

# DEATH, THE GATE OF LIFE?

(MORS JANUA VITAE?)

A DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS  
PURPORTING TO COME FROM  
FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

BY  
H. A. DALLAS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
PROFESSOR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.



"The veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark."  
TENNYSON.

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**DEATH, THE GATE OF LIFE?  
(MORS JANUA VITAE?)**

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**TO**  
**MY FRIENDS IN BOTH WORLDS**  
**I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK**  
**IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE**  
**AND GLAD ANTICIPATION**



## PREFACE

THE object of this little book is to bring before those who are not already familiar with the results of psychical research some small portion of the evidence for survival which has been accumulating within the last few years. The limits which I have laid down for myself are very narrow: I have confined myself to one point only, namely, to the consideration of that part of the evidence which relates to the question of the survival of the personality of Frederic Myers; and even so it has been necessary to select only a small portion of the available material, and to content myself with the briefest survey compatible with carrying out my purpose, which is to show that there exists a mass of evidence worthy of serious attention, to indicate what is the nature of that evidence and what are the conclusions to which it seems to point.

Many of my readers will doubtless think that the conclusions suggested make too large

a demand on their credulity, and they may, perhaps, formulate in their minds various other conceivable explanations of the facts here presented. It is not likely, however, that they will light upon any hypothesis which has not already been fully considered by the careful experts who have for years been studying these phenomena. I venture to affirm that it is generally those who know comparatively little of the subject who are most ready with the offer of simple explanations, such as fraud, collusion, chance, or mind reading.

Another class of reader will, perhaps, consider that I have claimed too little; that even the small amount of evidence which I have produced would justify wider and fuller deductions than those indicated in this book.

I am aware that I have not only reduced the evidence to a minimum, but that I have also set forth only the most obvious conclusions. This I deliberately aimed at doing. Those who care to assimilate the evidence here summarised, and who are able to accept, at least provisionally, the conclusions based upon it, will have no difficulty in finding further facts for study and in drawing fuller deductions for themselves.



I should like to anticipate one question, which may perhaps be suggested by the perusal of this work : it is this. If those who have died wish to communicate, can they not do so simply and directly? Must there always be an intermediary? Cannot spirit speak with spirit without having recourse to this difficult and strange method? Certainly there are abundant reasons for thinking that telepathic intercourse between minds can be maintained independently of all the channels of sense, and that those who have passed into the Unseen can, and do, directly impress their thoughts upon the minds of their still incarnate friends. But such intercourse does not, as a rule, afford evidence which can be verified in a way to convince those who do not participate in the experience.

Mr. Myers knew that something more than this was expected from him. He was familiar with the kind of objections raised by sceptics, objections which are by no means unreasonable. He had himself in his lifetime demanded crucial scientific proof of survival, and had undertaken, if such a thing were possible, to afford the necessary evidence in his own case. It would, therefore, have been disappointing if after his death there had

been no sort of attempt to produce proof of a more complex and unequivocal kind than had been previously forthcoming. To produce this was evidently a very difficult task, requiring much effort and ingenuity. It does not follow that all communications between spirits need be of this nature.

I desire to express my sincere thanks to the Council of the Society for Psychical Research for kindly giving me permission to quote at length from the published records of the Society; and I hope that the small work which I am thus enabled to bring out may serve as a useful introduction to the study of those records in their complete form. At the same time, I wish to make it clearly understood that the Society is in no way responsible either for the selection of passages which I quote or for the treatment of the subject. On both these points the whole responsibility rests with myself.

I also wish to acknowledge gratefully the kind assistance rendered by Mr. J. B. Shipley in correcting my MS. and proofs.

H. A. DALLAS.

*Hampstead,  
November 1909.*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE author has asked me to say a few words by way of introduction to this little book. I shall, indeed, be glad if any word of mine will help to commend it to the reader. Miss Dallas has long been known to me as an earnest and critical student of psychical phenomena. Her knowledge of this subject is exceptionally wide, and her judgment sane and well informed. In the present volume she has dealt in an interesting and succinct manner with one fragment of the evidence that is slowly accumulating on behalf of survival after death. The service which she has thus rendered is considerable. Few people have the time or patience to read through, and carefully consider, the lengthy, detailed, and therefore often wearisome, reports published by the Society for Psychical Research. Hence, whilst the interest in this subject is spreading throughout the Western world with astonishing rapidity, the well informed are few and far between.

