

JOURNAL

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

MEMBER.

GARRY, FRANCIS N. A., St. Mary's Vicarage, Reading.

ASSOCIATES.

DRUMMOND, MISS, Upton Court, Slough.

ROBERTS, REV. WILLIAM W., Brook Dene, 14, Strawberry Hill Road,
Twickenham, S.W.

MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At a Meeting of the Council held on the 7th of October, the following Members were present:—Professor H. Sidgwick, Messrs. Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, H. Arthur Smith, and J. Herbert Stack. The chair was taken by Professor Sidgwick.

The Minutes of last Meeting were read and signed as correct.

The Council was informed of the signing of the Agreement for the Rooms at 19, Buckingham Street, Adelphi. A resolution was passed approving of the arrangements that had been made, and adopting the Agreement on behalf of the Society.

A further Minute was passed authorising the House and Finance Committee to do what was necessary in the way of furnishing and fittings.

The House and Finance Committee was also authorised to let the three Rooms not required by the Society to a suitable tenant, at a moderate rent.

One new Member and two new Associates, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected.

Cash Accounts in the usual form were presented for the months of July, August, and September.

It was agreed that the next Meeting of the Council should be on Friday, the 4th of November.

CHANGES OF WRITING ACCOMPANYING CHANGES OF PERSONALITY.

The following is a communication addressed by Professor C. Richet to Mr. Myers, in February, 1886 :—

Puisque vous vous occupez si ingénieusement de l'écriture automatique, je voudrais à l'appui de votre opinion apporter quelques faits qui peut-être vous intéresseront.

Vous savez qu'il y a trois ans environ, j'ai pu faire sur les changements de personnalité l'expérience suivante, à peu près nouvelle. Un individu hypnotisable peut, pendant qu'il est dans cet état, subir des influences qui modifient sa personnalité. Ou lui dit, "Vous êtes un vieillard, une petite fille, un général, un prêtre, un avare, un malade," et il se croit alors transformé en vieillard, ou en prêtre, ou en avare, ou en malade. La transformation est étonnante ; tout se confirme dans lui à cette nouvelle personnalité—le langage, les gestes, les goûts, les attitudes ; et ce changement rapide, subit, complet, est un des plus curieux spectacles qu'on puisse observer.

Récemment, avec deux de nos confrères de la Société de Psychologie, MM. Ferrari et Héricourt, nous avons répété cette expérience, et nous avons vu que l'écriture, elle aussi subit des transformations parallèles, qui sont surprenantes.

Il s'agit de deux personnes—une femme de quarante ans que s'appellera A, et un jeune homme de vingt ans que j'appellerai B. C'est à peine s'il est besoin de les mettre en état d'hypnotisme. Une suggestion nettement formulée, et quelques passes rapides déterminent le changement voulu. Il va sans dire que tout soupçon de simulation doit être écarté.

A l'état normal l'écriture de A est extrêmement penchée, c'est une grande écriture (car A est très myope), régulière, peu élégante. Je lui dis alors, "Vous êtes Napoléon. Il s'agit d'envoyer un ordre à Grouchy, pour qu'il se hâte d'arriver sur le champ de bataille de Waterloo." Alors la figure de A se transforme ; ses traits prennent une énergie extraordinaire, et elle écrit d'une grande écriture, *penchée en sens inverse*, qui se ressemble en rien à son écriture normale ; aucune lettre n'est faite de la même manière que précédemment, tous les traits sont différents ; c'est un griffonnage difficilement lisible, avec des traits épais, écrasés, comme ceux que les graphologues attribuent aux volontés fortes, tandis que son écriture normale est filiforme avec des traits fins et ténus.*

Je lui dis encore, "Vous êtes une petite fille, vous même, telle que vous étiez à dix ans ;" alors elle écrit comme un enfant, en s'appliquant beaucoup, en moulant toutes ses lettres avec soin : mais, ce qu'il y a de très curieux, c'est que cette écriture ressemble à celle qu'elle a actuellement, avec cette différence, que c'est celle d'un enfant, tandis que la sienne est celle d'une femme.

