

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL MEETING ON

*March 28, 1884.*

The seventh General Meeting of the Society was held at the Garden Mansion, Queen Anne's Mansions, S.W., on March 28, 1884.

PROFESSOR HENRY SIDGWICK, PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

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## I.

## THIRD REPORT OF THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

*Committee*.—W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.E. : CHAS. C. MASSEY ; REV. W. STAINTON MOSES, M.A. ; F. PODMORE, M.A. ; and EDMUND GURNEY,\* M.A., and F. W. H. MYERS,\* M.A., *Hon. Secs.*

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## A THEORY OF APPARITIONS.

## PART I.

This is a question which, after five thousand years, is still undecided ; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding.—DR. JOHNSON.

By a curious combination of circumstances the question of which Dr. Johnson speaks—namely, what Apparitions really are—which has in a kind of fashion smouldered on since the days of the cave-men, or at least of Job and Homer, is now entering on an acute phase. It is coming at the same time to seem more *important*, and to seem more *soluble*. In this respect it resembles many other time-honoured questions, which men have been for many generations content to debate backwards and forwards without result, partly from a pre-scientific indifference to accurate tests, and partly from despair as to the possibility of applying them. The attitude of our generation towards such questions is very different. There is an inclination now to get to the bottom of subjects, or at any rate definitely to recognise them as bottomless. If any subject has actuality enough to retain any place at all in general conversation, it is felt that somebody or other may be expected to make it his business to analyse and expound it. The

\* THE COUNCIL HOLDS ITSELF GENERALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REPORTS OF ITS COMMITTEES. AT THE HEAD OF EACH REPORT THE NAMES OF THOSE MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE WHO ARE SPECIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS COMPOSITION ARE MARKED WITH ASTERISKS.

change fairly indicates the extent to which the modern scientific spirit has permeated the world of intelligence. Working unseen among multitudes who belong to no learned bodies and have no scientific pretensions, it helps to bear along on its imperceptible current the craft of the discoverer, which used to have to be ever wrestling with the opposing tides of ignorance and bigotry. The set of this current gradually broadens. At first it speeds the barks only of the older and more established sciences ; but little by little the explorer finds himself supported into more devious channels, through which hitherto the impetus of popular curiosity had never swept. Within the last generation, for instance, anthropology, from being rejected year after year by the British Association as a vain cobweb spun from travellers' tales, has taken its place as one of the most constant and popular elements in their proceedings. And later still, the ingenious speculations of Mr. F. Galton in the delicate domain of "eugenics," and in the idiosyncrasies of mental imagery—received at first with something as near derision as the eminence of their author permitted—are now recognised as a necessary development of the method into which Darwin has cast the thought of the age.

It is natural that the tone and the claims of science should change with this gradual popularisation of the scientific instinct. She can now demand, without fear, to subject, as it were, to her police regulations the Broad Sanctuary which was once governed by tradition and sentiment alone. Everything which claims to be *known* is expected to show its credentials ; and views about the seen and unseen worlds are alike conceived as amenable to objective tests. This process has been applied, as we all know, to every element in ancient creeds and institutions. It would be absurd to say that any kind of general agreement has been in this way attained. But if we had to submit two resolutions, as a kind of compromise, to be voted on by the readers of the innumerable tractates, "symposiums," &c., which have dealt with these high matters, we should select the following as prudent generalities, likely to gain more assent and provoke less strenuous opposition than any others which we could think of :—

1. The thesis that the universe is governed by unchanging laws, as opposed to arbitrary interferences, has gained in probability.

2. The crudely materialistic account of things, which refuses to allow us even to seek the key of any of the phenomena of life and mind outside the admitted scope of physiological and psychological laws, has failed to commend itself as a complete or ultimate solution of the problems without and within us.

Now if we wish to see what real guidance lies in these two somewhat vague resolutions, taken together, our practical corollary, as it would seem, must be something of this kind :—that while accepting as

perfectly valid every law which recognised science can establish, we may fairly suppose that further laws, of a different kind it may be, but perhaps none the less susceptible of rigorous investigation, are actually in operation in the domain of human life; and certainly no reason exists for contentedly ignoring any hint of such laws which experience may offer.

We select, then, a test-instance. We propose to deal with a class of phenomena at once ancient, widespread, and notorious—the standing jest and the standing mystery of age after age. *Apparitions*, of course, in one form or another, are an element in nearly every religion known among men; and the discussion of their reality has been a perpetual feature in religious controversy. But the apparitions which have been most associated with religious ideas have been those of the *dead*; and we shall do our best to avoid controversial ground, and also keep our subject within manageable limits, by altogether excluding this class. Let us take only the alleged apparitions of living persons, the commonest of which are death-wraiths, or apparitions of persons near the moment of death. How does opinion stand at present with regard to death-wraiths?

We think we may say that the subject holds a position absolutely unique. The main question, it must be remembered, is simply as to the reality of certain contemporary events. Differences of taste, of temperament, of skill in historical interpretation, of religious or philosophical proclivities, have nothing to do with it. Yet on this bare question as to whether or not a particular sort of phenomenon, alleged to be observed a good many times every year, is a reality or a figment, intelligent opinion is found to be utterly, it might almost seem hopelessly, divided. In what other department of real and pretended knowledge can we find a parallel to such facts as the following? Within the space of half a year two papers appear in two of the leading monthly Reviews. In the first, a rising physician, acting as spokesman to a party of vigorous and enthusiastic scientific workers, dismisses the phenomenon in question as a baseless absurdity. In the second, one of the ablest bishops on the bench, whose scientific aptitudes were at any rate sufficient to obtain for him the highest mathematical honours at Cambridge, represents the same phenomena as attested in a way which makes doubt of them almost impossible to a fair mind. This instance is a typical one; and without hazarding a guess as to the relative strength of the two parties, we feel assured that, if every casual assembly of educated Englishmen could be polled, each view would almost invariably claim a certain number of adherents. One may not infrequently find the very antipodes of opinion located at the two ends of a friendly dinner-table, and two groups, till then harmonious, each pursuing the theme under a fire of contemptuous

glances from the other. In a professedly scientific age, this division of belief on a point of contemporary testimony is surely an anomaly amounting almost to a scandal; and the more so that the alleged events, though not to be commanded at will, are not, like the sea-serpent, remote and inaccessible; nor, like him, are they described by any particular class of the community professionally addicted to yarns or to marvels. They occur, if they occur at all, in our very midst; and are testified to by no single class, but by individuals drawn from every class, and by representatives of every profession and pursuit.

A question of fact which is thus in suspense clearly cannot long escape the widening current that sets towards minute and exhaustive inquiry. For though there has been but little attempt at accurate treatment, it certainly cannot be said that the general interest in the subject has in any way flagged. With all their difference of view, the two parties at any rate agree in their inability to leave Apparitions alone. There is, no doubt, a growing distaste for the fictitious tales of "the supernatural" which have had in their day a considerable vogue; and it is still safe and easy to treat any thing which can possibly be called "a ghost-story" as on a par with such figments as these. But, for all that, such records as bear marks of genuineness are, as a rule, received with a much more thorough-going curiosity, and refuted (it may be) with a much more thorough-going zeal, than seems to have been the case in times generally accounted far more credulous and far more intolerant. If, therefore, little serious hope has been felt of ascertaining the truth by subjecting the alleged phenomena to a really scientific analysis, it must be owing to an indistinct idea that the necessary evidence exists in fragments too sporadic and uncertain to form the basis of any accurate inductions.

It is against this idea that our first stand is made. We deem it premature to despair of the success of an enterprise which has never once been fairly attempted. We spoke just now of the invigorating effect of the infusion of the scientific spirit into popular thought: we must now even more strongly insist on another aspect of the democratic tendency of modern science. The public are for the first time being made *participants* in scientific work: for the first time they appear as the sources of the evidence, as the actual material (so to speak) of the experiments, which the novel nature of recent inquiries demands. Here, again, we have the example of Mr. Galton to point to.\* The

\* Mr. Galton has felt himself at liberty to offer pecuniary rewards for information of the sort that he desires. We have held ourselves absolutely precluded from taking this course. We do not, indeed, feel that there is any fear of intentional fictions being palmed off on us; as our system of cross-examination (which our informants may sometimes, we fear, have thought pedantic) has by this time set us quite at rest on that point. But it is plainly necessary that our witnesses should not be induced, by any means that can be avoided, to cast their evidence in a striking or attractive form.

fact is, as he has pointed out, that the very spread of the scientific spirit has immensely increased the number of men and women who are able to give straightforward and accurate answers to questions bearing on their personal experience. And as science gradually extends her empire over the subtler problems of life, the importance of this new departure may be expected to be more and more felt. Many a problem which a Reid or a Hamilton settled down to in a mood of conscientious self-examination, and in the philosophic cave of his study, may hereafter be solved in the market-place, by the Method of Averages and by tables of statistics.

But to consider more precisely the present state of the argument as regards the genuineness of Apparitions.

*For* them there is a considerable mass of evidence (which, as we say, has never been carefully collected or measured), and a good deal of popular belief—mainly held, however, by people who believe also that they are more or less *miraculous*, more or less special interferences with the ordinary laws of events.

*Against* them there is a large mass both of scientific and of unscientific opinion. The unscientific opposition need not detain us long. It embodies itself in such assertions as that no one ever heard a ghost-story first-hand; or that seers of apparitions almost always end by believing in the Claimant, the Israelitish origin of the English, and the flatness of the earth; or that no one who was not of a nervous or hysterical temperament was ever troubled with such experiences; and it rests probably on tacit reasonings of this kind, “*I am a strong-minded and superior person, and I never saw anything of the kind;*” or on a comfortable and diffused sense of the progress of the age, and a piquant recollection of Sir Matthew Hale’s belief in witches. Supplementary arguments can readily be improvised to suit the occasion. If a believer in apparitions is a Catholic, it is said that of course he is one who will swallow anything; if he is a Freethinker, it is said that he is setting up grotesque images to replace his lost gods. These people give us no anxiety. Their assertions are mere phrases; and one phrase is as good as another. We entertain no doubt whatever that those who are now asserting that the world has become too instructed for this sort of thing, and that nobody ever heard a ghost-story first-hand, will—after the evidence has been brought under their notice—be equally loud in asserting that of course they always knew that any amount of people could be found to vouch for personal experiences of this sort, and that they are only too painfully aware what a thin crust of science overlies the chaos of primitive superstitions.

But the *scientific* opposition has, of course, a more logical basis. It supports itself on two arguments; one of which is an *explanation* of some at least of the alleged phenomena; the other *presumption* against

the antecedent possibility of the phenomena, except so far as that explanation will cover them.

(1) The *explanation* is that apparitions are merely cases of morbid hallucination; and that the time-coincidences involved (as when the figure of a friend is seen at the precise moment of his death) are due to chance alone.

(2) The *presumption* is that however hard it may be to explain away the coincidence as due to chance, nevertheless that is the only line to take; and we must not suppose that the apparition has really anything to do with the dying person, since this would involve an interference with the order of Nature.

Now the *explanation* here suggested really resolves itself into a pure question of facts and figures. No one doubts that there are numerous hallucinations which do not correspond with any objective fact whatever outside the organism of the percipient—which merely reflect and externalise some morbid condition of his brain. And few would care to deny that *some* such hallucinations or apparitions may have been observed in close coincidence with deaths, &c., and may thus have given rise to the belief in wraiths. It is obvious that until the evidence as to wraiths has been collected, sifted, tested in every way with thorough care, and until also some conclusion is arrived at as to the *frequency* of mere morbid hallucinations, it is impossible to say on grounds of fact whether the coincidences of death and wraith are due to chance or not. If it be at once asserted that *of course* all death-wraiths are mere chance-coincidences, this positive and wholesale assertion must be based on the *presumption* which we shall discuss presently, not on the ground of recorded *fact* which we are discussing now.

