

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

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The Council met on the 9th of May at 3 p.m., previous to the General Meeting. The President was in the chair. Professor W. F. Barrett, Professor Oliver J. Lodge, Rev. A. T. Myers, Dr. A. T. Myers, and Messrs. T. Barkworth, William Crookes, F.R.S., Walter Leaf, F. W. H. Myers, R. Pearsall Smith, and H. E. Wingfield were also present.

On the proposition of Mr. F. W. H. Myers, the Marquis of Bute, K.T., was elected a Vice-President of the Society.

The Hon. Alexander D. Aksakof, of St. Petersburg, was elected a Corresponding Member for the current year.

Four new Members and five new Associates, whose names and addresses are given on the preceding page, were elected. The election of thirty new Associates of the American Branch was also recorded.

Various matters having been considered, including the subjects to be taken up at the General Meeting in July, the papers to be included in the forthcoming Part of the *Proceedings*, and also various items of routine business, the Council agreed to meet on Friday, the 13th of June, at 4.30 p.m.

## GENERAL MEETING.

A General Meeting of the Society was held at the Westminster Town Hall, on Friday, May 9th, at 4 o'clock; the President, Professor Sidgwick, in the chair.

MR. MYERS, in a few introductory remarks, explained that in consequence of reports received from Mr. Hodgson and Professor William James of their sittings with Mrs. Piper—an American trance medium—he had arranged with her to come over to England in November last for a couple of months, which had been spent partly at Cambridge, partly in London, and partly at Liverpool.

PROFESSOR LODGE, who conducted the experiments in Liverpool, then read a report on them. After explaining the mode in which Mrs. Piper goes into a trance, more or less at will; the apparent change of personality that takes place, as shown in manner, voice, and seemingly in memory; and the knowledge of the sitters' friends, dead and living, sometimes shown by the trance personality; he discussed the possible ways in which that knowledge might be acquired, and the investigations he had made with a view to discovering the true source of it. He dismissed the view that it might be got up by Mrs. Piper, not only because he shared with all who had a sufficient acquaintance with her to form a judgment, a complete belief in her honesty in her normal state, nor only because close observation had revealed no signs whatever of her "getting up" anything about the sitters, but because the things said were often such as she could hardly have learnt, however much she had desired to do so. There remained the supposition of clever guessing on the part of the trance-personality and of drawing information from the sitters themselves by questions, &c. This guessing and fishing undoubtedly went on, especially in unsuccessful sittings, but could not be made to account for information given in successful sittings. This certainly required at least thought-transference to explain it, and Professor Lodge was inclined to think that thought-transference from the living alone could only be made to explain it by much straining.

MR. LEAF, who is editing the Cambridge and London evidence, then read some portions of his paper. The sittings in Cambridge and London were less successful than the Liverpool ones. Mr. Leaf was not inclined to think that the evidence before us at present warranted our assuming more than thought-transference—though the thoughts transferred were not always consciously in the mind of the sitters at the time.

[We do not attempt more than this very brief account of the papers read, because it would be impossible to do justice to the evidence or the arguments in an abstract, and it is hoped that the papers will be pub-

lished in full in the *Proceedings*—probably in October, together with the American evidence which Mr. Hodgson is now engaged in putting together.]

Some discussion followed. The question was asked whether inquiry had been made as to the truth of the account given of itself by the trance-personality, which calls itself Dr. Phinuit, and claims to have been a French doctor. The President replied that inquiries had been made, but so far without producing any evidence tending to support Dr. Phinuit's claim to an independent existence. A lady asked whether Dr. Phinuit could speak French, to which the President replied in the negative.

PROFESSOR BARRETT gave some account of experiments of his own with a trance medium—the wife of a country practitioner. She was put into a hypnotic trance by her husband holding her hand, and in this trance she answered questions. He had at first thought that thought-transference would explain all she told him; but afterwards he had obtained information about illnesses of absent friends which he was quite sure he had never known. In one instance the friend, when asked, said that the diagnosis was wrong, but it was confirmed by a doctor whom he consulted. No knowledge was shown by this medium concerning the dead.