A l'état normal l'écriture de B est assez grande aussi, penchée, avec quelques fioritures ; mais quand il a une personnalité nouvelle, son écriture

* Si vous le désirez, je vous enverrai quelques spécimens reproduits par la photographie, et gravés, afin que vous puissiez juger de la différence, et en faire juger les lecteurs.

est toute changée. Je lui dis, "Vous êtes Napoléon," et son écriture devient énorme, massive, dépourvue de toutes fioritures. Ainsi que A, lorsque elle est transformée en Napoléon, il casse plusieurs plumes en écrivant, tellement il appuie sur le papier.

Si je lui dis, "Vous êtes Harpagon," il prend alors une petite écriture sèche ; écrivant sur le bord du papier, cherchant à économiser l'écriture ainsi que le papier sur lequel il écrit, ainsi que l'avare même. On peut observer qu'il ignorait tout à fait que les graphologues avaient attribué précisément ces caractères à l'écriture des avares.

Si je lui dis, "Vous êtes un vieillard," son écriture devient tremblée, hésitante ; les lettres sont incomplètement formées ; personne ne peut s'y tromper, c'est une écriture de vieillard.

D'autres nombreuses expériences, qu'il serait trop long de raconter, m'ont donné des résultats pareils. Eh bien, ne vous semble-t-il que ces expériences, assurément très simples, comportent une conclusion intéressante et importante ? Au lieu de chercher une puissance extérieure, une intelligence étrangère à l'intelligence humaine, n'est-il pas plus rationnel d'admettre qu'il s'agit là simplement d'une incarnation nouvelle de notre intelligence propre. L'esprit de l'homme est certainement plus vaste qu'on se l'imagine. Il a des profondeurs, des dessous qu'on ne soupçonne pas. Son étude nous réserve des surprises inouïes, et c'est presque aller dans l'inconnu que d'étudier l'âme humaine. Peut-être trouvera-t-on cette méthode terre à terre, mais, pour ma part, je suis un peu comme vous, et je préfère n'adopter l'hypothèse d'une intelligence extérieure que quand on ne peut absolument pas expliquer un phénomène par l'intelligence humaine.

CORRECTION.

In Prof. Richet's account of some experiments in producing "Sommeil à Distance," published in the October *Journal*, some misprints have to be corrected. In the list on p. 150, "le succès" once, and "un succès" three times, should be replaced by "insuccès."

INTELLIGENT' AUTOMATISM.

From Miss Power, 19, Spring-street, Paddington.

May, 1887.

In 1883 I was asked to try writing by planchette, with a young lady. I believe I procured a new planchette for her, but that I cannot say for certain. I know the planchette we used was a new one. After dinner we were in the drawing-room, and Mrs. —, mother of the young lady, was sitting some little distance off, and I think her two brothers dropped in from the dining-room whilst we had our hands on the instrument, but were not near us, or in any way assisting. I was only willing to use planchette for the satisfaction of the young lady, and would not allow any but a trivial question to be put to it, and proposed that we should ask "whether it would be fine to-morrow," to-morrow being Sunday. I forget whether the instrument ran about at all, but when we lifted it up the writing faced me, and I

remember being surprised to see the word "Arthur," very clearly, which I pronounced aloud, and remarked in a vexed tone, quite aloud, that it was a ridiculous thing to be told "Arthur" if we asked a question about the weather. I was at once motioned to silence by my fellow-operator, who could not be induced to touch the planchette again, and looked uneasily in the direction of her mother.

On my retiring with her to put on my wraps before leaving the house, she confided to me that my distinct pronunciation of the word Arthur was very unfortunate (or rather that it should have been written), for Arthur was a forbidden admirer of this lady's, and she had a rendezvous with him at church the next day, if fine. I believe that no impression was made on the mamma, and that it was fine the next day, or as planchette observed, summarising, it was "Arthur."

H. POWER.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

SIR,—Though I occupied so much of your space last month, you will, I am sure, allow me room for a short reply to your notes on my letter.

I mistook, it seems, one Mr. Lewis for another, and carelessly wrote "Spiritual" for "Spiritualistic," and of course I ought not to have done so, though the mistakes do not to any appreciable extent affect the substance of what I wrote. I supposed, and perhaps not unnaturally, that Mr. Lewis must have been more than an ordinary observer, since his evidence was given in your *Journal* as a set off to that of hundreds of ordinary observers on the other side. And I think it is probable that the mistake led me to attach more importance to his letter than I should have done if I had not made it.