Here, then, we have come clearly in view of the *two* lines along which facts must be collected for the purpose of our introduction. We must collect information not only of death-wraiths, but also of morbid hallucinations—of purely subjective visions—having no claim to be anything else. Up to this time no one has adopted the method of systematic collection of facts along both these lines of inquiry, which alone can be expected to bring the controversy to a final close. It is not too much to affirm that the student of the subject may read every word that has ever been published on both sides of the argument, without encountering a sign—we do not say of the necessary statistics, but of even an idea that statistics can be wanted. Confident assertion is a far handier weapon. Thus, to quote a typical instance from a leading daily paper, “The number of well-attested coincidences” between the apparition of a person and his death “does not exceed, as Mr. Lang has suggested, the limits that the laws of chance allow.” The idea that a point of this kind can be settled off-hand by anybody’s suggestion—an

idea which Mr. Lang himself would be the first to repudiate—clearly belongs to the pre-scientific era. It is much as if some one should take a stroll through Hyde Park, observe the children he met, and then “suggest” the proportion of males to females in the population of England. Again, on the other side of the controversy, it is no doubt a more grateful task to relate or to print an interesting narrative than to ascertain, for instance, from twenty of one’s acquaintance the dull fact that they have never experienced a distinct visual hallucination. Just in the same way a scientific lecturer will win more regard at the moment by a sensational experiment with pretty colours and loud explosions than by laborious quantitative work in his laboratory. But we must persistently impress on the friends of “psychical research” that the laborious quantitative work has to be done; and it is some satisfaction to think that the facts themselves may stand as material for others to deal with, even if the conclusions that we ourselves draw from them are incorrect.

But while we much prefer facts to the most intelligent “suggestions,” we must point out that we have no wish wholly to discard the common-sense view of intelligent men, merely because it is not based on careful numerical estimates. On the contrary, we ourselves are in a position to appeal to that view with confidence, in respect of one, at any rate, of the two lines of inquiry which we have indicated. The question whether or not a very large proportion of the population have had experience of morbid or purely subjective hallucinations is one, we submit, where we might fairly have taken our stand on the ordinary observation of educated persons, and have thrown on our opponents the *onus* of proving it wrong. On this point a broad common-sense view does exist; and according to it, “spectral illusions”—distinct hallucinations of the sense of vision—are very far from the everyday occurrences which they would have to be if we are to suppose that, whenever they coincide in time with the death of the person seen, they do so by accident. Nay, if we take even one of our critics, and bring him fairly face to face with the question, “If *you* all at once saw in your room a brother whom you had believed to be a hundred miles away; if he disappeared without the door opening; and if an hour later you received a telegram announcing his sudden death—how should you explain the occurrence?” he does not as a rule reply, “*His* day and hour for dying happened also to be *my* day and hour for a spectral illusion, which is natural enough, considering how common the latter experience is;” he usually says, “The supposition is absurd; there are no really authentic cases of that sort.” Under the immediate pressure of the supposed facts, he instinctively feels that the argument of chance-coincidence would not seem effective.

But to return to our census—it would perhaps have been too much to expect our opponents to aid *us* in a task which it was rather for

them to have undertaken. But we were scarcely prepared for the reception which our proposal for a numerical estimate encountered. It was introduced in a circular letter, every word of which might have been penned by a zealous sceptic, anxious above all things to prove that, in cases where a distinct apparition or vision of a distant person has been simultaneous with the person's death, the coincidence has been an accidental one. If apparitions are extremely common things, then—it was pointed out—it might naturally happen, according to the law of chances, that one of them here and there would fall on the same day or night as the real event which it suggested. Not a syllable was used implying that the authors of the letter had themselves any opinion as to whether apparitions to which no real event corresponds *are* or are *not* common things; it was simply argued that it is necessary to have some idea *how* common they are, before deciding whether apparitions to which real events *do* correspond are or are not to be fairly accounted for by chance. And since sensory hallucinations, whatever their frequency, are at any rate phenomena as universally admitted as measles or colour-blindness, it did not occur to us that the following question could possibly be misunderstood:—Have you ever, when in good health and completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a human being, or of hearing a voice or sound which suggested a human presence, when no one was there? Yes or no?

Clearly, the more *yesses* are received to this question—*i.e.* the *commoner* the purely subjective hallucinations prove to be—the stronger is the argument for *chance* as an adequate explanation of the instances of coincidence; the more *noes*—the *rarer* the purely subjective hallucinations prove to be—the stronger the argument that the death which *coincides* with the apparition is in some way the *cause* of the apparition. We should have expected, if any injustice was to be done us, that it would have taken the form of attributing to us an inordinate desire for *noes*. To our amazement we found that we were supposed to be aiming exclusively at *yesses*—and not only at *yesses*, but at *yesses* expanded into orthodox “ghost-stories”—to be anxious in fact that every one in and out of Bedlam who had ever imagined something that was not there, or mistaken one object for another, should tell us his experience, with a view that we might immediately interpret it as due to the intervention of a bogey. A more singular instance of the power of *expectancy*, of the power of gathering from words any meaning that the critic comes predisposed to find there, can hardly be conceived. A statistical question on a perfectly well recognised point in the natural history of the senses was treated, in scientific and unscientific quarters alike, as a manifesto of faith in “supernatural” agencies; and we found ourselves solemnly rebuked for ignoring the morbid and subjective character of many hallucinations—that is to say, for ignoring the fact



which we had set forth as the very basis of our appeal, and from which its whole and sole point was derived.

So much for the statistical aspect of the controversy.\* We have next to consider the *presumption* against Apparitions as being interferences with Nature, exceptions to ordinary law-abiding phenomena, and so *a priori* impossible. Now let us try to fix the meaning of this expression. Arago's dictum pronounces "impossible" to be a meaningless word, outside the region of pure mathematics; but for present purposes we are content to take it in a much looser sense, and to count as impossible anything which can fairly be called too improbable to be worth inquiring into. Let us try a definition then, and say "An alleged phenomenon is impossible if it runs counter to a sufficient previous mass of experience; or if (without definitely contradicting any established generalisations) it postulates a force whose existence, did it exist, must long ago have been inevitably observed." This perhaps is as fair a working definition as can be got; it is at any rate one that all may agree to. But definitions are inanimate finger-posts, not living guides. And as soon as a really difficult case meets us, it is seen that the whole question has still been left unavoidably open in the words *sufficient* and *inevitably*, whose meaning it must be left in each case to common sense and the dicta of experts to determine. And even if we suppose a decision come to, it will be difficult to regard it as final, so long as common sense insists—and it certainly *will* insist—that all experience shall be counted for what it is worth. How long will our definition bind us to go on dismissing, as "running counter to experience," what is widely and strongly testified to as experienced? Facts which have ended by settling down quite comfortably with other facts, have before now had the door of science slammed in their face; and phenomena which are now the very starting-points of research were once distorted or ignored as intractable and intrusive. Plenty of good solid substances have in their day been jeered at as bitterly as if they were the airiest of spectres. Pre-Adamite fossils, which flew in the face of established chronology, were interpreted as marks elaborately imprinted in the rocks by some uncertain Power, with obscure reference to man's ultimate belief or disbelief in the book of Genesis. Aerolites were scouted as a kind of fetish *in excelsis*—a transcendental bætyl—"the image which fell down from Jupiter." "There are no stones in the sky," said Lavoisier, "therefore none can fall upon the earth." Again, forces now used in a wholesale

\* The collection of the statistics themselves must be the work of many months; and we earnestly appeal for help in it. To obtain an adequate number of answers, a very large number of collectors is needed. Any person willing to aid in the work should communicate with the Hon. Sec. of the S.P.R., 14, Dean's Yard, S.W.

commercial manner, and which existed as widely in the days of Archimedes and in the days of Bacon as in our own, remained almost latent, because the right conditions were not applied to draw them forth or measure them. When we consider the place which electricity now holds in the world, and yet how trivial were the forms under which men for ages had been wont to recognise it, and how little they thought of lightning in connection with it, we must surely be cautious of our assertions as to *when men ought* to have observed a force, and what particular phenomena they *ought* to have referred to it.

This last illustration is specially apposite. For, as it happens, our present theory comprises elements which are connected in somewhat the same way as the electrical phenomena of the firmament and of the cat's coat. Under our term *Telepathy*\* we connect very small experimental, and very striking spontaneous phenomena. Apparitions may stand for the lightning; while the ancient observations on the attraction of amber for straw may be paralleled by the modest experiments in Thought-transference, to which the Society for Psychical Research has been for some time inviting attention. Apparitions, on the one hand, have been observed in every age, but observed with mere terror and bewilderment. And on the other hand, candid friends have expressed surprise at our taking a serious interest in getting a rude diagram from one person's mind into another, or proving that ginger may be hot in the mouth by the effect of unconscious sympathy alone. Yet we hope to be able to show that these trivial cases of community of sensation are the germinal indications of a far-reaching force, whose higher manifestations may outshine these as the lightning outshines the sparks on Puss's back. We hope to show that the lowest telepathic manifestations may be used to explain and corroborate the highest. The experimental work from which, mainly at any rate, the lower manifestations have been drawn, is as yet indeed only in its infancy. But the infancy is a vigorous one; and the results which, when the subject was broached in our Proceedings two years ago, rested on the assumption of the sanity and probity of a few observers, have now been varied and repeated so as to divide the responsibility for their genuineness over a group of persons too large, at any rate, to be summarily discredited.

In thus insisting on Telepathy as a whole—as a conception of far-reaching application—we are but following out a hypothesis which to some of the highest intellects of the past appeared not only a rational,

\* We began by restricting this word to cases where the distance through which transference of impressions took place far exceeded the scope of the recognised senses. But there is great convenience in extending the term to *all* cases of impressions conveyed without any affection of the percipient's recognised senses, whatever may be his actual distance from the agent.

but a probable one. The idea is no mere popular instinct. It comes across our path in works of established fame, from Bacon's stately proposals for "experiments in consort touching the emission of immaterial Virtues from the Minds and Spirits of man, either by Affections, or by Imaginations, or by other impressions," to Goethe's genial view that this power in the case of lovers "is particularly strong, and acts even at a distance." Nor in referring to such names as Bacon, Cuvier, Goethe, in support of a broad theory of supersensuous influence, are we in any way bolstering up by antiquated authority a position which modern discovery has undermined. We most strenuously insist that whatever of rationality and probability that position *ever* possessed it possesses *still*. There is nothing in the advance of science since the days of Goethe, or even of Bacon, which could possibly make telepathy seem impossible to them *now*, if it seemed possible to them *then*. Physiology and psychology have, of course, advanced; the limits of the known senses have been more exactly tested; the invariable co-existence of a physical with every psychical event has been more irresistibly suggested. But the question of sympathy at a distance is left all the time exactly where it was before. Analogy might lead us to suppose that such sympathy, if it exists, has its physical basis, like so many other phenomena of action between distant points. But such sympathy if it exists, being *ex hypothesi* independent of the known organs of sense, is also independent of our enlarged scientific knowledge of them. We have here, in fact, a specially good illustration of the difference between the *negative dogmatism* and the *positive discoveries* of modern science, and of the dangers involved in treating the two with equal respect. It is not the assertion of the possibility but the assertion of the *impossibility*, that the necessary evidence to a widely surmised fact may one day be forthcoming, which is hasty and hazardous; and such attempts at finality lack wisdom in proportion as the prospect excluded is vast, and the instinct which prompts its exclusion a mere moment (so far) in the history of thought. *If* the instinct of the vulgar and the intuition of sages should turn out to have been right, and the fact of communication apart from the recognised sensory channels should once be established, then the scope of the laws (possibly even of the physical laws) which concern our deepest being would turn out to have been quite arbitrarily limited; and the half-century which has surpassed all others in the number of scientific paths which it has opened, would be the very one which had shut out a legitimate curiosity from the most inviting path of all. For in this direction may lie our clearest proofs that we are not mere isolated drops in an aimless storm of atoms, but interacting centres of force, and "every one members one of another." And so far from the scientific study of man being a region whose boundaries are pretty well mapped out, and which only requires to be

filled in with further detail by physiologists and psychologists, we should then perceive that we are standing only on the threshold of a vast *terra incognita*, which must be humbly explored before we can even guess at its true extent, or appreciate its relation to the more familiar realms of knowledge.