THE PRESIDENT said that he fully shared the views that had been expressed as to Mrs. Piper's trustworthiness in her normal state. The sittings produced very different effects on different sitters. An unsuccessful sitter who experienced nothing but fishing questions and guessing, could hardly avoid receiving an unfavourable impression. And a successful sitter was occasionally more impressed at the moment than on subsequent reflection seemed justified by the facts. He had himself had but very imperfect success in sittings with her—certainly not enough to warrant him in drawing any conclusion apart from the evidence of others. He might, however, observe that having tried a series of experiments as to how far "Dr. Phinuit" could perceive what was passing in some other room or house, he thought that the result, though inconclusive, indicated that the kind of experiment might with advantage be repeated.

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#### CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

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L. 839 A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Visual.—Unrecognised.

The following case, received from Miss Marie Thelemann through Mr. Fryer, is an interesting example of an unrecognised apparition on the night of a friend's death, followed by a vivid thought of that friend.

It has, however, the serious—though under the circumstances very natural—evidential weakness, that the experience was neither mentioned nor recorded by Miss Thelemann before the news of the death reached her.

It was in the evening of Friday, the 13th of June, 1884. I was staying in an old Manor in Hampshire, and had spent the evening very quietly. At about a quarter to 11 p.m. I went into my bedroom in order to fetch a few things, and I left it again without having noticed anything. About a quarter of an hour afterwards I went back into my room in order to go to bed. As it was rather late, the light in the hall had been put out, but I carried a lighted candle in my right hand. As soon as I had entered my room and had shut the door, my attention was attracted by a dark shadow standing in the niche which was formed at the right hand side close to the door between a protruding wall and my wardrobe. It was the shadow of some tall, slender person, dressed in a long dark gown. I was startled at this unexpected apparition, and held at once my candle up to look closer at it, when it began to move silently across the room towards the window farthest from the door. A couch and the bed which stood between that niche and the window were no obstacles for it, and I saw it vanish when it closely touched the curtains (of light coloured chintz), which were drawn. I followed it immediately and looked behind the curtains, but found nothing, the blinds being down and the windows locked. I then looked all over the room, under the bed and in every corner, but discovered nothing that could explain this strange appearance. It was an awful sensation to see the shadow move silently and solemnly through the room. In a very excited state of mind I went to bed, but could not sleep. I heard the clock in the hall strike every hour, and when it struck three in the morning, the thought of a very dear friend suddenly crossed my mind; I imagined that she, too, might perhaps be sleepless just then and might be thinking of me. Directly after this I went to sleep. I had seen my friend for the last time the summer before in Germany, where she lived with her husband. She was then in perfect health, and I had not heard that she had been taken ill. A very short time after that night I received a letter from my friend's husband informing me that his wife had died on June 14th at three o'clock in the morning, the very same night I had that strange experience.

Miss Thelemann has given us her friend's name in confidence. She informs us that she has not had any hallucination of the senses on any other occasion, but in a letter dated April 14th, 1888, she gives the following account of (1) an emotional effect apparently telepathic, and (2) a dream which was most probably a revival of memory.

I have had several times forebodings, the most remarkable of which was perhaps on Thursday, April 5th, 1882. I was playing croquet with a friend in the afternoon, when at about four o'clock I suddenly felt very sad and unable to go on with the game. I went into my room, where I stopped till five, crying bitterly, though perfectly unable to explain to myself my sudden feelings of grief and sorrow. On the following Saturday I heard from my

father that a dear sister of mine had suddenly been taken dangerously ill, and on Sunday morning my father wrote that she had died on that Thursday afternoon at five o'clock.

Also some dreams I have had have come true. One day I had lost a pair of studs. The next night I dreamt that they were lying in a certain cupboard, on the second shelf to the right hand side at the back—a place where I should never have thought of looking for them. The first thing I did in the morning was to go and open the same cupboard ; I put my hand to the place I dreamt of, and found my studs.

As to my experience of the night preceding the 14th of June, 1884, I unfortunately did not tell any one about it, as I did not attach much importance to it at the time. But I remember perfectly well that it happened on Friday night, by the fact that the following day, Saturday, June 14th, was the birthday of a friend of ours. I am so sorry I cannot find the letter in which my friend's husband informed me of her death, and in which the time is mentioned. If it was not so painful a subject I would write to her relations and ask for a statement of the fact. All I can prove are a few words which I wrote into my birthday book, when I received the news.

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L. 840 A<sup>e</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Auditory.