However, the Mr. Lewis who I supposed had written the letter and whom I spoke of as a "professional" conjurer (it seems incorrectly), is at least a conjurer of some sort, and adds "professor" to his pseudonym of Hoffman. He has also written several books on conjuring and magic, and may therefore be looked upon as at least a "clever conjurer," if not a professional one. Mr. Davey has communicated to him also "the details of his methods," and therefore my proposal that he should perform Mr. Davey's "tricks," not before select witnesses but in public, may fairly remain unchanged.

I omitted what you call "the essential clause" in that sentence of yours which I quoted, or "misquoted," as you say, viz., "so far as professional mediumship is concerned"; and I did so simply because it seemed to me of no importance whatever to the point which I wished to insist on. The point was that, even though it could be proved that Eglinton did his wonders by trickery, it would not follow that young girls and uneducated women did their wonders by trickery too; and it will not matter in the least to the argument whether those females be professional or non-professional.

As to young girl mediums, my evidence is what has been before the public for years. Mrs. Jencken was a writing medium when she was quite a girl, and sometimes too in a language of which she herself knew nothing. Then, is not Mr. Theobald's maid servant the medium in whose presence

writing is done in all sorts of places, approachable and unapproachable by human fingers? These and many similar cases have been recorded in scores of publications and are believed by thousands, some say by millions, and as long as this is so, I cannot see what you would gain even if you succeeded in showing Eglinton to be a mere impostor.

But perhaps I may also remind you that you will have to account for more than his slate tricks before you have done so. If we are to believe human testimony at all, scores of persons have seen and conversed with their deceased relations and friends in his presence. Was this done by trickery too? If so, then Mr. Eglinton is undoubtedly the most wonderful man of the age, and what motive he can possibly have for palming the feats of his own unexampled cleverness on unseen intelligences passes my power to imagine. You might as well argue, and indeed with far more show of reason, that some unprincipled knave wrote the plays of *Othello*, *Julius Cæsar*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, &c., and then heartlessly palmed them on an innocent and unoffending person called William Shakespeare.—I am, your obedient servant,

GEORGE HARPUR.

[Mr. Harpur still seems to be in some confusion about Professor Carvill Lewis. That gentleman has never written anything in the *Journal*, and if Mr. Harpur will look at his "Account of some so-called Spiritualistic Séances" in the *Proceedings*, he will perceive that it was not published because Professor Lewis speaks with any special authority, but simply because he succeeded in detecting Eglinton in trickery.

It is disappointing to find that Mr. Harpur's previous reference to "girls of 14" who "can write in locked slates answers to questions which they have never heard or seen and in languages which they don't understand," reduces itself to an allusion to the published evidence about Mrs. Jencken and Mr. Theobald's servant, who have neither of them, so far as I am aware, written in locked slates at the age of 14 or since. It would obviously take too long to discuss the evidence for these two mediums here, and I will therefore only say that it appears to me to be inconclusive.

If Mr. Harpur studies American Spiritualistic literature, he will find that Eglinton's materialisation séances are not so unique as he seems to think. The evidence for them is much the same as that for the materialisations of some detected impostors in that country—see, for instance, accounts of recent exposures of Mrs. Ross and Mrs. Wells, of which accounts may be found in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* for February, March, and April of this year. That Mr. Eglinton, too, has been detected in palpable trickery in materialisations is well known to readers of our *Journal* (see *Journal*, Vol. II., pp. 282-284). Supposed recognition of departed relatives and friends in a so-called materialised spirit is by no means always a satisfactory test of its genuineness. As an instance of this, I may refer to Colonel Bundy's account of how a certain Mrs. H., sitting not more than 18 inches from the curtain, recognised as her mother-in-law what was to Colonel Bundy's eyes the unmistakable masculine and moustached face of the medium (see *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, for September 9th, 1882).

Mr. Harpur's somewhat singular explanation as to how he came to misquote what I said in the *Proceedings* seems to show that he is still under the impression that my object was to make out a case against Spiritualism. I can only repeat that my object in calling attention to spurious phenomena is simply to purge the evidence brought forward for Spiritualism, as far as may be, of all that depends on fraud and imposture.—ED.]