We present the ordinary forms of Thought-transference, then, as a first step in this exploring process. And the experimental work, which we thus place in the forefront of our argument, at any rate supplies a new and direct answer to the objection that the implied force—if it exists—*ought* to have manifested itself sooner. For in fact it *did* manifest itself as soon as it was really looked for. Before exact experiments were made, the faculty which we now call Thought-transference was vaguely observed and obscurely asserted; as soon as exact experiments were made, it was definitely observed and explicitly asserted. The mode of experiment may reassure those who look on the faculty as something dangerous or uncanny; we are still quite as far as ever from any likelihood of reading each other's secrets. The results have to be tried for either by a very distinct and irksome process of concentration on the part of the person whose "thought" is to be "read;" or through the establishment by particular means of some sort of hypnotic condition in the "reader." It was when the discovery was made that the somnambulic state could be artificially induced, that experimental community of sensation may be said to have first presented itself. We could fill pages with recorded experiments of physicians and others in the early days of mesmerism in France, where almost precisely the same phenomena as ours were obtained with "subjects" in the so-called "magnetic state." And wherever this induced somnambulism has been largely practised, such phenomena have continued to appear. The novelty of recent years—that with which our Society is specially identified—is the systematic repetition of the same experiments with non-hypnotised subjects. And the experiments, when thus tried, have presented the same results which mesmerists had already obtained in a somewhat different form. No previous experiments were contradicted by these results, since no experiments had ever been performed from which the non-existence of the telepathic force could be concluded: all that happened was that what had always been *suspected* to exist, as soon as exact trial was made was *found* to exist.

We proceed now to illustrate the way in which all sorts and grades of "telepathy" do in fact hang together. And with this view we may conveniently defer our actual evidence for *Apparitions* until we have given some simpler and less startling instances—instances which may form a transition between one end of the scale and the other—of the *distant* and *spontaneous* action of the self-same force which

has been evoked within the four walls of a room by deliberate experiment.

Now experiment has given indications of communication of very various kinds, which follow in a somewhat indeterminate way the well-known fourfold division of mental faculties into the emotions, the will, the senses, and the intellect. And we shall find that the spontaneous cases may be similarly grouped. We do not mean to assert that this division corresponds with the various ways in which telepathic impressions really reach the percipient. The telepathic impact, as we are disposed to conjecture, falls usually upon the *sub-conscious* region of the mind. It emerges into consciousness by whatever channel happens in each case to be the easiest; but we cannot say what it is which determines whether the impression shall be felt emotionally as a diffused gladness or gloom; or fall on the motor nerves as an impulse to some special act; or be interpreted by the sensory centres as a visible figure, or a sound, touch, taste, or smell; or, finally, shall be conceived as a phrase or idea. But adopting the fourfold division for convenience' sake and beginning with the *emotional* class, as the least clearly defined, we may observe that the very vagueness of the emotions renders them a field ill adapted either for precise experiments or precise records. Strong emotion cannot be summoned up at will by an experimenter even in his own mind; while, if it exists, it probably betrays itself in ways beyond his control. And, even when these purely emotional impressions occur on a large scale, and spontaneously, they are still so far defective for purposes of evidence inasmuch as they depend on the percipient's account of his own necessarily indefinite sensations. In the domain of experiment we can, however, refer to the occasional cases where a secret grief or anxiety on a mesmeriser's part is reflected in the demeanour of his "subject." And to illustrate the spontaneous effect, we will select a few accounts from witnesses not likely to be accused of sentimental exaggeration.

We begin with two closely allied narratives from gentlemen of acknowledged scientific position. And we may remark in passing that men of science—who are not, of course, a large class—contribute, we think, quite their proportional quota to our collection of evidence throughout. The following case was sent to Professor Sidgwick by the Rev. J. M. Wilson, head-master of Clifton College, a senior wrangler and well-known mathematician\* :—

\* Most of the informants quoted in this and the subsequent Report are privately known to us. But since it happens that many of them bear well-known names, we have thought it better to omit in all cases the statement of our acquaintanceship, rather than to insert it in cases where our personal attestation of confidence would have looked highly superfluous. The narratives here given are, of course, mere samples from a very large collection, which we hope soon to lay before the public in its entirety.

CLIFTON COLLEGE,

January 5th, 1884.

The facts were these, as clearly as I can remember.

I was at Cambridge at the end of my second term, in full health, boating, football-playing and the like, and by no means subject to hallucinations or morbid fancies. One evening I felt extremely ill, trembling, with no apparent cause whatever; nor did it seem to me at the time to be a physical illness, a chill of any kind. I was frightened. I was totally unable to overcome it. I remember a sort of struggle with myself, resolving that I *would* go on with my mathematics, but it was in vain: I became convinced that I was dying.

I went down to the rooms of a friend, who was on the same staircase, and I remember that he exclaimed at me before I spoke. He put away his books, pulled out a whisky bottle and a backgammon board, but I could not face it. We sat over the fire for a bit, and then he fetched some one else to have a look at me. I was in a strange discomfort, but with no symptoms I can recall, except mental discomfort, and the conviction that I should die that night.

Towards 11, after some three hours of this, I got better, and went upstairs and got to bed, and after a time to sleep, and next morning was quite well.

In the afternoon came a letter to say that my twin brother\* had died the evening before in Lincolnshire. I am quite clear of the fact that I never once thought of him, nor was his presence with me even dimly imagined. He had been long ill of consumption; but I had not heard of him for some days, and there was nothing to make me think that his death was near. It took me altogether by surprise.

JAMES M. WILSON.

Our next case is also from a scientific witness, who can hardly have been tempted to exaggerate, since the experience which he thus records greatly impairs the force of the main thesis of his book, which is directed *against* the transmission of obscure influences (mesmeric and the like) from one person to another.

[*Translation of pp. 71-73 of "Der sogenannte Lebens-Magnetismus oder Hypnotismus" by Dr. E. L. Fischer, of Würzburg (1883).*]

When I was a student at the University, I experienced, on waking one morning, a quite extraordinary feeling of sadness. I was not in the slightest degree unwell, and was aware of no reason for distress, and my state of depression consequently made a great impression on me—the more so that I normally enjoy the best spirits. I asked myself what could be the meaning of it, and whether some serious illness must not be impending. I made every effort to banish this deep melancholy, and especially to assume a gay demeanour in the presence of my friends; but all my efforts were unavailing.

\* One or two of the cases quoted by Mr. Galton, of consentaneous action or thought on the part of twins, seem to us to be probably referable to telepathic impressions.

Before lecture two of them asked me what was the matter ; they said I must have something heavy on my heart. During the whole forenoon I remained in this state of dismal wretchedness. All at once a telegram arrived from home, informing me that my grandmother was taken very ill, and that she was earnestly longing for me. There I had the solution of the riddle. Nevertheless from that hour my melancholy gradually decreased, and in spite of the telegram it completely disappeared in the course of the afternoon. In the evening I received a second message, to the effect that the danger was over. In this way the second phenomenon, the rapid decrease of my wretchedness—a circumstance which in itself was surprising, inasmuch as the melancholy should naturally rather have *increased* after the receipt of the first news—received its explanation. For the afternoon was just the time when the change in the patient's condition for the better took place ; and the danger to her life once over, her yearning for my presence had decreased ; while simultaneously my own anxiety was dispelled.

We have space for but one more instance, which is, at any rate, sufficiently terse and business-like :—

20, RANKEILLOR STREET, EDINBURGH.

December 27th, 1883.

In January, 1871, I was living in the West Indies. On the 7th of that month I got up with a strange feeling that there was something happening at my old home in Scotland. At 7 a.m. I mentioned to my sister-in-law my strange dread, and said that even at that hour what I dreaded was taking place.

By the next mail I got word that at 11 a.m. on the 7th of January my sister died. The island I lived in was St. Kitts, and the death took place in Edinburgh. Please note the hours and allow for difference in time, and you will notice at least a remarkable coincidence. I may add I never knew of her illness.

A. C—N.

In answer to inquiries Mr. C—n adds :—

I never at any other times had a feeling in any way resembling the particular time I wrote about. At the time I wrote about I was in perfect health, and in every way in comfortable circumstances.

If further proof be needed that we have not to go to weak or hysterical sources for evidence of these vaguer and more emotional sorts of telepathic impression, we may add that our collection includes under this head accounts from two informants who, in very different ways, have obtained the highest reputation as acute and accurate observers—Mr. Henry James and Mr. J. N. Maskelyne.

We come next to that branch of telepathy which manifests itself as an influence exercised on the percipient's *will* ; or on the motor centres where will is transformed into action. And here the connection between the *experimental* cases (both in the normal and in the

hypnotic states) and the *spontaneous* cases becomes at once very marked.

Having space for only a single experimental case, we choose one which is of interest as showing a "subject" midway between the normal and the mesmerised condition. It is interesting, too, as the first publication, on first-hand authority, of an after-dinner incident which made much sensation in Yorkshire society when it occurred, and which even twenty years afterwards was still alluded to with bated breath as a manifest proof of the alliance of mesmerists with the devil. The modern inquirer will rather regret that this diabolical assistance was so frequently perverted to mere works of charity and mercy; for Mr. H. S. Thompson (formerly of Fairfield, now of Moorlands, near York) has devoted his almost unique mesmeric power mainly to the cure and comfort of his tenantry and poorer neighbours, and has only incidentally made, and rarely recorded, those experiments on "the silent power of the will" which few men, we fear, in a generation are able to repeat.

MOORLANDS, YORK.

November, 1883.

DEAR SIR,—I will give you a sketch of some of the experiments I have tried, and which lead me to the conclusion that the will is sufficient to influence some people either far or near.

In 1837, I first became acquainted with mesmerism through Baron Dupotet. The first experiment I tried was upon a Mrs. Thornton, who was staying with some friends of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Harland, of Sutton. She told me that no one had ever succeeded in mesmerising her, though she soon submitted to being mesmerised by me. She went to sleep at once, and was very strongly influenced by my will. One night when I was dining with Mr. Harland, after the ladies had left the room, some gentleman proposed that I should will her to come back again, which I did. She came directly, and after this I could not go to the house without her going to sleep, even if she did not know that I was there.

I have met with many cases of thought-reading, but none so distinct as in a little girl named Crowther. She had had brain fever which had caused a protrusion of the eyes. Of this ill effect I soon relieved her, and found that she was naturally a thought-reader. I practised on her a good deal, and at length there was no need for me to utter what I wished to say, as she always knew my thoughts. I was showing some experiments to a Dr. Simpson, and he asked me to will her to go and pick a piece of white heather out of a large vase full of flowers there was in the room, and bring it to me. She did this as quickly as if I had spoken to her. All these experiments were performed when the girl was awake, and not in a mesmeric sleep.

Believe me, dear Sir, yours truly,

HENRY STAFFORD THOMPSON.

The following cases differ from the last in that the desire became



operative at a distance without any expectation of such a result on the part of the person who exercised it.

[*Extract from a Letter to Professor Sidgwick.*]

CATHEDRAL YARD, WINCHESTER.

January 31st, 1884.

SIR,—As a constant reader of the *Times*, I have noticed the "Proceedings" of the Psychical Society, and as your Society has invited communications, I respectfully beg to offer you a short statement of my experience on a subject which I do not understand. Let me premise that I am not a scholar, as I left school when 12 years of age in 1827, and I therefore hope you will forgive all sins against composition and grammar. I am a working foreman of masons at Winchester Cathedral, and have been for the last nine years a resident in this city. I am a native of Edinburgh.

It is now more than 30 years ago that I was living in London, very near where the Great Western Railway now stands, but which was not then built. I was working in the Regent's Park for Messrs. Mowlem, Burt, and Freeman, who at that time had the Government contract for three years for the masons' work of the capital, and who yet carry on a mighty business at Millbank, Westminster. I think it was Gloucester Gate, if I mistake not. At all events it was that gate of Regent's Park to the eastward of the Zoological Gardens, at the north-east corner of the Park. The distance from my home was too great for me to get home to meals, so I carried my food with me, and therefore had no call to leave the work all day. On a certain day, however, I suddenly felt an intense desire to go home, but as I had no business there I tried to suppress it,—but it was not possible to do so. Every minute the desire to go home increased. It was 10 in the morning, and I could not think of anything to call me away from the work at such a time. I got fidgety and uneasy, and felt as if I must go, even at the risk of being ridiculed by my wife, as I could give no reason why I should leave my work and lose 6d. an hour for nonsense. However, I could not stay, and I set off for home under an impulse which I could not resist.