The following is from Mr. Colchester-Wemyss, late of the Royal Artillery :—

Westbury Court, Westbury-on-Severn.

In September, 1874, I was in Brighton and was walking back from the town to a house in Prestonville, where we were staying for the night. Close by the old parish church, I fancied I heard my name called and stopped and looked round, but evidently none of the people near had addressed me. It was dusk in the evening, and so satisfied was I that some one had called me that I crossed over the road, looking for the person who called, but found no one and went on. On arriving at the house about three-quarters of a mile distant, I found a telegram had arrived announcing that a carriage accident had taken place, that our children were hurt, and that we were to return home at once. My wife, excited and terrified, ran out to the front door, calling out loudly to me by name. This was just the time I heard the voice, and, at the time, I was in a noisy crowded street, over half a mile, very likely three-quarters of a mile, distant.

M. W. COLCHESTER-WEMYSS.

In answer to questions, Mr. Colchester-Wemyss says that he was in perfectly good health at the time, and in no anxiety of any kind. He was walking alone in the street. This is the only time that he has had such an experience.

Mrs. Colchester-Wemyss, in a letter to a friend dated April 10th, 1890, confirms her husband's account so far as she is concerned. After describing how they had come into Brighton for one night, to stay in

Stamford-road, Prestonville, and how she felt causelessly anxious about the children, she continues :—

All the afternoon we were making calls in Brighton and I should think at about 6 or 6.30 I went back with Mrs. — in a cab, leaving Maynard to follow. . . . When we arrived, the servant came to the door and said there was a telegram for me and that something dreadful had happened. The telegram was for Maynard, from our doctor, and it said that the coachman in returning from the station had taken up our nurse and children, that the horses had bolted, the carriage had been upset and smashed to pieces. He went on to say that I was not to be anxious, as their injuries were but trifling ; but long before I came to that I had made up my mind to the worst and could not believe that they were not seriously hurt, even when Mrs. — kept on saying, “Their injuries are but trifling.” My one idea was to go to them, and I kept saying, “Oh ! Maynard, Maynard ! where are you ? Why don’t you come ?” I don’t think I ever said it very loud, but, of course, when one is in that state of agitation it is impossible to know whether you are shouting or whispering. At any rate, he could not by any possibility have heard if I had screamed. At last I seized my portmanteau by one end, and the cook took the other, and I ran into the street. I think I must have gone on saying “Oh ! Maynard, Maynard !”—I am almost sure I did—and I remember I had run out of the house once or twice into the road and said it. When we got to the end of the road I turned down the hill to go to the station, Mrs. — went on along the road by which Maynard would come from the town. She soon met him and told him, and he ran after me, and we ran on together. When we were in the train, he said, “Did you call me about 7 o’clock ?” (The train went at 7.30.) I said, “I should think I did !” Then he told me what he [has written] to you. [He] always laughs at everything of the kind, but he has never forgotten this and always says it certainly is very strange.

If I can tell you more I shall be very glad to do so. I was nearly frantic when I got that telegram, and I remember how angry I was with poor Mrs. — when she tried to make me eat, or pack my clothes. . . . Every idea seemed to be concentrated in that of going to the children, and the longing for Maynard to come to me.

In answer to inquiries, Mrs. Colchester-Wemyss tells us that the name which Mr. Colchester-Wemyss heard was his Christian name, Maynard.

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#### L. 841 Cl. Dream.

The following dream suggests something of the nature of telepathic clairvoyance :—

Turnours Hall, nr. Chigwell, Essex. *July, 1888.*

Statement by William Bass, farm bailiff to Mrs. Palmer :—

On the night of Good Friday, 1884, I went to bed at half past 10, and very soon fell asleep. Just before the clock struck one I awoke in violent agitation and profuse perspiration. I told my wife I dreamt that something was wrong at the farm stables, and I was so convinced it was the fact that I should get up at once and go there. She persuaded me to lie down again (I was sitting up in bed and the night was cold). Still I could not rest. At

a quarter to two I dressed hastily, and taking a lamp and matches with me went as fast as I could to the stables (distant about a third of a mile). I at once perceived the place had been broken into and that a grey mare had been stolen. From appearances where the mare had lain I judged she had been taken away about two hours previously.

WILLIAM BASS.