Unfortunately the fascination of the subject is like a candle to moths, it attracts and

burns the silly, the credulous and the crazy. The natural human longing to lift a corner of the veil that hides the life beyond the grave, renders a dispassionate consideration of the facts, a calm and critical weighing of the evidence, as difficult as it is imperative. Only by the slow and toilsome pathway of rigorous scientific inquiry can any assured results ever be obtained. We cannot hope in this generation or the next to clear away all the perplexities and pitfalls that confront the investigator in these obscure regions. The methods of science are not the methods of journalism, and though it was to be expected, it is equally to be deplored that the untrained and unscientific have rushed in where many wiser men have feared to tread. Even in ancient times, when, doubtless, there existed a certain esoteric knowledge of some of the psychical phenomena which we have now re-discovered, the approach to this subject was guarded with jealous care. The inquirer needs to be level-headed and to walk warily; whilst the foolish and the fashionable who merely desire a new sensation, the roving journalist and the rapid book-maker, should be warned off so treacherous a ground.

Psychical research, as the author points out, requires to be conducted with care and wise restraint. When this is done we may dismiss as groundless the fear of any injury being done to the psychic. How far any injury may occur to the unseen communicators on the other side is another matter on which we can only form vague impressions. We are led to infer that, on their part, it is a self-denying act of service, for they speak of being "disturbed," "suffocated," "kept earth-bound" by trying to communicate, possibly it involves a partial loss of their personality.

As I have said elsewhere, "indiscriminate condemnation and ignorant credulity are, in truth, the two most dangerous elements with which the public are confronted in connection with Spiritualism. It is because I hold that in the fearless pursuit of truth it is the paramount duty of science to lead the way, and erect such sign-posts as may be needed in the vast territory we dimly see before us, that I so strongly deprecate the past and (to a less extent) the present scornful attitude of the scientific world towards this subject."

The shrinking which some deeply religious minds feel in relation to Spiritualism is, no doubt, partly based upon a mistaken view of

the subject, but it is not wholly irrational. We instinctively feel, as Archbishop Trench has finely expressed it :—

“ Where thou hast touched, O wondrous death,  
Where thou hast come between,  
Lo ! there for ever perisheth  
The common and the mean.”

Whether this be objectively true or not, it is certainly true subjectively to the stricken survivor, and hence the natural recoil from the inane and often vulgar futilities of so many spiritualistic *séances*. It has, however, long been recognised, and the Society for Psychological Research has clearly demonstrated the fact, that very much of what professes to be communication from an ultra-mundane source is nothing more than automatic expressions of the medium's own mind. And in every case, as might be expected, the communications are more or less influenced by the mental equipment, the personality, of the medium. Hence it is that we find Greek and Latin automatically written by a classical scholar like Mrs. Verrall, and in general a high level of thought expressed in the automatic writings of those cultured ladies, who have in recent years given so much patience and labour to the experimental investigation of this important field of inquiry.



In the case of thought transference between those who are now living on earth, the more completely the receiver, or percipient, places his own waking or conscious thoughts in abeyance the more effective is the result, and doubtless this is also the case with telepathic communication from the unseen. The larger part of human personality lies below the threshold of consciousness, and this subliminal self speaks through involuntary or automatic muscular action, just as our conscious self speaks through voluntary muscular action. Not only is the occasional intrusion of the latter into the former a source of error in all sensitives, but a more subtle and prolific source of error is the unavoidable intrusion of the sensitive's own subliminal self into the telepathic message from another. Hence it is that messages purporting to come from some ultra-mundane intelligence need to be scrutinised with the utmost care. This has been done with increasing knowledge by those engaged in the work of the Society for Psychical Research and by others. Notwithstanding this careful sifting a growing conviction has been produced in most thoughtful students of this subject that life and intelligence demonstrably exist in the unseen, and can get into imperfect communication with

us. It is true that some of us are not prepared to go quite as far as the author in accepting the identity of the unseen intelligences as adequately proved. Identity would be enormously difficult to establish even between two widely separated persons on earth, speaking to each other for a few minutes through, say, wireless telegraphy, and still more so if messages from other sources were constantly intermingled.