When I reached my own door and knocked, the door was opened by my wife's sister, a married woman, who lived a few streets off. She looked surprised and said, "Why, Skirving, how did you know?" "Know what?" I said. "Why, about Mary Ann." I said, "I don't know anything about Mary Ann" (my wife). "Then what brought you home at present?" I said, "I can hardly tell you. I seemed to want to come home. But what is wrong?" I asked. She told me that my wife had been run over by a cab, and been most seriously injured about an hour ago, and she had called for me ever since, but was now in fits, and had several in succession. I went upstairs, and though very ill she recognised me, and stretched forth her arms and took me round the neck and pulled my head down into her bosom. The fits passed away directly, and my presence seemed to tranquillise her, so that she got into sleep, and did well. Her sister told me that she had uttered the most piteous cries for me to come to her, although there was not the least likelihood of my coming. This short narrative has only one merit; it is strictly true.

ALEXANDER SKIRVING.

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Dr. Fischer, whom we quoted, describes how he was himself once driven forth from the midst of a jubilee-dinner, by the urgent desire (as it turned out) of a person whose need of his attendance was at the time quite unknown to him; and we have reason to believe that the experience is by no means unique in medical practice. We received the following very similar case from Mrs. C——, 11, Upper Hamilton Terrace, N.W. :—

*December 17th, 1883.*

On the 2nd of December, 1877, I was at church. My children wished to remain to a christening. I said, "I cannot, somebody seems calling me; something is the matter." I returned home to find nothing; but next morning two telegrams summoned me to the deathbed of my husband, from whom I had had a cheerful letter on the Saturday, and who left me in excellent spirits on the Thursday before. All Sunday he was dying, and my friends could not telegraph, and there was no train. I only arrived in time to see him die. As soon as I read your letter, my sons both said they remembered the circumstance quite well, and signed the enclosed. George was 10 years old, John 12 years.

ELLEN C——.

We remember, perfectly, our mother leaving the church, saying she felt she was wanted, some one was calling her. The next day our father died, the 3rd of December, 1877.

GEORGE C——.

JOHN A. C——.

Here we have instances of an impression powerful enough to produce a distinct and unusual course of action—for Mrs. C—— assures us that under ordinary circumstances she would certainly have remained where she was—yet so obscurely seated in the mind that its own source remains unrealised and unknown. Somewhat similar is the process of rising by candlelight in pursuance of an overnight resolution to catch an early train, while, though sufficiently awake to dress quickly and carefully, one does not yet realise *why* one is in such a hurry to be up and out. A still closer parallel is offered by a hypnotised "subject," who has been made in the sleep-waking state to promise to go on some absurd errand when he wakes. He fulfils his mission in just this mood of blank obedience to an inward impulse whose origin he cannot trace, and which affects him, we may suppose, like the migratory instinct that carries the lemming into the deep sea. We none of us grasp our whole identity; the bark of our conscious being may float on currents which neutralise each other in unguessed confusion, till one of them bears us for a moment with it, and shows how much stronger than our rowing is the set of that hidden sea.

Our next class, a wide and important one, includes transferences of actual *sensation*—*sensory* telepathy as distinguished from transference of emotion, motor impulses, or abstract ideas. And here we naturally find the line between *sensation* and *ideation* very hard to draw. This is not the place to discuss the derivation of ideas from sensations; but among our published experiments may be seen some curious instances of a sensation transferred, but modified in the transference by some erroneous *belief* on the part either of agent or percipient as to the precise nature of the sensation felt or transferred. Perhaps the transmission of *localised pains* is as purely sensory an instance of telepathy as can be well selected. We have occasionally obtained this phenomenon in the normal state; but it is in the hypnotic state that, though still rare, it is most markedly induced. Take a mesmerised “subject” who is sufficiently *en rapport* with his mesmeriser; talk to him on some question which engrosses his attention; and, in the middle of your talk, suddenly pinch (for instance) the mesmeriser’s right ear behind the subject’s back. The sleep-waker will continue to listen and reply, but his hand will fly to his own right ear, which he will rub with manifest discomfort. Now here is a transferred impression which is as purely *sensory* as we can well obtain, which prompts to an action nearly or quite reflex, and is scarcely present in any conscious manner to the sleep-waker’s beclouded intellect.

Now, according to our theory of a close parallelism between the *induced telepathy* of our experiments and the *spontaneous telepathy* which nature offers on a much larger scale to our examination, we might fairly expect to find some cases where a localised pain has been transferred from one person to another at a distance, unaccompanied by any definite *idea* of the cause or source of the pain thus felt. To give force to an account of this kind, it is plainly important that the pain should be sudden, distinctly localised, and not easily referable to some mere ordinary cause. If Brown were to tell us that he got into such *rapport* with Smith at a friendly Greenwich dinner that, when Smith’s head ached the next morning, Brown’s ached also out of sympathy, we should hand over both headaches alike to a branch of science better established than our own. But when Louis Blanc feels a shock through one of his arms, as if it had been pierced through with a rapier, at the moment that Charles Blanc’s arm is pierced in a duel, \* we feel that any ordinary sort of common cause for the two events is excluded. The incident which we shall now quote (occurring to Mr. Arthur Severn, the distinguished landscape-painter, and his wife, and the account of which has been obtained for us through the kindness of Professor Ruskin) presents the requisite

See “Memoirs of C. M. Young” (1871), pp. 341, 342.

characteristics of suddenness, localisation, and unusualness of the pain in a very high degree.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON,

*October 27th, 1883.*

I woke up with a start, feeling I had had a hard blow on my mouth, and a distinct sense that I had been cut, and was bleeding under my upper lip, and seized my pocket handkerchief, and held it (in a little pushed lump) to the part, as I sat up in bed, and after a few seconds, when I removed it, I was astonished not to see any blood, and only then realised it was impossible anything could have struck me there, as I lay fast asleep in bed, and so I thought it was only a dream!—but I looked at my watch, and saw it was 7, and finding Arthur (my husband) was not in the room, I concluded (rightly) that he must have gone out on the lake for an early sail, as it was so fine.

I then fell asleep. At breakfast (half-past 9), Arthur came in rather late, and I noticed he rather purposely sat farther away from me than usual, and every now and then put his pocket handkerchief furtively up to his lip, in the very way I had done. I said, “Arthur, why are you doing that?” and added a little anxiously, “I know you’ve hurt yourself; but I’ll tell you why afterwards.” He said, “Well when I was sailing, a sudden squall came, throwing the tiller suddenly round, and it struck me a bad blow in the mouth, under the upper lip, and it has been bleeding a good deal and won’t stop.” I then said, “Have you any idea what o’clock it was when it happened?” and he answered, “It must have been about 7.”

I then told what had happened to *me*, much to *his* surprise, and all who were with us at breakfast.

It happened here about three years ago at Brantwood.

JOAN R. SEVERN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON,

*November 15th, 1883.*

Early one summer morning, I got up, intending to go and sail on the lake. Whether my wife heard me going out of the room I don’t know; she probably did, and in a half-dreamy state knew where I was going.

I was left becalmed for half-an-hour or so, when, on looking up to the head of the lake, I saw a dark blue line on the water. At first I couldn’t make it out, but soon saw that it must be small waves caused by a strong wind coming. I got my boat as ready as I could, in the short time, to receive this gust, but somehow or other she was taken aback, and seemed to spin round when the wind struck her, and in getting out of the way of the boom I got my head in the way of the tiller, which also swung round and gave me a nasty blow in the mouth, cutting my lip rather badly, and having become loose in the rudder it came out and went over-board. With my mouth bleeding, the mainsheet more or less round my neck, and the tiller gone, and the boat in confusion, I could not help smiling to think how suddenly I had been humbled almost to a wreck, just when I thought I was going to be so clever! However, I soon managed to get my tiller, and, with plenty of wind, tacked back to Brantwood, and, making my boat snug in the harbour, walked up to

the house, anxious of course to hide as much as possible what had happened to my mouth, and, getting another handkerchief, walked into the breakfast-room, and managed to say something about having been out early. In an instant my wife said, "You don't mean to say you have hurt your mouth?" or words to that effect. I then explained what had happened, and was surprised to see some extra interest on her face, and still more surprised when she told me she had started out of her sleep thinking she had received a blow in the mouth; and that it was a few minutes past 7 o'clock, and wondered if my accident had happened at the same time; but as I had no watch with me I couldn't tell, though, on comparing notes, it certainly looked as if it had been about the same time.

ARTHUR SEVERN.

It is fortunate that in this case the incident was bizarre enough to stamp itself at once on the memory. For one main difficulty in collecting cases of this sort is that, even if they do occur, they are not likely to be observed or remembered. Their theoretical importance is (very naturally) not discerned; they are thought trivial and purposeless—merely incredible, without either pathos or dignity. In reality, no narratives are more significant, or cast a more searching ray on the obscure pervasive co-sentiency of man and man.

We will next give a sample of an auditory impression. And here we could easily give cases in precise parallelism with our recorded experiments—cases, that is, where the actual words used by a person dying or in strong distress are represented to the consciousness of a friend at a distance. But the following, a somewhat more complex instance, is perhaps of still greater interest. We received it from the Rev. Andrew Jukes, Upper Eglinton Road, Woolwich.

On Monday, the 31st of July, 1854, I was at Worksop, staying in the house of Mr. Heming, the then agent there to the Duke of Newcastle. Just as I woke that morning—some would say I was dreaming—I heard the voice of an old schoolfellow (C. C.), who had been dead at least a year or two, saying, "Your brother Mark and Harriet are both gone." These words were echoing in my ears as I woke. I seemed to hear them. My brother then was in America; and both were well when I had last heard of them, but the words respecting him and his wife were so vividly impressed upon my mind that before I left my bedroom I wrote them down, then and there, on a scrap of an old newspaper, having no other paper in the bedroom. Could they have been the end of a dream, haunting me in the moment of waking? They seemed to me like a voice from the unseen. That same day I returned to Hull, and mentioned the circumstance to my wife, and entered the incident, which had made a deep impression on me, in my diary, which I still have. On the 18th of August (it was before the Atlantic telegraph), I received a line from my brother's wife, Harriet, dated the 1st of August, saying that Mark had just breathed his last, of cholera; after preaching on Sunday, he had been taken ill with cholera on Monday, and had died on Tuesday morning; that she herself was ill, and that in the event of her death she wished their

children should be brought to England. She died the second day after her husband, on the 3rd of August. I immediately started for America, and brought the children home. The voice I seemed to hear, and which at first I thought must have been a kind of dream, had such an effect on me, that, though the bell rang for breakfast, I did not go down for some time. And all that day, and for days after, I could not shake it off. I had the strongest impression, and indeed conviction, that my brother was gone. But you should notice that at the moment when I seemed to hear this voice my brother was *not* dead. He died early next morning, on the 1st of August, and his wife nearly two days later, namely, on the 3rd of August. I do not profess to explain it—I simply state the facts. I ought perhaps to add that we had no knowledge of the cholera being in the neighbourhood of my brother's parish. My impression was that both he and his wife must, if the voice was true, have been taken away by some railway or steamboat accident.

Here we may conjecture that the first shock of alarm in the mind of Mrs. Mark Jukes—at the idea of cholera in her household—flashed itself upon the mind of Mr. Andrew Jukes at the impressible moment of waking, but clad itself in his brain, for some untraceable reason, with a dreamlike reminiscence of the old schoolboy friend.

We are excluding from this Report all cases where the impression received suggests a presence wholly external to the percipient's organism, and thus seems to differ not only in *degree* but in *kind* from the more ordinary forms of experiment. In the case of *sound*, however, it is admittedly difficult to draw the line between what is *inner* and what is *outer* sense; and we have therefore included Mr. Jukes' narrative. If we were to pass from the ear to the eye, we should be able to cite instances of *incipient visualisation* of a very similar kind; but the subject of visual phantasms will be more conveniently treated as a whole in our next Report.

