

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

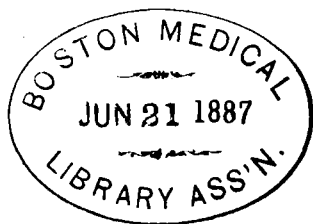
## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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VOLUME I.

(CONTAINING PARTS I-IV.)

1882-83.



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PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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# THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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FOR 1882.

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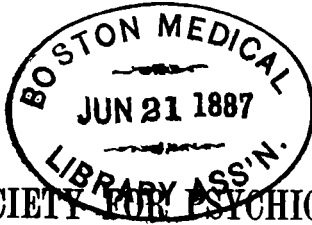
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## THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

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It has been widely felt that the present is an opportune time for making an organised and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical, and Spiritualistic.

From the recorded testimony of many competent witnesses, past and present, including observations recently made by scientific men of eminence in various countries, there appears to be, amidst much illusion and deception, an important body of remarkable phenomena, which are *primâ facie* inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis, and which, if incontestably established, would be of the highest possible value.

The task of examining such residual phenomena has often been undertaken by individual effort, but never hitherto by a scientific society organised on a sufficiently broad basis. As a preliminary step towards this end, a Conference, convened by Professor Barrett, was held in London, on January 6th, 1882, and a Society for Psychical Research was projected. The Society was definitely constituted on February 20th, 1882, and its Council, then appointed, have sketched out a programme of future work. The following subjects have been entrusted to special Committees:—

1. An examination of the nature and extent of any influence which may be exerted by one mind upon another, apart from any generally recognised mode of perception.
2. The study of hypnotism, and the forms of so-called mesmeric trance, with its alleged insensibility to pain; clairvoyance and other allied phenomena.
3. A critical revision of Reichenbach's researches with certain organisations called "sensitive," and an inquiry whether such organisations possess any power of perception beyond a highly exalted sensibility of the recognised sensory organs.

*Objects of the Society.*

4. A careful investigation of any reports, resting on strong testimony, regarding apparitions at the moment of death, or otherwise, or regarding disturbances in houses reputed to be haunted.
5. An inquiry into the various physical phenomena commonly called Spiritualistic; with an attempt to discover their causes and general laws.
6. The collection and collation of existing materials bearing on the history of these subjects.

The aim of the Society will be to approach these various problems without prejudice or prepossession of any kind, and in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled Science to solve so many problems, once not less obscure nor less hotly debated. The founders of this Society fully recognise the exceptional difficulties which surround this branch of research; but they nevertheless hope that by patient and systematic effort some results of permanent value may be attained.

The Council desire to conduct their investigations as far as possible through private channels; and they invite communications from any person, whether intending to join the Society or not, who may be disposed to favour them with a record of experiences, or with suggestions for inquiry or experiment. Such communications will be treated, if desired, as private and confidential.

Letters relating to particular classes of phenomena should be addressed to the Hon. Secs. of the respective Committees, as follows:—

- (1) Committee on Thought-reading; Hon. Sec., PROFESSOR W. F. BARRETT, 18, Belgrave Square, Monkstown, Dublin.
- (2) Committee on Mesmerism; Hon. Sec., DR. WYLD, 12, Great Cumberland Place, London, W.
- (3) Committee on Reichenbach's Experiments; Hon. Sec., WALTER H. COFFIN, Esq., Junior Athenæum Club, London, W.
- (4) Committee on Apparitions, Haunted Houses, &c.; Hon. Sec., HENSLEIGH WEDGWOOD, Esq., 31, Queen Anne Street, London, W.
- (5) Committee on Physical Phenomena; Hon. Sec., DR. C. LOCKHART ROBERTSON, Hamam Chambers, 76, Jermyn Street, S.W.



- (6) Literary Committee ; Hon. Secs., EDMUND GURNEY, Esq., 26, Montpelier Square, S.W. ; FREDERIC W. H. MYERS, Esq., Leckampton, Cambridge.

The Society for Psychical Research is now in a position to invite the adhesion of Members. It is desirable to quote here a preliminary Note, which appears on the first page of the Society's Constitution.

“NOTE.—To prevent misconception, it is here expressly stated that Membership of this Society does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation, in the physical world, of forces other than those recognised by Physical Science.”

The privileges and conditions of Membership are defined by Rules IV. and V. as follows:—

Rule IV.—The Society shall consist of :

(a) *Members*, who shall contribute not less than two guineas annually, and who shall be entitled to hold any of the offices of the Society ; to vote in the election of the Governing Council, and at all meetings of the Society ; to use its Reading Rooms and Libraries ; to borrow books from its Libraries ; and to the free receipt of any journal, transactions, or periodical publication which may be issued by the Council.

(b) *Associates*, who shall contribute not less than one guinea annually, and who shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Society, except such as are convened for business purposes only ; and shall have free access to its Reading Rooms and Libraries.

Rule V.—All Members and Associates of the Society shall be elected by the Council. Every candidate for admission shall be required to give such references as shall be approved by the Council, unless he shall have been proposed in writing by two or more Members or Associates, who, on his behalf, and by his authority, shall assent to the Constitution and Rules of the Society, and consent to abide and be governed by them, one of whom shall have certified in writing, from personal knowledge of him, that he is a fit person for admission. Every such certificate having been read and approved at a Meeting of the Council, the Election shall be proceeded with. The election to be by ballot, and one black ball in

*Objects of the Society.*

six to exclude. The Council shall cause the result to be made known to the candidate, who, if elected, shall be furnished with a certificate of election, and a copy of the "Constitution and Rules."

Ladies are eligible either as Members or Associates.

Meetings of the Society will be held from time to time; and the Proceedings of the Meetings, or other papers, will be published when occasion requires. Rooms will be taken and a Library opened so soon as the funds of the Society may justify this step.

The names of the President, Vice-Presidents, and Council of the Society, as at present constituted, are given on another page.

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NOTE.

Since the first edition of this Part was issued some changes have been made in the Council and Committees, and in the privileges of Associates; particulars of these changes and the names of the present Hon. Secretaries of the Committees are given in Part II. of the Proceedings. Rooms have also been taken and a Library opened at 14, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W., where the Secretary, Mr. Edward T. Bennett, attends on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons from 2.30 to 5.30, and to whom at any time application for information or for Membership can be made, by letter addressed to the offices of the Society.