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

DEAR SIR,—I remember the visit of Messrs. Witherby and Fry at the rooms of the Spiritual Lyceum (not Alliance, as stated by Mr. Witherby), and the chief topics of our conversation. As far as my recollection goes, the statements which Mr. Witherby attributes to me in his letter, are very nearly those I made that evening. He has, however, twisted them a little out of their original shape to suit his fancies as a sceptic. I have no means, now, to controvert or dispute the accuracy of his allegations. After such a considerable lapse of time (some four years), and in the absence of any notes or written accounts for reference, I cannot recall in every detail what was actually said; nor disprove what I have been charged with having said on that occasion. I have not the slightest doubt as to Mr. Witherby's honesty of purpose and do not insinuate that he would make a single statement he knew to be untrue; but I must nevertheless point out to Mr. Witherby that whereas he was dealing—and as a novice—with a subject in itself full of confusion and confusing terms, it is perhaps a little hazardous on his part to depend for material for his letter upon his memory alone.

Mr. Witherby is certainly wrong when he writes that I made the assertion concerning the gradual disappearance of the drapery as being an experiment or experience of my own. I gave it as an example quoted in several books I had read on the subject; which is a very different thing. I may have spoken of analogous cases of my personal experience, because I had seen its gradual formation; but the particular case he mentions in his letter was a citation from a book and nothing more. In fact, I do not like to be made responsible for what I never said, and can only answer for what I wrote in *Light* in several articles which bear my signature. In the number for March 21st, 1885, p. 140, the following statement occurs: "The gradual disappearance may be due to other less miraculous causes. . . . The samples of spirit drapery I have examined did not differ from ordinary muslin or calico sold at the linen-draper's shop"—and to this I still adhere.

But I will first deal with what I take to be a cardinal point in Mr. Witherby's letter, viz., his observation that my opinions (with regard to the reality of mediumistic phenomena) have undergone some modification. I fancy this must have been evident from the remarks I made in my letter which appeared in the June number of the *Journal*. But my objections were not directed against Spiritualism in its philosophical or metaphysical aspects, but against its pretensions as a science based upon demonstrable

facts. And my contention is still that, if mediums were not professional, that is, dependent upon their mediumship for a living, and that if the occasional genuine manifestations were recorded for what they were worth, Spiritualism would still be entitled to claim spiritual cause for some of its phenomena. Mr. Witherby hints that I still believe in the occasional occurrence of genuine cases and suggests that I should publish them. I fail to see what good could ensue from bringing forward any apparently genuine case. I may be personally convinced of the reality of a certain phenomenon witnessed by other investigators or by myself. Upon what grounds, may I ask, can I expect to be believed when, in arguing the probability of its reality, I feel constrained to admit that the medium in whose presence my case occurred had been previously or subsequently detected in the production of spurious phenomena? Under such regrettable circumstances I feel somewhat diffident as to my ability to furnish your readers with a single case that could withstand even the mildest form of scientific criticism. And hence, I hope you will excuse the conciseness of my reply to the different questions raised in Mr. Witherby's letter. If you will grant me the necessary space to deal more elaborately with the subject of professional mediumship, I will devote a whole chapter to each separate question.

All I can state now is that in my present opinion the John King of which I spoke, is either a phantasy created by the medium's somnambulant consciousness (as suggested by Dr. von Hartmann), or the medium under "control" of a disincarnated but intelligent being—"spirit"—the medium being influenced to act unconsciously the part of that "spirit." How far in such a case the "form" represents the "spirit," or how little of the medium remains in it, I cannot now determine. I hope to recur to that hypothesis on a future occasion.

The names and titles of séance-room spirits such as John King, or Charlie, or the Prince Imperial, are, I believe, creations of the medium's somnambulant phantasy or expectations. But I must observe that under the present conditions of investigation it is impossible to discriminate between a genuine somnambulant case and a fraud. I imagine Mr. Witherby has not given sufficient attention to the theories propounded by Dr. Eduard von Hartmann.

The life-history of séance-room spirits, and the various kinds of information given by them, I no longer regard in a serious sense, not even in those cases in which I assume the medium to have been actually in a somnambulant state; and do not now believe in the veracity of any statement of quasi-materialised spirits and professional mediums alike. The drawing to which Mr. Witherby refers represents, to the best of my present knowledge, a portrait of the medium, slightly transformed, in his somnambulant trance.

