomena is by itself " worth nothing as evidence " against those phenomena. Now in the paper on which I was commenting we had the bare fact alone, for practically for nine readers in ten, a reference to a little known work is of no use. But with the majority of readers that bare fact would have much weight. How often in former days have I heard the dictum, not of a committee of professors, but simply of " our doctor," quoted as decisive against mesmerism. Herein lay the rhetoric of Mrs. Sidgwick's method of treatment, unconscious rhetoric, of course, for I never for one moment thought of attributing to her any intentional deviation from scientific fairness. I know not how it may be with Mrs. Sidgwick, or with you, but for my own part, when I am in earnest about a subject, I find it very hard indeed to keep clear of rhetorical methods in dealing with it. On the whole, I still think that the experience we have had of the dealing of the medical profession in this country and in France with mesmeric phenomena, warrants a suspicion that the medical men of America would come to the investigation of analogous phenomena with a strong *d priori* bias against them, and deprives the mere fact of an adverse decision of any considerable weight.

I shall look with much interest for the details of the exposures of Mr. Eglinton's slate-writing. I only trust that the evidence of exposers will be criticised as strictly as that of believers, that it will be remembered that, if some good easy folk can be tricked to their faces, others have eyes so sharp that they can see what is not there.

The question of the methods of dealing with the evidence for phantasms or for psychography is too wide for me to attempt now to discuss. It is most important, and I fear I am not altogether in accord upon it with Mrs. Sidgwick or with the authors of *Phantasms of the Living*. Possibly when, in a few weeks hence, I find myself more free from work, I may ask you to admit some thoughts of mine on this subject.—I am, &c.,

WM. S. GRIGNON.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

SIR,—I am glad to be allowed the opportunity of saying a few words on one or two points in Mr. Grignon's courteous letter.

(1) As regards the drum incident, he attributes to me an inference which I have been careful not to draw. I did not say that Mrs. Jencken endeavoured to deceive us, but that "she, or her 'spirits,' are willing to claim as spiritualistic phenomena occurrences quite unconnected with her presence." This seems to me to be undeniable. By the phrase in my notes of the séance, "the 'spirits' claimed to have produced" the raps on the drum, I meant that an intelligence communicating with us by raps (as Mrs. Jencken's "controls" do) informed us that it had produced them. It had, however, not produced them. Therefore, whether it was Mrs. Jencken herself or another being, it said what was not true.

(2) In saying that in my paper in *Proceedings*, Part X., I gave the "bare fact alone" that Drs. Flint, Lee, and Coventry had on investigation pronounced against the genuineness of the so-called Rochester knockings, Mr. Grignon must, I think, have forgotten that I described, with as I thought sufficient detail for clearness, the two specific experiences on which they based their conclusion; namely, that they had experimented with another lady who could by certain movements in the knee joint produce similar sounds; and that, when the Fox sisters were placed in positions which precluded these movements, the knockings did not occur.

I shall look forward with interest to the criticism promised by Mr. Grignon on the methods adopted by Mr. Gurney and myself in dealing with evidence in psychical research. Such criticism from competent persons is, in a field of inquiry so little trodden, an almost indispensable condition of thoroughly well-directed work.—I am, sir, &c.

ELEANOR MILDRED SIDGWICK.

### SUPPLEMENTARY LIBRARY CATALOGUE.

*The following additions have been made since the last list:—*

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| ALEXANDER (P. P., M.A.), <i>Spiritualism ; a Narrative with a Discussion</i><br>(second copy) ..... | Edinburgh, 1871 |
| FERRIER (David, M.D., F.R.S.), <i>The Functions of the Brain. Second Edition</i> .....              | London, 1886    |
| MIND IN NATURE. Vol. II.....  | Chicago, 1886*  |
| <hr/>   |                 |
| AZAM (Dr.), <i>Hypnotisme double Conscience et Altérations de la Personnalité</i> .....             | Paris, 1887     |
| BARETY (Dr. A.), <i>Le Magnétisme Animal</i> .....  | Paris, 1887     |
| DESPINE (Dr. Prosper), <i>Etude Scientifique sur le Somnambulisme</i> .....                         | Paris, 1880     |
| HERZEN (Professor A), <i>Les Conditions de la Conscience</i> .....                                  | Geneva, 1886    |
| OCHOROWICZ (Dr. J.), <i>De la Suggestion Mentale ; avec une preface de M. Charles Richet</i> .....  | Paris, 1887     |
| VOISIN (Dr. Auguste), <i>De la Thérapeutique Suggestive chez les Aliénés</i> .....                  | Paris, 1887     |

\* Presented by Mr. J. E. Woodhead.