Mr. J. B. Surgey, enclosing this account, writes as follows:—

22, Holland-street, Kensington. *July 9th, 1888.*

DEAR MR. MYERS,—Probably a few lines will be acceptable to you beyond those to which William Bass has signed his name. Before being employed as bailiff he was coachman at Turnours Hall, and has been 32 years in his place—a thoroughly trustworthy, straightforward, and the most unimaginative, matter-of-fact fellow conceivable. Before his dream of Good Friday, 1884, he was never known to speak of one. I had all particulars of it almost immediately, but only jotted them down last week. I asked if he could guess how long he had been dreaming when he awoke. No, not possible to guess; but he was in a horrible fright and his shirt was “dripping” with perspiration, by which he supposed he might have been in a state of excitement a good while.—Very truly yours,

J. B. SURGEY.

Mr. Bass has recently been interviewed by Mr. Barkworth, who writes:—

*April 18th, 1890.*

William Bass confirmed his previous evidence to me this day.

About the time when the incident occurred (and for a long while afterwards) systematic horse stealing had gone on in the neighbourhood, but Bass has no recollection of being specially anxious about this. Pressed as to the details of the dream, he recollected that he saw the horses in the dream, and had a vivid impression of “something wrong,” but what it was he did not know. Although thus vague, the impression was so strong as to be irresistible, so that although his wife begged him to go to sleep again, he lay awake for about 1½ hours until he could bear it no longer, when he got up and went to the stable.

His wife confirmed all this, particularly as to his having twice said there was something wrong in the stable and he must go and see to it. He had always reproached her since with having prevented his going to the stable when he first woke.

Bass states he is not in the habit of dreaming. Pressed as to any previous experience of the kind, he said that about 20 years ago he dreamt he saw his father dead. The father who was quite well at the time died suddenly 10 days afterwards.

On the evening before the horse was stolen, he had heard a cart driven by very fast. The neighbourhood is so lonely that anything unusual is remarked upon, and he said to his wife, “There is something wrong.” He had made the same remark on previous occasions when a vehicle was driven rapidly by.

When he interviewed the police in Scotland Yard, they asked him how

he knew the horse had been stolen in the middle of the night, and when he told his dream they ridiculed him, and evidently suspected complicity on his part. Mr. Bass is a most respectable man, well known and esteemed in the parish. He has lived in his present situation for many years.

T. B.

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### CLASSIFICATION OF CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

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As we find that many members of the Society are unaware how the evidence received is dealt with by the Literary Committee, we propose here briefly to explain our plan, as a preface to a catalogue of cases which for various reasons we do not print at length.

When the Literary Committee was first instituted, its members found it almost impossible to study satisfactorily in manuscript the mass of evidence that came in. To meet this difficulty some members of the Committee for a time supplied the funds necessary for printing on slips all the cases which seemed worthy of consideration. The original documents were, of course, also retained, and are stored at the rooms of the Society.

For convenience the cases were roughly classified under the heads L, M, P, G, and S, and were numbered.

L stands for Phantasms of the Living, and the class includes any phantasm, &c., coinciding with some event with which it appears to be connected. It also includes thought-transference in the normal state and spontaneous telepathic clairvoyance. But automatic writing and table-tilting, even if giving messages from living persons, are not included under L, but under M. L cases are often further described by the letters A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> equivalent to "agent dying, percipient normal," or P<sup>s</sup> "percipient sleeping," or A<sup>e</sup> "agent excited," &c.

M stands for Mesmerism, and in this class are included psychical phenomena connected with the hypnotic state and also automatic writing and automatism of all kinds, crystal vision, and induced telepathic clairvoyance; clairvoyance proper (meaning by this apparent direct perception of present facts without the intervention either of the senses or of another mind cognisant of those facts; *e.g.*, perception of cards enclosed in opaque envelopes and unknown to anyone) is also included under M, except when it is associated with the idea of a future event; when it is so associated it is included under P as a premonition, although the seeming premonition can be explained by supposing an extended knowledge of the present.

P stands for Premonition. Under this head we class premonitions, monitions (or premonitions which by foresight are prevented from coming true), and, as stated above, such clairvoyance as includes the idea of a future event.

G (or "Ghosts") includes all apparitions, &c., of dead persons, of unrecognised persons, of animals, of lights, and of inanimate objects, which have some characteristic to distinguish them from purely subjective hallucinations, but which yet do not coincide with the death of any one or with some other occurrence to a living person in such a way as to suggest a con-

nection between the event and the phantasm, and thus to bring it under the head of L.