The spirit of the Dutchman was, I am now almost certain, a mere fancy of my own, a fancy, the result of undetected imposture. But here again Mr. Witherby makes a mistake in his allegations, for I did not tell him that it (the spirit) used to visit me while I was at work. I said the voice told me it was that of a "spirit" present (at the séance) who knew me in earth-life and did often visit me at my own rooms. I ought to have added, unaware to myself, because it (he) could not manifest without the medium. As regards the

temptation by that spirit to make me drink, I must refer to my explanation in a letter to yourself, in which I gave you a narrative of what statements I made to the before-named gentlemen. I still maintain that, as I explained to you, persons, especially sensitives, in the habit of frequenting séances with physical mediums, are, at the time, and for a short period after, (half an hour or so) to a certain degree under hypnotic influence, a condition not unlike the alert state in the mesmeric subject. I will refer to this on a future occasion.

In the spirit of the little child (which I said stood at my side and not "sat on my knee") I have no longer any faith, because I have, on more than one occasion, detected the medium's daughter performing the part of a spirit-child.

I wish it to be well understood, by Mr. Witherby in particular, and Spiritualists in general, that although I have still faith in many of the phenomena called Spiritualistic, I have been most cruelly deceived by physical mediums and their confederates. Hence, I make no apology for having changed my opinions. Nor do I, on the other hand, beg Mr. Witherby's pardon for the admission that I still believe in the spiritual origin of some of the phenomena. The idols are not all broken. Metaphorically speaking, I should say they merely want a fresh coat of paint of a less brilliant hue. But no matter in what modest garb I may now offer them to Mr. Witherby for acceptance, he will, I am afraid, not look at them. He will not be contented until he sees me smash the things into atoms and scatter these atoms before the winds. May be that further disillusionment necessitates the application of a still duller coat of paint. But until it be demonstrated by incontrovertible proof that a whole host of witnesses to these facts, including myself, have been the victims of delusion, I shall keep my idols for what I think them to be worth and still believe that there is a nucleus of solid facts behind the mysteries of the séance-room.

I must conclude by calling Mr. Witherby's attention to the fact that at the time he and his friend interviewed me I had not personally met with suspicious conduct on the part of mediums and had not discovered premeditated frauds. The information I gave them was in perfect harmony with my convictions. I must also mention that I believe that I informed my visitors of the fact that, prior to my investigations, I had personally experienced such as yet but partly explained mysteries as clairvoyance, and other preternormal perceptions; that the "apparition" of my favourite child at the moment of his death was the chief cause of my meditations on the destiny of man; and that the books I consulted on this subject further induced me to search more direct information from the Spiritualists.

I did not approach the subject in the mood of a miracle-hunter, nor as an unprejudiced sceptic hoping to be converted, far less as an antagonist determined to expose its fallacies, but as a searcher after truth. Nor did I depend entirely upon my own powers of judgment and observation but looked for guidance and instruction from what is considered to be the best literature on Spiritualism; and the arguments and theories propounded by the authors of this literature were in full accord with my notions; they seemed to explain my personal experience in every way, and hence I believed in the truth of

the whole of these phenomena. How could I be expected to think otherwise? I had never read or heard a single serious argument against their reality. With implicit faith in mediums—for the suspicion that a person could be so debased as to deceive a fellow creature in his holiest beliefs and noblest aspirations, did not for a moment enter my mind—who can blame me for accepting as true that which appeared to be true? Not that I accuse the authors and defenders of Modern Spiritualism of having wilfully misrepresented facts. My present contention is that they have, like myself, trusted too much in the *bona fides* of their mediums, and have given as examples a good many cases which were, though real to them, the mere work of deception. If these authors taught me much of what is true, they unconsciously led me to accept also much of what is false.

And I must here remark that, after discovering direct fraud on the part of mediums, I did not fail to inform those most interested in the matter. My first experience with a medium (then very much in favour with Spiritualists) included a series of exceedingly doubtful manifestations. I expressed my opinion as to their apparent spuriousness, in a paper which I submitted to the then President of the Spiritual Lyceum. Most of my subsequent discoveries of imposture were communicated to the late editor of *Light*, who took the best means in his power to prevent further imposition by refusing these mediums advertisement in *Light*.