Miss Dallas has, however, given a portion of the evidence which will enable the reader to judge for himself so far as concerns the communications purporting to come from Mr. Myers. Knowing Mr. Myers as I did intimately on earth for thirty years, I confess that the collective weight of the evidence now accumulated through the automatic script of Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Piper, has convinced me that in this case it is highly probable that the unseen intelligence is no other than a fragment of the personality of Mr. Frederic Myers. For in all these communications purporting to come from disembodied human beings, it is a sort of dream or truncated personality that presents itself, one largely bereft of self-determination, and with memory and associations strangely limited.

Nor do we ever hear any connected and consistent account of their environment or of their life in the unseen. As Mrs. Barrett-Browning said long ago, "We could as well hope to see our faces in a shivered looking-glass as catch a clear vision of a desired truth or a lost friend by these means. What we do see is a shadow at the window, the sign of something moving without." It is all very like a dream picture, bits here and there painted on the medium's own canvas, and with patches of the canvas showing in between. However, such as it is let us be grateful for it, inasmuch as the implications are tremendous and far reaching. At the same time we need to bear in mind that these manifestations, however interpreted, belong to the material plane, and that "our true union with those we love can only be reached by a common life in God." As Myers himself wrote :—

"Live thou and love! so best and only so  
Can thy one soul into the One soul flow,—  
Can thy small life to Life's great centre flee,  
And thou be nothing, and the Lord in thee."

W. F. BARRETT.

*Kingstown, co. Dublin,  
December 1909.*



# MORS JANUA VITAE ?

*A DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS PURPORTING TO COME FROM  
FREDERIC W. H. MYERS*

## CHAPTER I

### FREDERIC MYERS AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

It was on January 26, 1900,<sup>1</sup> that F. W. H. Myers delivered his presidential address before the members of the Society for Psychical Research. In this address he reminded them that he had worked for its objects "from days before the Society's formation," and assured them of his determination "to go on thus working" as long as his faculties would allow. (*Proceedings of the S. P. R.*, Part xxxviii, p. III.)

No one, perhaps, has ever had a deeper realisation of the importance of the issues involved in this research; to him the main question to be determined by this means was the question of survival. It is true that it is not

<sup>1</sup> Just a year before his death on January 17th, 1901.

the only one; for psychical research has led to the discovery of extraordinary human faculties, formerly unrecognised by science, and further investigations into these faculties form an important part of its work; but men of Frederic Myers' temperament would care little to be assured of the wealth of human endowments if individual consciousness, and all that it includes, are doomed to final and complete extinction. In his opinion the question of survival is the "only test we can apply to the existence of a Providence." "It has been doubt as to the value of life and love," he says, "which has made the decadence of almost all civilisations" (*Ibid.* p. 113). Neither was it the bare fact of survival of which he desired to assure himself. There are two poems on immortality, written by him, which show that there were moments in which he contemplated with repugnance the possibility of persistence under conditions devoid of delight, conditions under which the weariness of earthly life might be renewed, or at least all sense of personal identity might be lost.

One of these poems will be found in a volume entitled *Fragments of Prose and Poetry*. In the second stanza he writes:—

Yet if for evermore I must convey  
 These weary senses thro' an endless day  
 And gaze on God with these exhausted eyes,  
 I fear that howsoe'er the seraphs play  
 My life shall not be theirs, nor I as they,  
 But homeless in the heart of Paradise<sup>1</sup> (p. 173).

The other poem is in a volume called *Renewal of Youth*, published in 1882 :—

Ah, but who knows in what thin form and strange,  
 Through what appalled perplexities of change,  
 Wakes the sad soul, which, having once forgone  
 This earth familiar and her friends thereon  
 In interstellar void becomes a chill  
 Outlying fragment of the Master Will;  
 So severed, so forgetting, shall not she  
 Lament, immortal, immortality? (p. 55.)

We see, therefore, that Frederic Myers did not enter upon this quest with that indifference as to the result, which some would have us regard as an essential condition for an impartial investigator.

Is it true, however, that an attitude of indifference as to the nature of the issue is the most favourable for successful discovery?

Professor William James evidently does

<sup>1</sup> In this poem there are lines obviously related to an Ode of Horace (see I. 28), concerning which Mr. Myers wrote to Dr. Verrall that it had "entered as deeply as any Horatian passage" into his own inner history. (See *Proceedings*, Part lvii, p. 406.)

not think so. In an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1909, he says:—

Things reveal themselves soonest to those who passionately want them—Need sharpens wit. To a mind content with little the much of the Universe may always remain hid (p. 294).