From these cases of transferred *sensory* impression the transition to transference of more abstract conceptions is gradual and imperceptible. Ideas are derived from sensations, and intimately interfused with surviving elements of sense; and in the spontaneous, as in the experimental cases, the percipient who receives an *idea* from another mind can hardly tell in what shape or investiture it sprang up in his own—clothed upon by mental picture, or mental word, or in the state described by one great Irish orator when he said of another, "He brings a brood of lusty thoughts into the world, without a rag to cover them." Let us quote first a case (originally cited by Mr. Knowles, in a letter to the *Spectator* of January 30th, 1869) which closely resembles some of our published experiments:—

Mr. Robert Browning tells me that when he was in Florence some years since, an Italian nobleman (a Count Giunasi, of Ravenna), visiting at Florence,

was brought to his house without previous introduction, by an intimate friend. The Count professed to have great mesmeric or clairvoyant faculties, and declared, in reply to Mr. Browning's avowed scepticism, that he would undertake to convince him, somehow or other, of his powers. He then asked Mr. Browning whether he had anything about him then and there which he could hand to him, and which was in any way a relic or memento. This, Mr. Browning thought, was, perhaps, because he habitually wore no sort of trinket or ornament, not even a watch-guard, and might therefore turn out to be a safe challenge. But it so happened that, by a curious accident, he was then wearing under his coat-sleeves some gold wrist-studs to his shirt, which he had quite recently taken into wear, in the absence (by mistake of a sempstress) of his ordinary wrist-buttons. He had never before worn them in Florence or elsewhere, and had found them in some old drawer, where they had lain forgotten for years. One of these studs he took out and handed to the Count, who held it in his hand awhile, looking earnestly in Mr. Browning's face, and then he said, as if much impressed, "C'è qualche cosa che mi grida nell' orecchio, 'Uccisione, uccisione!'" (There is something here which cries out in my ear, "Murder, murder!")

"And truly," says Mr. Browning, "those very studs were taken from the dead body of a great-uncle of mine, who was violently killed on his estate in St. Kitts, nearly 80 years ago. These, with a gold watch and other personal objects of value, were produced in a court of justice, as proofs that robbery had not been the purpose of the slaughter, which was effected by his own slaves. They were then transmitted to my grandfather, who had his initials engraved on them, and wore them all his life. They were taken out of the nightgown in which he died and given to me, not my father. I may add that I tried to get Count Giunasi to use his clairvoyance on this termination of ownership, also; and that he nearly hit upon something like the fact, mentioning a bed in a room, but he failed in attempting to describe the room—situation of the bed with respect to windows and door. The occurrence of my great-uncle's murder was known only to myself, of all men in Florence, as certainly was also my possession of the studs."

Mr. Browning, in a letter to us, dated the 21st of July, 1883, affirms that the account is "correct in every particular"—adding, "My own explanation of the matter has been that the shrewd Italian felt his way by the involuntary help of my own eyes and face. The guess, however attained to, was a good one." We think that in this conjectural explanation the illustrious author of *Sordello* has done imperfect justice to his own power of concealing his thoughts; and we fancy that his involuntary transparency of expression would not have enabled the wily Italian to "feel his way" to murder. But of course such cases are more complete when agent and percipient are at a distance which excludes involuntary hints.

Such instances are the following. The first is from a lady who requests us not to publish her name. We learn from the friends with

whom she was staying that they "remember the circumstances perfectly well."

On the 5th of November, 1855, when I was staying at a country house with several friends, one wet November day we amused ourselves by reading aloud, of which I did a large share, but was so overcome by the impression that a very dear brother was drowning, that ice had broken, and that he was drawn under it by the current, that I could not at all follow the purport of the book, and when alone dressing for dinner, could only control my distress by arguing that there could be no fear of ice accidents, as the weather was exceptionally mild at that time. We afterwards learned my brother had been in very actual peril, having jumped into a canal dock to rescue a companion, who, being short-sighted, had fallen in in the dusk of the evening. My brother was then an undergraduate at Cambridge, and I was in Wales. He received a medal from the "Humane Society," and a watch, &c., from the members of his college, in recognition of the act. I have never had any other similar impression of death or danger to any one.

The next case is from Mr. Robert Castle, estate-agent to many of the Oxford colleges :—

OXFORD, *October 13th, 1883.*

In the years 1851 and 1852, when I was from 15 to 17 years of age, I was left in charge of a considerable extent of building and other estate work at Didcot, Berks, at which some 50 or 60 men were employed ; and for so young a person a good deal of responsibility was put upon me, as I was only visited occasionally, about once a fortnight on an average, by one of the seniors responsible for the work.

Occasionally this senior was my brother Joseph, about eight years older than myself, and who had always taken, even for a brother, a very great deal of interest in my welfare, and between whom and myself a very strong sympathy existed.

I was very rarely apprised by letter of these visits, but almost invariably before my brother came (sometimes the day before, at other times at some previous hour on the same day) it would suddenly come into my mind as a quite clear and certain thing, how I cannot say, that my brother was coming to see me and would arrive about a certain hour, sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon, and I cannot remember a single occasion, on which I had received one of these vivid impressions, on which he did not arrive as expected.

I had, without thinking particularly about it, got to act upon the faith of these impressions as much as if I had received a letter, and the singularity of the occurrence was not brought very forcibly to my own mind until one day when the foreman asked me to give him instructions as to how a portion of the work should be carried out, when I answered him quite naturally, "Oh, leave it to-day, Joe will be here about 4 o'clock this afternoon, and I would rather wait and ask his advice about it." The foreman, who had access to my office, and usually knew what letters I received, said, "Perhaps it would be as well, but I didn't know that you had received a letter from Oxford." I had to explain to him that I had not received a letter, and



that it was merely by an impression I knew my brother was coming, and upon this I got a hearty laugh for my credulity.

As my brother turned up all right at the time named the foreman would not be convinced that I had not been playing a trick upon him, and that I had not received a letter and put it away, so that he might not know of it.

The strangeness of the matter then induced me to arrange with the foreman always to let him know, as soon as I might have the opportunity, on the occurrence of these impressions, so that he might check them as well as myself, and he, although he gave up all attempts to explain the singularity of the thing, came afterwards to trust the certainty of their being right as much as I did myself.

I told my brother of them, who was very much puzzled and could not account for so strange an occurrence ; but on comparing my statements as to the time when the impressions occurred to me, in a number of cases, he said that, so far as he could check the time, it would seem to have been always at or about the time when he first received his instructions, or knew of the arrangement having been made for him to come.

As both the foreman and my brother have been dead for some years past, I have no means of comparing their recollections of these matters with my own.

Perhaps I should add that my brother was living at Oxford at the time, 10 miles or so from Didcot, and that although I was visited from time to time by other gentlemen beside my brother, I cannot remember having had these previous impressions in any case except his.

ROBERT CASTLE.

The next case may also fairly be classed as the transference rather of an idea than of an emotion. We received it from Mrs. Herbert Davy, Burdon Place, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

*December 20th, 1883.*

A very old gentleman, living at Hurworth, a friend of my husband's, and with whom I was but slightly acquainted, had been ill many months. My sister-in-law, who resides also at H., often mentioned him in her letters, saying he was better or worse as the case might be.

Late last autumn my husband and I were staying at the Tynedale Hydro-pathic Establishment. One evening I suddenly laid down the book I was reading, with this thought so strong upon me I could scarcely refrain from putting it into words : "I believe that Mr. C. is at this moment dying." So strangely was I imbued with this belief—there had been nothing whatever said to lead to it—that I asked my husband to note the time particularly, and to remember it for a reason I would rather not state just then. "It is exactly 7 o'clock," he said, and that being our dinner hour, we went downstairs to dine. The entire evening, however, I was haunted by the same strange feeling, and looked for a letter from my sister-in-law next morning. None came. But the following day there was one for her brother. In it she said : "Poor old Mr. C. died last night at 7 o'clock. It was past post time, so I could not let you know before."

E. M. DAVY.

December 27th, 1883.

I have a perfect recollection of the night in question, the 20th of October, 1882, when my wife asked me to tell her the time. I told her the time, as she "had a reason for knowing it," she said. She afterwards told me that reason.

HERBERT DAVY.

In all these cases the idea conveyed to the percipient, though it doubtless involved a faint sensory image and had a certain amount of emotional colouring, was at any rate abstract in so far as it was the idea not of an object, but of a *fact* or *event*. The following account presents an interesting contrast in the total absence of an emotional element; while the idea transferred was of the most unpictorial kind. Mr. Keulemans, a scientific draughtsman, of whose accuracy as a witness we have had several examples, has experienced so many of these coincidences that, even before our inquiries quickened his interest in the matter, he had been accustomed to keep a record of his impressions—which, as he informs us, were invariably justified by fact.

In the summer of the year 1875, about 8 in the evening, I was returning to my home in the Holloway-road, on a tramcar, when it flashed into my mind that my assistant, Herr Schell, a Dutchman, who knew but little English (who was coming to see me that evening), would ask me what the English phrase "to wit" meant in Dutch. So vivid was the impression that I mentioned it to my wife on arriving at my house, and went so far as to scribble it down on the edge of a newspaper which I was reading. Ten minutes afterwards Schell arrived, and almost his first words were the inquiry, "Wat is het Hollandsch voor 'to wit'?" (The words scribbled on the newspaper were not in his sight, and he was a good many yards from it.) I instantly showed him the paper, with the memorandum on it, saying, "You see I was ready for you." He told me that he had resolved to ask me just before leaving his house in Kentish Town, as he was intending that evening to do a translation of an English passage in which the words occurred. He was in the habit of making such translations in order to improve his knowledge of English. The time of his resolution corresponded (as far as we could reckon) with that of my impression.

J. G. KEULEMANS.

We have now, in rough adherence to the common division of man's nature into emotions, will, sense, and intellect, indicated under each of these heads some apparent anomalous and aberrant phenomena, which we have attempted to place in close parallelism with actual *experiment*, and to colligate provisionally under the general conception of telepathy, the precise law of which has yet to be ascertained. Meanwhile, we must specially warn the reader against concluding, from the word *force* which we are obliged to use, that the law is necessarily a *physical* one, or that this distant-working force can in any way be co-ordinated with the recognised forces of the material world. Not only, as with other delicate phenomena of life and thought, is the *subjective* side of the

problem the only one that we can yet attempt to analyse: we do not even know where to look for the *objective* side. If there really is a physical counterpart to the *fact* of transmission—over and above the movements in the two brains which are the *termini* of the transmission—that counterpart remains wholly unknown to us. The physical analogies hitherto suggested for telepathic impulses are aids to imagination and nothing more. Mr. Knowles' "brain-wave" was a metaphor well chosen for its purpose, namely, to attract public attention to a novel field of inquiry. But the transformation (by Dr. Maudsley) of "brain-wave" into the more ambitious "mentiferous ether" only serves to throw into stronger relief the real absence of provable likeness between the psychical and the physical modes of communication. In fact, the first *nodus* of the problem lies in the relation of telepathy to *space* and to *matter*, in the states in which matter is known to us. Unless *some* such relation can be demonstrated we cannot reasonably speak of a *psychical telergy*—an action of mind on mind at a distance—as correlated with any energy which we have learnt to measure. For even the force of gravitation diminishes with distance, and there is no force whose influence on a distant point is not liable to be intercepted by various forms of matter; while, on the other hand, it seems not improbable that the action of mind on mind operates as easily from London to Melbourne as from this room to the next. It is true that in our actual experiments we have found the physical nearness of agent and percipient to be in the normal state always, and in the hypnotic state usually, a necessary condition of success. But in our experiments we seem to be dealing with weak and incipient stages of a *rapport* which, when thoroughly established, and vivified by adequate stimuli, may be transmitted without appreciable impairment or delay, not only through walls, but over oceans, or through the centre of the earth.

Understanding, then, that from physical conceptions we can hope at present for nothing more than *suggestive analogies*, we prefer to seek those analogies on more sides than one; not only in the conceptions of *radiance and undulation*, but in the conceptions of *attraction and affinity*. The illustration which we should be most inclined to use, as we note the extraordinary intensification of telepathic impulses at the moment of dissolution, would be drawn from "nascent hydrogen"—from some gas, let us say, which, set free by an electrical current from its long union with some less volatile element, shows at its first moment of deliverance an unusual eagerness to unite itself with any suitable substance in its vicinity; but which, in default of such substance, escapes away, recoverable by us no more from its diffusion in the height of heaven.

But the testing or verification of such speculations as these must be

left for a later stage of this inquiry. The achievement which we claim for our Society is not a *theory of causes* but a *colligation of facts*. We claim that it has been shown that certain small experimental results can be produced, and that certain impressive spontaneous phenomena, generally discredited as anomalous, can be plausibly shown to belong to the same class as these small results of experiment. To recur once more to a previous metaphor, we may say that we have produced frictional electricity on a small scale, and indicated the probable connection of lightning with the sparks thus obtained. But we have not yet tracked the birth of the thunderbolt, nor lit our highways with the obedient flame.