S includes the physical phenomena of Spiritualism and things happening at Spiritualistic séances other than automatic writing and table-tilting. This class is now in the main handed over to the "Physical Phenomena" Committee.

We have not, of course, enumerated above every possible variety of psychical phenomenon, but we have probably sufficiently indicated the plan of classification. It has not, as will be perceived, any claim to be regarded as a scientific classification, but it has been found to be on the whole practically convenient. Sets of the slips on which the cases were printed are kept at the rooms, and, with the exception, of course, of those which by our informants' desire are kept private, may be studied there by Members and Associates.

In 1885 the plan of printing cases in the *Journal* instead of on slips was begun—see *Journal* Vol. I., p. 245—and by degrees printing on separate slips was discontinued. For a time some cases were type-written, but this also has now been left off. Gradually, too, as the mass of evidence increased, the standard to which a case must attain before it is considered worth printing at all, rose. It is not, for instance, worth while to print L cases manifestly below the evidential standard of *Phantasms of the Living*, unless they illustrate some special point. The present plan is to print in the *Journal* cases which appear to one or two members of the Committee to have sufficient interest to be worth printing. They are then in a convenient form for study by the Committee, and at the same time are accessible without trouble to all Members and Associates of the Society; who may, and sometimes do, criticise them or send additional information about them. Printing them in the *Journal* is not publishing them, and it should be understood that no guarantee by the Literary Committee is implied in printing them there. They are there primarily for consideration by the Committee. The cases used in *Phantasms of the Living*, or in papers in the *Proceedings* have for the most part been selected from those on slips or in the *Journal*; but in some instances cases clearly suitable have been taken at once into the book or papers; this course having the double advantage of economising the funds of the Society and of putting before Members and Associates in the *Proceedings* some evidence that has not been already before them in another form. When this is done the MSS. of the cases are stored and numbered and catalogued along with those that appear first in the *Journal*, &c.

Now that the old plans of printing on slips and of type-writing have been abandoned, it has been found desirable to form a kind of second class of cases, consisting of those which it is not at present proposed to print at all. These are stored, numbered, and catalogued separately from the others and are marked B L, B P, &c., the letters L, P, &c., having the same meanings as in the printed cases. Among the various reasons for placing cases in division B rather than printing them may be mentioned (1) Prohibition by our informants to print; (2) Comparative evidential weakness, notwithstanding which the case may be well worth keeping either as containing points which may prove important and instructive from some particular

point of view, or as possibly to be improved. Evidential weakness is of different kinds; for example, the case may be (a) not at first hand; or (b) remote; or (c) evidence may be wanting to show that the supposed phantasm was not a real sound or sight; or (d) there may be too great a probability on the evidence that the coincidence was due to chance, as with many dreams; or (e) the evidence may be incomplete. There is generally some hope that further evidence may be obtained about incomplete cases at some future time, which may raise them out of class B into the printed class. This might happen, for instance, as regards a case supposed to be coincidental though no evidence as to dates is at present forthcoming; or again, as regards a single appearance in a haunted house with no information as to its relation to other supposed experiences there. Such cases would, generally speaking, remain in class B until further evidence reached us.

Abstracts of a few of the B cases have already been printed recently in the *Journal*. It is proposed to print by degrees in the *Journal* a descriptive catalogue of all of them, both as a convenience to students and as a means of obtaining further information, should any of our Members and Associates be able to furnish it. The cases themselves, with the exception of private ones, can under certain conditions be studied at the rooms of the Society.

#### CATALOGUE OF UNPRINTED CASES.

B L 1. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Visual.—Mr. Buckle is seen walking in Hyde Park by Miss Boyd in 1862; a telegram announcing his death at Damascus arrived at the time. Recorded in 1886.

B L 2. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Visual. 2nd or 3rd hand.—Miss Beane's grandmother sees her brother at the foot of her bed on the day he dies of yellow fever, in China, about 1802. Recorded 1887.

B L 3. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Visual. 2nd hand.—Mr. Hobson's father sees two cousins outside their house on the night they die.

B L 4. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Auditory. From Mr. R. E. Morgan.—Three knocks are heard by all the household at the death of a member of the family in five instances from 1878 onwards. Recorded and signed by four of the witnesses in 1887.