I hope I have now fully explained my present attitude towards Modern Spiritualism and its alleged phenomena. Should Mr. Witherby or any of your readers wish for additional information, or require a more detailed account of my séance-room discoveries, I am prepared to give them all the particulars of my personal experience.—I am, dear sir, yours obediently,

8, Primrose Hill Studios,

J. G. KEULEMANS.

¹ October 22nd, 1887.

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

SIR,—Mr. Myers, in his very able paper at the last General Meeting, appeared to me to offer a solution in one sentence of the question of multiple personality. It was but a hint. I refer to his suggestion that development may lie at the root of the matter. Leaving too altogether esoteric assumptions on one side, the majority of civilised folk believe in the existence of body and mind. The *cogito ergo sum* satisfies most of us. Not a few of us also have a vague belief in the existence within us (or at any rate in some particular relation to us individually) of a something we call spirit. This leads to the guess that, as mind has been added to body, so spirit is being added to mind.

Mr. Myers gave us a new definition of genius which certainly accords with the use of the word as the generally accredited Latin translation of *δαίμων*, though whether genius in our sense should mean spirit itself or the action of spirit (the unconscious stratum) on mind, as the lecturer suggested, philology will hardly determine for us, as *ingenium* originally seems to have meant an innate quality, and so inclination or even character, while the word *spiritus*, a breathing, supports the latter view. Inspiration would thus

mean activity of spirit, while according to the other interpretation men of genius would be the spiritually-minded.

Belief has, of course, always jumped at external influence. The *δύναμις πάρεδρος* of Nonnus, which we find practically in the *Paredrus Spiritus* of Tertullian, is not dissimilar to the old Hesiodic idea that the *δαίμονες* were the souls of men of the golden age helping their posterity. The genius which Servius, in a note on Virgil, says may be *loci vel rei vel hominis*, and which we find substantiated on a coin, "Genius Populi Romani," the precursor perhaps of the *Zeitgeist*, is rather apart from the subject, though opening a very interesting field for inquiry.

It is a striking fact that the interference of *δαίμονες* was always thought to be supernatural, and conversely Pythagoras attributed dreams and signs and divination entirely to *δαίμονες*. No wonder Socrates in his defence considered his direct method superior to the indirect rule of thumb divination of the augurs. Probably it was the supreme difficulty of being conscious of a second self that made the philosopher deny that his *δαίμων* was only his own prudence, which Nepos asserts it was. A word as to method. If we have to be most stringently scientific in the study of the relation of mind to body, this stringency must be redoubled when we attempt to determine the relationship of a something, spirit perhaps, to mind. In conclusion, I may be permitted to remark that this theory of development seems on all fours with the subtle suggestions of St. Paul, a veritable genius.—I am, &c.,

R. A. H. BICKFORD-SMITH.

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

SIR,—The interesting letter of "H. G. R." in the July number of the *Journal* suggests a point which would, I think, repay investigation in connection with experimental thought-transference; and that is—how far the power of visualisation in the percipient is a condition of success. "H. G. R." says that when his experiments succeed, he instantly *sees* the card before the agent; when the trials fail, he does not see it. I have myself frequently made small experiments in thought-transference, and have almost invariably noticed that the percipient, when he makes a successful "guess," says he *sees* the card, diagram, or whatever it may be. For myself, I am so utterly without power of visualisation that I never understood what people meant by it until I recently read Mr. Galton's *Enquiries into Human Faculty*, and my own experiments as percipient have invariably been total failures.

Of course, I do not wish to do more than suggest that the two things—power of visualisation and success as a percipient—may be connected; but it seems to me that the question is worth some inquiry, which it would not be difficult to make. It would be interesting to know, first, whether the successful percipient always *sees* the object thought of, or in what way it enters his consciousness, and secondly, whether, apart from thought-transference, he possesses a power of visualisation, and to what extent.—I remain, &c.,

B. W.

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

DEAR SIR,—The announcement which appears in the last *Journal* that my daughters were detected using a code of signals in some thought-transference experiments at Cambridge, has given me intense pain; and I have no desire to excuse their misconduct, nor to extenuate their guilt, for which they now grieve quite as much as I do. But I do not believe that signs, signals, and hints of any kind were used in the earlier experiments. It would, of course, be impossible to say that a sign was never used in the thousands of experiments that were made, not only before scientific and literary men, but in numerous drawing-rooms as an evening amusement, during the two or three years in which we were interested in the matter, though I was never aware of it; but that anything like a code of signals was ever in use during the early experiments with which I had anything to do, I do not believe.