Here we must break off. We are obviously as yet only on the threshold of Apparitions as commonly understood—the visible phantoms, externalised in space, which, above all things, our title pledges us to discuss. This further step, it may seem, must surely sever us from the experimental support to which we have hitherto clung, and bring us face to face with quite new problems. But though this is to some extent true, we shall not quit our old basis. We shall still hold fast to our fundamental doctrine of Thought-transference; we shall still seek the origin of the phenomena not in “transcendental physics,” but in human psychology. The object of our next Report will be to show after what fashion the minds of men, as already known to us, may be the matrix of these airy crystallisations, the camera whence these phantasmal images are projected upon the waking world—what law is their Summoner and their Disperser, the Hermes which “guides them harmlessly along the darksome way.”

## II.

## SECOND REPORT

## OF THE

## COMMITTEE ON HAUNTED HOUSES, &amp;c.

*Committee.*—REV. W. D. BUSHELL, M.A. ; F. S. HUGHES,\* B.A. ;  
A. P. PERCEVAL KEEP ; F. PODMORE,\* M.A. ; HENSLEIGH  
WEDGWOOD, J.P. ; and EDWARD R. PEASE,\* *Hon. Sec.*

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A year has elapsed since the last report of the Committee on Haunted Houses was issued. During this time we have not been idle, although we have no very startling theory to propound, or discovery to announce. We have been occupied in the main in collecting and sifting evidence, in printing those stories which seemed moderately complete, and in making some few personal examinations of houses reputed to be haunted.

We are moreover convinced that at present we are not in a position to attempt anything beyond the collection of evidence and the making of experimental observations. Our subject is an obscure and difficult one ; the stories which come before us present very various features, and a considerable experience will be necessary before, with any confidence, we can judge of their evidential value. But, as a whole, the evidence before us unquestionably points to the reality of this class of abnormal phenomena. We are not investigating the origin of fables ; we are examining facts ; and the quantity of evidence for them, which we are now engaged in sifting, far surpasses our expectation.

Nevertheless, as noticed in our first report, we still find but few opportunities for making experimental investigations of Haunted Houses. Often such houses belong to families who are not anxious to attract attention, and perhaps ridicule, by allowing us to make serious examinations. In other cases, where something abnormal is seen by a tenant, we do not hear of it till he has left the house, which is either occupied by another tenant or else can only be rented by us at considerable expense.

But beyond these there is another more serious obstacle to experimental investigations. It is very seldom that phantoms appear or disturbances occur with any frequency or regularity. On this point we shall have something to say further on. Meanwhile it is sufficient to state that when cases of repeated appearances are investigated, they usually

prove to be in this respect exaggerated. The original account is that the figure was seen or the noise heard on one or two occasions in the course of perhaps a dozen years. The report of such a story that first reaches us often is that a figure is *constantly* seen, or a noise heard *every night*. As therefore there is no satisfactory means of testing the reality of the phenomenon, except upon the rare occasions of its occurrence, we are losing hope that the experimental branch of our inquiries will furnish us with much matter of value.

Nevertheless, we would beg any of our members and friends who are so fortunate as to inhabit haunted houses, to afford us, if possible, some opportunity for investigation. It may be that we are not likely to obtain results, that is, to see or hear anything abnormal. But there is some small chance of success, and for this chance we are willing to incur much trouble and expense. If one of us could have some actual experience of these phenomena, we should feel amply rewarded.

In these circumstances we are obliged to fall back on the testimony of those fortunate persons who have seen phantasms or heard abnormal noises. Now this evidence is not necessarily of small value. If a phantasm is seen by several trustworthy witnesses, their account of the matter is not vitiated because they do not happen to be members of the Haunted House Committee.

We have made an analysis of the 65 stories which are printed as being provisionally complete, but which, of course, form but a small proportion of our collection. We have classified their evidential value under four qualities, A B C and D. Of these 28 are A, or first-class stories, for which the evidence is clear and strong, and the witnesses for which we regard as worthy of credence. This does not, of course, represent the true proportion of A stories amongst the total number which reach us, since vague, unsatisfactory, and second-hand stories are not usually worth printing. We now propose to give some particulars of these 28 A stories, for the purpose of showing, not so much what they are, as what they are not.

In the first place the whole of these stories are first-hand. In every instance we have received the account from the actual witness of the occurrence reported, and, in most cases, our informant is known personally to some member of the Haunted House Committee, or of the Literary Committee.

We are accused of obtaining our evidence principally from women. This is, no doubt, true to some extent, and very good reasons could be given why women should be our most frequent and accessible witnesses. Nevertheless, for these 28 cases we have the evidence of 40 witnesses, of whom 14 are men and 26 women.

The appearance of figures is recorded in 24 of these stories, whilst 4 record noises only. This is, of course, a proportion the reverse of

what obtains amongst our stories as a whole. Noises are more abundant than visual appearances, but they are far less easily verified. If a phantom is seen it can be clearly described, and must generally be explained as an hallucination, or as a dream, or as something abnormal. But noises may be all these, and, as well, may be rats, or wind, or wood starting, or a dozen other things. Therefore, it is only now and then that we obtain accounts of haunted houses where nothing has been seen, which are sufficiently clear and detailed to be treated as first-class evidence.

Omitting the four cases of noises only, and five other cases which are of an exceptional nature, we have left 19 stories, all as regards evidence, of the A or first class. In these stories we shall now point out the presence of certain common features, and the absence of a good many other features which might have been expected by anyone fresh to the subject.

In the magazine ghost-stories, which appear in such numbers every Christmas, the ghost is a fearsome being, dressed in a sweeping sheet or shroud, carrying a lighted candle, and speaking dreadful words from fleshless lips. It enters at the stroke of midnight, through the sliding panel, just by the blood stain on the floor, which no effort ever could remove. Or it may be only a clanking of chains, a tread as of armed men, heard whilst the candles burn blue, and the dogs howl. These are the ghosts of fiction, and we do not deny that now and then we receive, apparently on good authority, accounts of apparitions which are stated to exhibit some features of a sensational type. Such cases are, however, very rare, and must for the present be dismissed as exceptional.

In examining the normal type of apparition, we find in the first place that these appearances scarcely ever bear any relation to special times. In none of the 19 cases we are considering is the apparition seen at any known fixed time, either of the day or of the year. There are, no doubt, stories that seem to be authentic of apparitions on special days and at particular hours. One of the cases now published records the occurrence of noises at a fixed time. But in general this would seem to be an exceptional feature. It may indeed exist in some cases where it has not been observed, but on the other hand it is a sensational detail which might easily be added in cases where it is really absent.

This fact, if such it be, is important. We are usually told that phantasms appear on the anniversary of some tragic occurrence, reputed as their origin. But if subsequent observations show that the supposed time-relation has no real existence, our task will be simplified when we have to ascertain the cause of these phenomena.

Another characteristic which these 19 cases present to our

notice is the apparently casual and objectless nature of the appearances. A figure is seen, and that is all. It does not act as if alive; it does not speak or use its limbs. If it moves, it is usually described as "gliding," that is, moving in an indefinite manner. It seems to resemble a magic-lantern figure more closely than anything else we can suggest. We may mention in this connection that the production of ghosts as practical jokes, whether by magic lanterns or by any other means, would seem to be very uncommon. Only one distinct case has come under our notice.

Turning to the descriptions of the apparitions, we notice that in 12 cases the figure is taken to be a living person, whilst in 7 cases only it is recognised at once as a phantom. Again, in 13 cases it is seen distinctly, and described in detail; in 6 cases only it is stated to be shadowy and indistinct. On these points, therefore, the evidence is not decisive; and for the present we can only say that the figure, if seen distinctly, is found to appear in such clothes as are now, or have recently been, worn by living persons.

We find that in 7 out of the 19 cases a sudden death, often either a murder or a suicide, appears to be connected with the cause of the apparition. In 7 other cases long residence in the locality, and often a peculiar attachment to some special house or room, seem to be similarly connected with it; whilst in the remaining 5 cases no explanation of its origin is suggested to us.

As regards frequency of appearance, the A stories are not a fair test, since the fact that we have good first-hand evidence for several occurrences of the same apparition is, of itself, generally a sufficient reason for giving the story a place in the first class. Yet in 8 out of these 19 cases, we have records only of a single appearance. And even when a figure is seen more than once, it is often only at intervals during a considerable period. The instances where an apparition is seen on several occasions during one year are very few indeed.

The generalisations which we have now laid before you are professedly made from the 19 cases under consideration, but in reality we have drawn them from our knowledge of the whole mass of evidence in our possession. We find that a large majority of the stories which prove to be genuine, possess certain features; and, on the other hand, we find that in nine cases out of ten, when a story differs widely from the type, it proves to be incorrect, or unattainable from an authentic source. We are not prepared to affirm that all exceptional stories are unworthy of credence. But we are inclined to believe that a larger collection of material, and a more careful study of it, will, before long, enable us to lay down with some certainty and precision the laws of the occurrence of those phenomena.

In conclusion, we must repeat that we offer no hypothesis to account



for the facts which we are discussing. We have avoided the convenient word "ghost" because it might be understood as conveying the idea that phantoms are due to the presence of departed spirits. To this hypothesis we desire to give no countenance. Until our collection of facts is larger, and our examination of them more complete, we absolutely decline to theorise.

We have now to bring before you two narratives, the first of which is a fair example of the normal type. It is a good case, because we have accounts of the apparition on three distinct occasions, and from three separate persons. Moreover, the story is of recent date, and the witnesses are all alive, and personally known to our President and to Professor Barrett.

The evidence is as follows :—

In relating simply what I saw one July morning in the year 1873, I will first describe the room in which I saw it. It is a bedroom with a window at either end, a door and a fireplace at opposite sides ; the door is nearer the front window, and the room is on the upper storey of a two-storied house, as you know, some miles from the city of D—. The house is an old one, said to have been built before the Rebellion ; it has all the appearance of dating as far back as that, at least, the walls being unusually thick, and the roof high-pointed and uneven. A large old-fashioned garden lies in front, and a yard opening upon the public road at the rear. The occupants at the time I speak of were my brother Henry, myself, and a servant woman. The latter slept in a room in the basement storey. A lobby divided my brother's room from mine. On the night before the morning above-mentioned, I had locked my door, as usual, and having undressed and put out my light, I fell into a sound dreamless sleep. I awakened, I should think, about 3 o'clock in the morning—of the hour I am not sure—with my face to the front window. One of my oddities consists in disliking cross lights, so that I had got into the habit of having the blind of the back window drawn and the shutters closed at night, and of leaving the blind raised and the shutters open towards the front, liking to see the trees and sky when I awakened.

Opening my eyes now I saw right before me the figure of a woman, stooping down and apparently looking at me. Her head and shoulders were wrapped in a common grey woollen shawl. Her arms were folded, and they were also wrapped, as if for warmth, in the shawl. I looked at her in my horror, and dared not cry out lest I might move the awful thing to speech or action. I lay and looked and felt as if I should lose my reason. Behind her head I saw the window and the growing dawn, the looking-glass upon the toilette table, and the furniture in that part of the room. After what may have been only seconds—of the duration of this vision I cannot judge—she raised herself and went backwards towards the widow, stood at the toilette table, and gradually vanished. I mean she grew by degrees transparent, and that through the shawl and the grey dress she wore I saw the white muslin of the tablecover again, and at last saw that only in the place where she had stood. I have heard people speak of lying "without moving

a muscle." For hours I lay as I had lain on first awaking, not daring even to turn my eyes lest on the other side of the bed I should see her again, and first had courage to stir when the servant came to call me. Now there is one thing of which I could take my oath, and that is, that I did not mention this circumstance either to my brother or our servant. I was almost morally certain that if I had done so the latter, whom we valued, would leave us, and that the former would turn me into ridicule. We had been only about four months in that neighbourhood, and had few acquaintances, and I am equally certain that I mentioned the occurrence to none of them. At the distance of about a mile and a-half from us lived a family with whom I had long been intimate, but to whom my brother had not then been introduced. After passing a sleepless night with a perfect glare of lamp-light about me, and not daring even to close my eyes, I started on the second day to see my friends and consult with them. As we sat at luncheon I told them about it, half dreading the ridicule of my host, but though he smiled at first he went gravely into it, and proved in a sensible, matter-of-fact way, entirely to his satisfaction, that the apparition was attributable to the state of the drainage or that of my stomach. His wife and daughter were sorry for my evident nervousness, and, I fancy, set down a good deal of it to a very imaginative mind. However, I went home considerably relieved, and struggled hard to obliterate my vivid remembrance with my friend's arguments.