B L 5. A<sup>e</sup> P<sup>n</sup>—Miss — has an impression, acted on and spoken of, that a friend wants her. A telegram predicted and received. Experienced in June, 1886, and recorded six months later.

B L 6. A<sup>e</sup> P<sup>s</sup>—Mrs. Darrell Brown awakes in 1887 with the impression, afterwards found to be correct, that her son in Australia was ill. Her daughter dreams of his illness the same night.

B L 7. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Auditory (Collective).—About 1847, Mr. — and his wife are awoken at midnight by an imaginary brass band. The wife's two brothers (one a bandsman), are the one killed and the other fatally wounded in battle on the same date.

B L 8. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup> Emotional. 2nd hand.—A case of depression during last days of agent's life, with relief at the time of his death. (*Cf. Phantasms*, Vol. I., p. 272, case 69.) Experienced and recorded in 1885.

B L 9. A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>s</sup> From Mrs. Davidson.—Coincidental dream of death in 1886.

B L 10. Ad P<sup>n</sup> Borderland. Visual and tactile.—Mr. John Hobson when a boy, in 1844, was awoken by a tap on the leg, and saw his grandmother gliding out of the room. She died at the time at a house opposite. Recorded in 1888.

B L 11. Ad P<sup>n</sup> 3rd hand.—Mr. Biddle informs us that Richard Sumpter, in 1830, recorded the date of a vision of his brother before the news of the brother's death at that date arrived.

B L 12.—Miss Keightley, writing in 1886, says that “years ago,” when confined to the sofa with illness, she saw the details of an accident to her brother, who was out with the rest of the family, shortly after it occurred. In 1884 she had a vision before going to sleep of details of his death. He was ill at the time.

B L 13. Ad P<sup>n</sup> Borderland. Auditory.—Mrs. — had visited a sick baby nephew in 1872. That night she was awoken by a rustling of her bed-curtains, and heard the child call “Aunt Pollie” twice. He died that night calling for Aunt Pollie, this being the first time he was known to say the words clearly. Recorded 1888.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### ILLUSIONS HYPNAGOGIQUES.

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

SIR,—A letter in the *May Journal* on the above subject having interested me deeply, I am emboldened to address you, and to relate my own experience, now I know that it has a really delightful scientific name.

During my mother's lifetime, she and I often discussed our “dream-faces,” as we called them, for want of a better name, for we never saw them in our dreams, only when lying wide awake with our eyes shut. The faces usually melt into each other in such rapid succession that it is quite impossible to describe them quickly enough in words—such as “lovely face, golden hair, &c. ; hideous face, glaring eyes, making grimaces, nose long and red ; pale, cadaverous face, much lined ; lawyer's face, wig and spectacles,” and so on indefinitely. Last night, for instance, I had just put out my light, when I clearly saw, on a black background, a skull. I had the instant before been thinking of something widely different, and nothing had happened all day to bring such an object into my thoughts. In fact, I had not time to *think* of it, before it vanished, and in a second was succeeded by a vision of angels. They departed as speedily, and were succeeded by the more prosaic procession of “faces.” The odd circumstance about these latter is that though all are familiar and distinct, as no real face ever is to my short-sighted eyes, I could not put a name to one. I never see a friend's face, nor that of a well-known personage, though I seem to have seen each face before. My mother saw only “faces,” and imagined herself feverish when she did so. I see them at all times ; but have never noticed them if I closed my eyes in the daylight when in health. Like your correspondent, I frequently see definite pictures too.

Glorious sun or moon lighted landscapes, mountains and rivers, grand cathedrals, village spires—all of these, too, seem familiar, but I cannot remember to have ever seen them in reality. When ill of a fever in 1884, I saw exquisite faces and scenes, but instead of melting harmoniously into the next picture, a blood-red veil seemed to gradually descend, and to make each feature of face or landscape horrible or grotesque. So painful was this inevitable conclusion that I dreaded closing my eyes. This I remember happened in broad daylight, and I described each picture, as it came, to my husband, as I have often done since.

I hope this rather lengthy account will induce others to relate similar illusions, with a view to their being scientifically explained. Is it "such stuff as dreams are made of"?—I am, &c.,

May 10th, 1890.