To show the positive grounds on which this conviction rests I must give a condensed account of our first experiments, and the method in which we conducted them.

Having heard, with great scepticism, of some curious things that occurred at a friend's house, during the playing of the "willing game," I resolved to test their truth with the members of my own family, almost all of whom were then children (in 1880), and entirely unacquainted with any experiments like those of the "willing game."

But before giving details, I may say, that after experimenting for three or four months I gave a lecture on "Thought-reading," before a scientific society in Derby, which was reported in a Derby paper the same week. The MS. of that lecture is now before me, and from it I quote the details of our first experiments in thought-transference, which I now propose to give.

" . . . I made notes at the time of all that occurred, and from these notes I compile the present lecture. On the first evening it was agreed that the children should go out of the room in turn, remaining in another room until called. And this arrangement was carried out through the whole series of experiments.

" The first evening was spent in trying the 'willing game,' as it had been described to me; and though many mistakes were made, the successes were so much in preponderance that we all began to feel there was something in it. It then occurred to me to dispense with 'contact,' to see whether it was really a willing game, or a merely pushing game, and we found at once that want of contact did not interfere with the results. On the second evening we fixed on the names of objects that were to be guessed, and had very few mistakes. On the third evening we settled on the names of foreign countries and chief towns, and had no mistake during an hour; and as, during this time, fully thirty trials were made without a mistake, the explanation must be looked for in some other hypothesis than that of chance. The succeeding evenings were spent in repeating experiments with names of towns, of people, and of objects—such as a pin, a match, a carpet-tack, in fact anything we could think of; and during an hour, whilst we made five-and-twenty trials not one mistake occurred. It was then suggested that they should try and guess cards selected out of a pack whilst the guesser was

absent, and on being recalled the question was asked : What card have we chosen ? And in sixteen trials thirteen were named at once without a mistake, the other three being guessed on the second attempt. We then made a similar experiment with a bundle of fifty photographic cards, and in fourteen trials twelve were named correctly at once, the other two on the third attempt."

Now I wish to call attention to the fact that during the first three or four evenings the successes were as great as they ever afterwards became ; and that the subjects selected for guessing were of the most varied kinds—names of persons, fancy names, of towns, and countries, and objects, &c., for which it would have been impossible to frame a code of signals so as to convey to the guesser the idea of the thing selected—the selection having been always made by me just at the time. Besides, when they began to guess cards, there was a very keen emulation amongst them as to who should do the best, as in order to stimulate them I had promised to give to the one who had made the highest "score" a halfpenny for each right guess. So that, had any signs been made by any one of the company, the cry of unfair play would immediately have been raised ; this we never heard.

The report of my Derby lecture having been forwarded to Professor Barrett, he paid us a visit at Buxton. And for more than a year afterwards we were visited by numerous scientific gentlemen, to whom my house was always open,—morning, noon, and evening, to suit their convenience. No one was ever refused who brought a proper introduction ; and the children (for children they all were at that time) were always at their disposal, and willing to be placed under all sorts of conditions, not only in our own house, but in their private lodgings in Buxton. And yet, during all that time I never heard they were suspected of using signals. Had they been in the habit of doing so, we might have expected to find them improving in their guessing, according as "the code" became more perfect by practice ; but the very reverse was the case. And as I found, after the early part of 1882, that their faculties of percipience were gradually deteriorating, I resolved to give up the experiments ; and it was contrary to my advice and wish that they were recommenced after a lapse of five years, knowing the power of the temptation, which in somewhat kindred matters has proved almost universally fatal, to simulate by tricks what formerly came spontaneously and naturally.

The last word that I shall say on this matter is this : that if the scientific investigators, all of whom afterwards became prominent members of the "Society for Psychical Research," could have been deceived by a few children practising a "code of signals," their keenness of vision, and their faculty of "continuous observation," are less than I could have imagined. Than the above statement I know no more, and I can say no less.

Faithfully yours,

A. M. CREEBY.

October 18th, 1887.