Exactly a fortnight afterwards, when sitting at breakfast, I noticed that my brother seemed out of sorts, and did not eat. On asking if anything were the matter, he replied: "No, but I've had a horrid night-mare. Indeed," he went on, "it was no night-mare. I saw it early this morning, just as distinctly as I see you." "What?" I asked. "A villainous looking hag," he answered, "with her head and arms wrapped in a cloak, stooping over me, and looking like this——" He got up, folded his arms, and put himself in the posture I remembered so well. "O, Henry," I said, "I saw the same a fortnight ago." "And why did you not tell me before?" he asked. "Because," I said, "I was sure you would only laugh." "I should be sorry," he said, "if anyone laughed at me if I mentioned this; it has quite upset me." He then described how the figure moved towards the door and disappeared. I asked him if she wore a cloak or a shawl, and he said it might have been either—he was chiefly struck by her malevolent face and her posture.

About four years afterwards, in the month of July, one evening about 7 o'clock, my second eldest sister and two little children were the only people at home. The eldest child, a boy of about four or five years, asked for a drink, and on leaving the dining-room to fetch it my sister desired the children to remain there till her return, leaving the door open. Coming back as quickly as possible, she met the boy pale and trembling on his way to her, and asked why he had left the room. "Oh," he said "who is that woman, who is that woman?" "Where?" she asked. "That old woman that went upstairs," he answered. She tried to convince him that there was no one else in the house, but he was so agitated and so eager to prove it that she took his trembling hand in hers and brought him upstairs, from one room to another, he searching behind curtains and under beds, still

maintaining that a woman "did go upstairs." My sister thought that the mere fact of a woman going upstairs in a house where he was a stranger would hardly account for the terror of the child. My brother had then married and gone to live at a distance.

A gentleman with whom we became acquainted in the neighbourhood, started when we first told him of what we had seen, and asked had we never heard that a woman had been killed in that house many years previously, and that it was said to be haunted. He is a sober-minded, religious man, an Englishman of middle age, the most unimaginative man I ever met, but he says he firmly believes we actually saw what he described.

I have heard that the house was previously for years unlet owing to having got the name of being haunted, and this was our only reason for keeping the story very much to ourselves. About three years since, I mentioned what we had seen to the sub-agent, a respectable man, and he seemed annoyed and asked if anyone had been telling us anything of the kind, to which we replied in the negative. We had been awakened night after night by the sound of heavy blows such as I have heard produced by breaking up peat with a cleaver, and, day and night, heavy footsteps going up and down stairs. One night as I was going to bed—my youngest sister had been in about 10 minutes previously to say good night—I heard a loud knocking at the panel of my door—someone knocking with the knuckles—and I called out, "Come in!" As there was no answer I called out louder, "Come in!" taking for granted it was my sister come back for some reason. As she did not answer and was not at my door when I opened it, I went across the lobby to her room, saying, in rather a tone of annoyance, "Why didn't you come in?" when I saw the room was dark, and getting a light saw she was sound asleep.

Another night, while undressing at the far end of the room, I heard the sound of a large bunch of keys flung violently on the toilette-table. At first I was startled, but took my light over to examine it, thinking I might have left keys or some heavy metal in such a position as to cause a fall like what I had heard, but still could not get over the idea that they were *flung* violently. There was nothing of the kind to be seen on or near the table. Two or three small keys hung in one of the drawers of my chest of drawers, and were not in motion. Frequently, in that room, both in day-time and at night, my dress has been pulled as if grasped by some hand.

On one occasion, as I was laid up with erysipelas in my foot, my youngest sister had a bed moved into my room and slept there to take care of me. When one night, as I lay wide awake, my foot being rather painful, there was a loud sound beside my bed—as if some heavy body had fallen—indeed, the whole room shook with the fall. My sister started up out of a sound sleep, and cried out, "What is it? What is it?" in a frightened voice. "What did you hear?" I asked. "Something heavy falling there," she said, and pointed to the spot at which I heard it—which was, in fact, the very spot on which my visitant appeared to me. She got up and searched the room, but found nothing to account for it.

May 23rd, 1883.

H. C. S. B.

About three years ago, on the night of the 7th July, I was awakened from a sound sleep by someone speaking close to me. I turned round saying, "What is it, Emily?" thinking that a sister who slept in the room next mine had come in. I saw plainly the figure of a woman who deliberately and silently moved away towards the door, which remained shut as I had left it. She disappeared, and not till then did the slightest doubt of my visitor being supernatural enter my mind. Then I got really frightened, saying to myself it must be the "Grey Lady," as we had for years called our ghost, the story of which I had often turned into ridicule. A few minutes afterwards I heard the hall clock strike two. I may mention that neither shutters nor blind were closed. I thought it best to say nothing of what had occurred to the only sister then at home, but the next evening when talking to a gentleman who was with us, she said suddenly to me, "Did you hear any noise last night? I thought it sounded as if in your room." I said, "No—at what hour?" "Two o'clock." Soon she left the sitting-room, and I told the friend with us, under the promise of secrecy, what I had seen.

M. B.

*July 5th, 1883.*

So far as I recollect, it was about this time 10 or 11 years ago, I was asleep in the house in question, and suddenly about 6 o'clock on a fine summer's morning I was awakened by a feeling or presentiment of approaching evil. I opened my eyes and distinctly saw the form of a darkly-clad elderly female bending over me with folded arms, and glaring at me with eyes of the most intense malevolence and malignity. I tried to scream, and struggled to withdraw myself from her, when she slowly and silently receded backwards and seemed to vanish through the bedroom door. I cannot say whether the door was locked; I generally keep it so at night, but it was certainly closed tight.

*August 1st, 1883.*

H. B. B., Solicitor.

The next narrative is a remarkably clear account of a haunted house where noises were heard, but nothing was ever seen. It was written by a well-known Church dignitary, from whose widow we have received it. She was cognisant of all the facts related, and confirms the accuracy of the account in every detail. The case is remarkable as showing a periodicity in the noises, which is, as we have previously stated, by no means a common feature.

About 18 years ago, having completed the probationary period of two years from my ordination as deacon, I was in search of a curacy. Amongst others which came under my notice was one in the south-west of the county of S. The parish was extensive and the situation very retired. It was a sole charge, and a commodious house was at the disposal of the curate. The curacy was accepted, and in due time my wife and I proceeded to take possession of our new home. We reached it on the afternoon of a dull February day.

The vicarage we were to occupy was a square spacious building, surrounded by lawn and shrubberies, garden and orchard. The house was detached, situated a short distance from the village, and separated by a road from two

or three cottages which were the nearest dwellings. Our rooms were large and sufficiently lofty, everything was in good repair, and we congratulated ourselves on having secured a comfortable home.

It was, I remember, a Friday afternoon on which we arrived, and we worked with a will, and had two or three rooms fit for occupancy by Saturday evening.

Night fell, shutters were fastened, bolts shot and keys turned, and my wife and I retired to bed on that Saturday, not reluctantly, for we had worked for a couple of days as hard as porters in a warehouse.

We had not as yet engaged a servant, and had, therefore, availed ourselves of the help of an honest country woman who lived hard by. When I made all fast on the Saturday night, that honest country woman, my wife, and myself were—to the best of my knowledge and belief—the only three living beings within the four walls of the vicarage. Long before twelve we were all in the land of dreams, and probably some way beyond it, in that realm of sleep to which no “extravagant and erring” dream ever finds its way. Suddenly, however, there broke on our drowsy ears a sound which murdered sleep. In a moment, almost before consciousness had come, I was out of bed and on my feet, and even then it seemed as if that strange noise was only just passing into the accustomed silence of deep night. My wife was as abruptly and completely roused as myself, and together we listened for some repetition of what had disturbed us, or for some further token to guide us to the discovery of its cause. But nothing came. It was obviously my business to make an investigation without delay, for the natural solution of the mystery was that some one or more persons had made their way into the house.

Accordingly I hurried on a few articles of dress and set out on an exploring expedition. Before doing so, however, I looked at my watch, and found that it was just 2.5 a.m. I wish to call particular attention to this fact. I made a thorough search over the whole house. I examined the fastenings of the doors, the shutters of the windows. All was safe, all was quiet, everything was in its place. There was nothing left for me to do but to return to my room, go to bed, and think no more of the disturbance. This last was not so easy. Neither my wife nor I could persuade ourselves that it was a mistake. The sound was so palpable, broke on our sleep with so peremptory a summons, pealed on our half-awakened senses with so prolonged a crash, that neither could its reality be doubted nor its impression thrown off.

It struck me, then and afterwards, as being like the crash of iron bars falling suddenly to the ground. Certainly there was a sharp metallic ring about it. Moreover, it was prolonged, and, instead of coming from some fixed point, it seemed to traverse the house like a succession of rattling echoes, treading hard on one another's heels.

I speak of it not specially as it impressed me on the particular occasion to which I am referring, but from my general estimate of its character; for I may as well say at once that my acquaintance with it was not limited to the experiences of that one early Sunday morning. Of course—on my return to my room—when we talked the matter over, it occurred to us to ascertain whether the good woman from the village had also been roused by the din.

However, as she had not herself given any signs of alarm, we resolved to wait to see whether she had any tale to tell in the morning.

Well! the remaining hours of darkness passed away quietly enough, and when morning came we found that the third member of our household had been a sharer with ourselves in the mysterious visitation. She, like us, had been rudely awakened, and had long lain awake in a state of considerable disquietude and alarm.

To her, however, the thing was not quite so strange and unlooked for as to us. "Oh dear," she said, "I've heard tell of it afore, but never till last night did I hear it, and don't want to again."

She had heard tell of it before. But there was not much more to be got out of her, and she seemed unwilling to discuss the subject. "It was a conceit," she said, and that was all she chose to say about it. On one point, however, she was clear enough, and that was the necessity of going home that evening to look after her house and children. She would give us her services during the day, but she could not well be spared from home at nights. To this effect, therefore, an accommodation was made with her, and my wife and I stood committed for the coming night to be the sole garrison of the vicarage, whether it was to be assailed by tangible force or impalpable sounds. The Sunday duties were duly discharged. I met my parishioners in their church for the first time; looked round with satisfaction on a large and attentive, though not perhaps especially intelligent congregation, and could not help wondering whether any of those stolid young farmers and peasants, whose faces were turned so impassively towards the pulpit, had been indulging in a grim practical joke at my expense.

In due time, my wife and I found ourselves alone in the vicarage: the darkness of a winter night without, a snug wainscoted parlour, a bright fire, and sundry creature comforts within. Thus we sat, till about 8 o'clock. It then occurred to us to make an examination of the house, though we had taken care—as soon as it became dark and our handmaid had left us—to make everything, as far as possible, secure. We rose, then, and set off together, and passing out of our sitting-room, found ourselves in the square entrance hall, the door of which opened into the garden. Scarcely were we there before we heard a noise which made us pause and listen. The sound came from the long passage upstairs into which all the bedrooms opened, and was simply the sound of human footsteps walking slowly but firmly along the passage. There was no mistake about it. Bold, distinct, and strong, each footfall reached our ears. At once, candle in hand, I dashed upstairs, three steps at a time, and in a moment was on the landing and in full view of the passage. But there was nothing to be seen. My wife, of course, followed me, for she was becoming nervous. Together, therefore, we entered and searched the bedrooms. But our search was fruitless. If anybody had been there he had contrived by some way inexplicable to us to make his escape. A more complete and anxious examination of the house was the necessary consequence of this adventure, and we pretty well satisfied ourselves that, whatever might have caused the sounds we had heard, we were not the involuntary entertainers of any unbidden guest of flesh and blood. To make assurance doubly sure, I unbarred the yard door and took a survey of the outside premises. From this work, however, I was rather hastily recalled by

my wife, who announced that the inexplicable footsteps were again in motion, and though on my return they had ceased, yet once more that night they did us the favour of letting us hear them before we went to bed. Now at this point I am bound in honesty to say that when we returned to our parlour fire, which had a very encouraging and comforting look about it, my wife and I, in discussing the matter, did hint at the possibility of our having fallen in with "a haunted house." And it is only fair to add that we neither of us were so settled in all unbelief of the supernatural, as without further consideration to scout the notion as absurd. But assuredly we did not jump at once to any such conclusion, and were content with simply passing a resolution to the effect that the disturbances were somewhat extraordinary and rather disagreeable than otherwise.