A. M. W.

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

SIR,—A letter on "Illusions Hypnagogiques" which is printed in the last number of the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research has greatly interested me. The fact is that I have had experiences of a similar kind almost as long as I can remember. I have always tried to discover whether everyone can see such mental images, or whether it is a characteristic feature of a few persons only; but I have never succeeded in making this point perfectly clear to myself.

I hardly ever see any distinct mental images now; but when I was a boy of 13 or 14 this faculty of mine was exceedingly developed. Every evening after I had gone to bed and had closed my eyes I began to see images of remarkable distinctness which followed each other ceaselessly. These images were always in motion, and there seemed to be some kind of intelligible relation between them—sometimes at least, I mean. If after having closed my eyes I had seen a *flower*, I could be perfectly certain that I should see *flowers* for some time, until another class of objects should take their place. As I have already said, these curious images were always in motion, and each of them was comparatively of very little duration.

As for the character of these images, so far as I can remember, I used to see flowers oftener than any other objects, and I am unable to account for this, as I have never liked flowers exceedingly. It is true that almost every year I used to spend five or six months in the country, where, of course, there were plenty of flowers. That there was—often at least—a connection between the objects I had seen during the day and the images I saw every evening is for me *certain*. I will give you an instance of this. One evening I saw almost all the time *dry leaves* covering the ground, with stalks of grass here and there. This must be undoubtedly explained by the fact of my having spent a great part of the day in a forest, where, of course, I had had under my eyes almost all the time the same scene that I saw with closed eyes in the evening. In other cases *strawberries* were the principal object that persistently remained in the field of my mental vision (as I think it must be called), and in that case these *ideal* strawberries had followed real ones which I had seen and eaten in the course of the day.

The distinctness of these curious images was often striking, and when, for instance, I saw images of my friends and relations, these images were far more like the real persons than what I could voluntarily represent to myself even if I tried to do so.

To show you how unexpected these images could be, I will tell you that once—I think I was then seven or eight years old—I was dreadfully frightened by the image of an ugly old woman suddenly appearing before my *closed* eyes. I had behaved badly during the day and had been sent to bed early; and, so far as I can remember, I considered this image and the fear that followed its appearance as a punishment which God had sent me for my bad behaviour.

I must add that I have never had any objective hallucinations, and even when these mental images continued—as they sometimes did—to flock before my eyes when they were *open* (in the dark, of course), I always knew them perfectly well to be merely subjective and mental.—I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

MICHAEL SOLOVOY,

Associate of the Society for Psychical Research.

9, Mohovaia, St. Petersburg.

April 28th/May 10th.

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

SIR,—The letter of “An Associate” deserves attention. May I suggest that members of the Society for Psychical Research who are light sleepers might follow out a series of interesting experiments on this subject. Some 20 years ago, in consequence of the pain of a slight surgical operation which hurt the nerves of one side of my head, I found I could, as it were, watch my own dreams. It seemed as though one-half of the brain were dreaming while the other was awake. The effect was like a theatrical representation. I noticed that the dreams formed very rapidly, and tried to time them by my watch, but found the effort of looking at the watch prevented my testing the question (so often mooted) of the length of time occupied in a dream.

May I ask these questions:—

1. What is the cause of the white or light grey light one sees in closing one's eyes? I know many people who notice this light (in rooms perfectly dark), and then as sleep comes on first geometrical forms and then figures. (Sailors say that these form often into ships on the sea.)

2. Another point in dreams is, are the figures always complete? In light sleeping I have tried to notice this. Is not sometimes only the part developed to which we give attention—in fact, do we not often dream of bodiless heads or headless bodies?

3. Taste dreams are in my experience very common (though some people say they never experience them). The usual taste seems that of fruit. But dreams of smelling appear to me to be rare.

I have noticed the brown sand “An Associate” mentions.

Newlyn, Penzance.

W. S. LACH-SZYRMA.

## THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF HYPNOTISM.

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

SIR,—All new arts, sciences, and discoveries appear to undergo certain regular and fairly definite stages of treatment on the part of the public, and especially of the more learned portion of it. The new subject is first ignored, then ridiculed, then hotly opposed, and finally adopted with enthusiasm. The science or practice of hypnotism which has passed through all the previous stages seems now to be in transition between the two last of those named. In particular the medical faculty, who ignored Braid and Esdaile, and who persecuted Elliotson, have, in France at least, become enthusiastic students of hypnotism, and even in England are waking up to its claims upon their attention. But this new attitude is accompanied by a very singular characteristic. Since the reality and significance of hypnotism can no longer be denied, it is sought to forbid the study of it to non-professional persons, without whom it would in all probability have never been discovered. Accordingly, in most European countries the medical faculty have succeeded in prohibiting the practice of hypnotism in public, and in some cases I believe in private also; and it is not unlikely that in a short time they will seek to do the same in England. It seems to me, therefore, opportune to consider the arguments for legislation.