That night we experienced no further annoyance, and indeed for a week or two there is nothing of any particular significance to record.

In the meantime we found ourselves fairly settled. One strong and willing female servant did all that we needed to have done indoors, and a lad of about 14 years of age was engaged to look after a couple of ponies and to do the sundry odd jobs. This boy, it must be observed, did not sleep in the house, so that unless we had a visitor, which did not often happen, the number of the inmates was only three. Our female servant was a stranger from a village at some distance, and had not, as far as we knew, any acquaintances in the place.

For some little time, as I have intimated, we were not much disturbed. The unexplained sound of footsteps we occasionally heard, but we troubled ourselves as little as possible about it, believing that whatever it might be it was at all events very inoffensive and not likely to interfere much with our comforts or prerogatives.

However, in due time we were favoured with a new development and that, too, of a kind which was sufficiently distinct and obtrusive. There was, it must be understood, a range of attics at the top of the house reaching over the full extent of it. We found them empty and in good repair, and we converted them into store-rooms for our boxes, packing cases, &c. They were reached by a small staircase opening off the main passage upstairs; and having deposited in them everything that we wished to put out of the way we secured the staircase door.

We had gone to bed one night as usual, and were about quietly to drop asleep, when all at once there commenced a tumult overhead, which very soon made us as wide-awake as we had ever been in our lives. The noise was, confessedly, of the most vulgar, commonplace, and substantial kind. It was—or rather I should say it seemed to be—the result of the tossing about over the attic floors of all the boxes, cases, and bundles stored there. It was loud, boisterous, and persistent. There was a bump, and a rattle, and a roll, and a crash. Of course an investigation was an obvious necessity, but an investigation discovered nothing. All was quiet. Everything was apparently undisturbed and as much in order as it ever had been, or, in such a place, could be expected to be. We were confessedly perplexed, and moreover,—as far as that, as well as the other occurrences went, we were condemned to the humiliation of remaining in a state of unrelieved perplexity.

But, besides, some supplementary entertainments were provided for our benefit. From time to time a succession of distinctly audible knocks would greet our ears. These knocks varied in their type. At one time they were hurried, eager, impatient; at another, slow and hesitating. But, however, in one style or another we were treated to them, I should say on the average, four nights a week during our sojourn at C—. These were, of all the phenomena, the commonest. I am bound, in justice to the unknown cause of them, to say that we were seldom disappointed in our expectation of hearing them. They were not very alarming, certainly, and after a little familiarity had bred the requisite measure of contempt, they were not particularly disturbing.

One feature about them, however, deserves to be noticed. Sometimes, while lying awake, an involuntary listener to their tattoo, I was provoked to the use of a little sarcasm or what school-boys would call "chaff." I would, for instance, address the hypothetical agent and bid it "be quiet, and not disturb honest people in their beds," or I would challenge it, if it had any request to make or any complaint to lay, "to come out and do it in a manly, straightforward way." Somehow or other these remonstrances were not well received. They always led to louder, more hurried, and if we may use such a term, more passionate knocking. The reader may smile at the notion of any connection between any wild words and the intensified rappings, and I do not wish to assert that there must necessarily have been any connection. I simply state the fact that coincidentally with my challenge, the rappings intensified. I do not theorise, I tell a round, unvarnished tale. Possibly it was a coincidence and nothing more.

Did we—it may be asked—say anything to our neighbours about what we were so frequently experiencing? For a considerable time we did not. We had determined to hold our tongues for several reasons. In the first place if we talked about what had so much of the mysterious about it, we might give rise to exaggerations, and excite alarms which would make it a difficult matter to keep a servant or to get one. Moreover, we knew little of the characters of the people amongst whom we had come, and we thought that if it was the result of a trick we should, by saying nothing about it, be more likely to discover it, or to tire out the performers by assumed indifference. Hence, though our servant, who was a stout-hearted country wench, sometimes dropped hints of nocturnal disturbances, we always put aside the subject and discouraged her attempt to talk about it. So far I have strictly confined myself to what came under my own observation—to what I heard with my own ears. And I think that the experience of my wife and myself does not reach beyond the rappings, the confused noises in the attics, the well defined pacing of footsteps about the house, and that grand satanic crash. On these the changes were from time to time rung.

They began soon after our arrival, they were kept up with tolerable activity during our stay, and for anything I know we left them behind us when we departed. The great noise which greeted us on the first Sunday morning, as it was the most startling of all the phenomena, so it was the least frequent. Weeks sometimes passed without our hearing it at all. But whenever we did hear it—if we took the trouble to ascertain—we always found that it occurred at *two o'clock on a Sunday morning*. In the course of



time, we had incontrovertible evidence that it might manifest itself to some persons in the house, without my wife or myself being conscious of it. Knowing how overwhelming the sound always appeared to me when I did hear it, I cannot but consider this fact one of the most wonderful things in the whole business. I will show, however, that it was so.

As the winter passed away, and our country became more attractive, we had a few visitors ; amongst the earlier comers was a young lady, a very near relative of my wife. We agreed to say nothing to her about our own experiences, partly because we did not want her to be frightened by anticipation, and partly because we wished for a little independent, unprejudiced and spontaneous testimony. We very soon got it ; our friend had not been many nights with us, before she began to put questions as to why we had made such a stir in the house after everybody, as she supposed, had retired to rest. Our answers to these inquiries were, as might be expected, a little vague and unsatisfactory. Once or twice she asked whether there was to be a funeral, for she had heard under her window what she concluded to be the sexton digging a grave, and she expressed a little surprise that he should choose to ply his melancholy trade during the hours of darkness. She was, of course, assured, as was indeed the case, that no funeral was about to take place, and, moreover, that whatever she heard under her window, it was at all events not the process of grave-digging, for the churchyard lay on the other side of the house. This was conclusive enough, no doubt, against her theory, but she did not the less persist in asserting that on several occasions she had heard a noise beneath her window, and that that noise was, in her judgment, the result of some form or other of spade-husbandry. I have no doubt of the reality of the impression made on her mind, but I never myself heard the sounds which she described.

I was not, however, particularly surprised, when, on another occasion, she told us that someone had walked along the passage, and knocked at her door, but that in answer to her call of "Who's there?" no reply had been vouchsafed, and no attempt at entrance into her room had been made.

At length Sunday morning arrived, and we met at the breakfast table.

"Whatever was the matter last night?" was our kinswoman's earliest greeting. "What a clatter somebody made ! I was so thoroughly awakened, that I got up and should have come out of my room to see what had happened had it not been that I was afraid of encountering your dog ! However I was so much disturbed that I could not easily compose myself again to rest, and as I stood at my window, peering into the darkness, I heard the church clock strike two." Hereupon my wife and I exchanged very significant looks. Our friend had heard that night—though we had not—what we had begun to call "The Great Sabbath Alarum." We then told her something of our own experience, and her impression of the sound harmonised with our own. I shall only mention one more incident collateral to what we ourselves observed, for it is on our *personal* experience that I rest the value and the interest of my story.

We were absent from home for a week or two during the autumn, and on our return our servant reported the following occurrences :—

One evening she had gone out into the village to do some business and had left the servant boy in sole charge of the house. He was seated by the

kitchen fire, when he heard some one,—as it seemed—tramping about the passages. He went to ascertain who it was, and what might be his business, but finding no one, he returned to the kitchen and tried to fancy that he was mistaken. Presently he again heard the apparent and palpable sound of human feet, and again he ventured to explore the premises, though with nerves a little more unsteady, and with glance more hurried and retrospective. Again he made a bootless quest. But when from his quiet seat in the chimney corner he heard for a third time the same mysterious echoes, it was too much for boyish flesh and blood. He rushed out of the house, hurried down the village, and never stopped till he told his breathless tale to the gaping inmates of his father's cottage. I have already mentioned that for some time I said nothing to any of my parishioners on the subject of these nocturnal disturbances.

Ultimately, however, I introduced the subject in a conversation with a very excellent Christian woman, a long and patient sufferer from a bodily infirmity, which altogether confined her to her bed. She had seen better days, was a Churchwoman of a good old type, full of a calm and sober religious spirit. Her cottage was just opposite to the vicarage, and the window of the little room in which she lay commanded a full view of it.

I told her what from time to time we had heard and asked her if any reports of such matters had ever reached her ears. She at once said that there had often been talk of such disturbances, and that some, at least, of my predecessors in the curacy had been a good deal annoyed by them. Moreover she added, what I am sure she would not have said if she had not thoroughly believed it—that she had herself at times seen flickering and intermittent light at the attic windows. Now it must be borne in mind that, during my occupancy of the house, these attics were not used, that I never myself entered them at night but on the occasions when I sought to discover the cause of the noise heard there, that there was but one possible entrance to the whole suite, and that we had made that secure, and as far as we could judge, had the means of admission exclusively in our own power.

My informant further told me of certain transactions which had taken place in that house in the last century, and of which she had heard from her elders, which, if they could be verified, and could be fairly connected with the disturbances in the relation of cause and effect, would certainly assist in enabling one to arrive at a theory as to the nature of the disturbances themselves.

But it is not my object to theorise, but simply to relate phenomena and leave them to be judged on their merits. For the facts related, I again say I can honestly vouch; for their causes I am almost as much thrown on conjecture as my readers, for with all the pains I took I never could make any discovery. The explanations which will probably suggest themselves to many, did not fail to suggest themselves to us. There was first of all the possibility of a practical joke. But supposing that with the care I took, and the watch I kept any persons could have gained admission to the house, they must have been the most patient and dreary jokers that ever gave their unrequited and unappreciated services to the genius of mischief. To say nothing of former years, only fancy any one troubling himself to keep up for

12 months at all hours of the night (and *occasionally in the day-time*), a succession of incoherent and inarticulate noises. Methinks a performer of average ability would have tried the experiment once or twice in way of a *visible* manifestation.

Then again there is the resource in such cases of *rats*. Well ! I have a great respect for the capabilities of rats in the way of nocturnal clamour. If, however, they really achieved all that came under my own observation, then I must say that their abilities are wonderful. How, for instance, did they accomplish—and how did they so exactly time—the Great Sunday Crash ? There is a circumstance that deserves to be considered by any one who may care to suggest an explanation of what I have related. I have always been something of a dog-fancier, and I had at that time, two Skye terriers of pure breed, excellent house-dogs, uncompromising foes to vermin, ready for any fun, with no delicacy as to letting their sweet voices be heard, if they saw good reason for speaking out. Once during our sojourn at C—, they did speak out to good purpose. The winter was a rough one, times were not good, and there were several robberies of houses in the neighbourhood. An attempt was made on the vicarage. My trusty dogs, however, gave prompt alarm, I was roused by their fierce barking, reached a window in time to see more than one dark figure on the lawn below, and was able to address such a remonstrance to them as led to a retreat, expedited in some measure by the discharge of a few shots from a pistol. I mention this incident simply to contrast the behaviour of the dogs on that occasion with their conduct in the presence of the mysterious noises. Against these they never once by bark or otherwise made any demonstration. Perhaps they did not hear them. It would seem otherwise, however, for when at such times, in making search about the house, I came where they were, I always found them cowering in a state of pitiable terror. Of this I am quite sure that they were more perturbed than any other members of the establishment. If not shut up below they would make their way to our bedroom door and lie there, crouching and whining, as long as we would allow them.

Our experience of the phenomena, which I have described, extended over a period of 12 months. At the end of that time I was appointed to a benefice in another part of England, and consequently resigned my curacy. We turned our backs on the vicarage, not sorry, it must be confessed, to be done with our nocturnal alarms, but disappointed at not having been able to discover the cause of them.

I have never visited the place since, and never had the opportunity of learning whether the attentions paid by those secret and invisible agents to us have ever been renewed in favour of our successors.