The subject naturally divides itself into two branches, public exhibitions and private experiments.

1. I will deal with the latter first, since it is only in private that actual abuses of hypnotic influence could occur. The most important objection to legislation against private experiments is its impotence. Practically, no one can be hypnotised for the first time without their consent, and even afterwards an involuntary submission is exceedingly rare. But given such consent, how is the legal prohibition to be enforced? We are never likely in England to attain to the spy system of Russia under which anyone is liable to be denounced by their own servants to the police; and without such a system nothing can prevent two persons from going into a room by themselves, and hypnotising, the one the other, as much as they please. The only effect of legislation, then, would be to impose certain precautions of secrecy upon the practice, which would increase indefinitely its liability to abuse. The only people in fact who would be bound by the law would be those who were ruled by a rather strained conscientiousness, and these are not the people that require restriction.

2. But if the practice of hypnotism cannot be prevented in private, where is the good of prohibiting it in public? No advantage could be taken of a subject (*e.g.*, a young girl) in public without exciting at once the indignation and interference of the spectators. Is it, then, pretended that to familiarise the people publicly with a practice which may be abused on other occasions is to render its abuse more probable? The exact contrary is the case. For when the spectators see the helpless, defenceless, and absurd condition to which the professional hypnotist reduces his subjects they will be taught in the most forcible and practical manner the danger of submitting themselves to the operations of any one in whom they have not grounds of absolute confidence. Already I have met with persons who object to be hypnotised on

the very natural ground that they "do not want to be made ridiculous." But this objection would never have occurred to them had they not seen public performances.

If the apostles of grandmotherly legislation are so anxious to distinguish themselves there is plenty of work for them to do without interfering with hypnotism. The indiscriminate sale of revolvers might be stopped, for instance; scarcely a month passes without someone being murdered with a revolver. On the other hand I doubt if there has yet been a single case, in England, of serious abuse of hypnotic influence. Indeed, if we are to legislate against comparative evils it would be more reasonable to prohibit all young persons from dancing after midnight, since it is certain that more injury results to the public health from late hours than is ever likely to be produced by hypnotism.

But I am aware it may be urged that, apart from criminal or malevolent acts, hypnotism is liable to abuse by innocent but ignorant persons meddling with what they imperfectly understand. Most of what I have said above, however, applies to this argument also. You cannot prevent private experiments, and they are not more liable to produce injury than the family medicine-chest or the family spirit-case. If grown people of sound mind are to be judged incapable of taking care of themselves, then the only alternative is to keep them under police supervision by night and by day, and make everything they eat and everything they do the subject of legal enactment. But what you cannot upon any reasonable grounds justify is to restrain them here and there from any practice on which, for the moment, you can catch the public ear, because it happens to offend the private taste or private judgment of individuals.

THOMAS BARKWORTH.

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#### HYPNOTISM AND CRIME.

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Professor Liégeois writes as follows to Mr. Walter Leaf, with respect to the question raised in the last number of the *Proceedings*, p. 223: Whether a criminal hypnotiser might not evade detection, even by the ingenious process recommended by the author, if he protected himself by a suggestion to his tool that no one but himself could produce the hypnotic state:—

"The objection which you raise at the foot of p. 223 is most serious; it had occurred to myself, but I did not wish to state it explicitly. Still it is perhaps not impossible to answer it. In two words, this is what I should say.

"No one as yet knows for how long a good somnambule—and it is with such only that we need trouble ourselves—would remain absolutely amenable to a suggestion that no one but the hypnotiser himself could produce the hypnotic sleep. No one can assert that suggestion in the waking state, without complete production of sleep, would be for ever impossible with the same subject.

"This uncertainty would of itself, it seems to me, be enough to deprive the author of a really criminal suggestion, which had worked successfully, of any certainty of impunity."