This only applies, of course, to sincere minds, who honour truth above all things, and are prepared to sacrifice their most treasured hopes if they are convinced that they are illusions.

Frederic Myers did make this great surrender: and he has told us that to do so was “more grievous” to him than anything else which happened to him in life.<sup>1</sup> Although he did not make the sacrifice with indifference, his passionate desire for assurance of immortal life of a worthy and satisfying nature bore a marked effect on his work, for it intensified his perception of all that seems to negative this hope, he became more keenly alive to weak points in the evidence in favour of immortality. “*Desire* is not necessarily *bias*,” he writes, “and my personal history has convinced myself—though I cannot claim

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Part xxxvii, p. 113. See also the poem called “Retrospect” (*Fragments of Prose and Poetry*, p. 119).



that it shall convince others also—that my wishes do not strongly warp my judgment—nay, that sometimes the very keenness of personal anxiety may make one afraid to believe, as readily as other men, that which one most longs for.” (Part xxxvii, p. 113.)

It was in this spirit, moved by the stimulus of almost passionate but well-nigh hopeless desire, and in an attitude of critical and avowed agnosticism, that Frederic Myers applied himself to the task which occupied the latter half of his life.

It was with “little hope—almost with reluctant scorn”—he says, “but with the feeling that no last chance of the great discovery should be thrown aside,” that he turned to this research, and he adds:—

It is only after thirty years of such study as I have been able to give that I say to myself at last, *Habes tota quod mente petisti*—“Thou hast what thy whole heart desired”;—that I recognize that for me this fresh evidence,—while raising that great historic incident of the Resurrection into new credibility,—has also filled me with a sense of insight and of thankfulness such as even my first ardent Christianity did not bestow (*Ibid.* p. 114).

It must not be supposed, however, that Frederic Myers assumed that conviction of truth *could only* be reached by this process of arduous scientific study, far from it; he

did not claim that this method is a substitute for intuition and revelation. He regarded psychical science as a means by which "to prove the preamble of all religions, to demonstrate that a spiritual world exists"; but he did not deny, he was, indeed, eventually assured, that men may be carried by intuition into "even profounder apprehensions of truth—but such apprehensions are not transferable." Moreover it is not every one who has this intuitive insight, and those who have such experiences know that they are transitory, and there are times when they, too, feel urgent need to seek some scientific basis for the security of their highest hopes. The work of Frederic Myers was to demonstrate that this basis exists.

How the idea of this research first originated he has related in his obituary notice of his friend, Professor Henry Sidgwick:—

I felt drawn in my perplexities to Henry Sidgwick as somehow my only hope.

In a starlight walk which I shall not forget (December 3rd, 1869), I asked him, almost with trembling, whether he thought that when Tradition, Intuition, Metaphysic, had failed to solve the riddle of the Universe, there was still a chance that from any actual observable phenomena—ghosts, spirits, whatsoever there might be—some valid knowledge might be drawn as to a World Unseen. Already, it seemed, he had thought that this was possible;

steadily, though in no sanguine fashion, he indicated some last grounds of hope; and from that night onwards I resolved to pursue this quest, if it might be, at his side (*Fragments of Prose and Poetry*, pp. 98, 99).

It is deeply interesting to compare this passage with his presidential address delivered thirty-one years later, in which he was able to affirm:—

This persistent analysis of unexplored faculty has revealed to us already far more than I, for one, had ever dared to hope. . . . I do not presume to forecast what we may come in time to learn; I only say that for the present hour there will be enough of motive to urge us to utmost effort to rise in the scale of being (*Proceedings*, Part xxxvii, pp. 118, 123).

Further on in this address, after alluding to the “enfranchisement of the blessed dead,” he continues:—

We know that they are still minded to keep us sharers in their joy. It is they, not we, who are working now. . . . Nay, it may be that our response, our devotion, is a needful element in their ascending joy; and God may have provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. . . . I believe that upon our own attitude towards these nascent communications their progress and development depend, so that we cannot too soon direct attention to the high responsibilities opening on our view (Part lvii, p. 123).

This confidence in their co-operation with us was one which he held with increasing assurance.

In his work on *Human Personality* he again refers to it :—

The experiments that are being made are not the work of earthly skill. All that we can contribute to the new result is an attitude of patience, attention, care; an honest readiness to receive and weigh whatever may be given into our keeping by intelligences beyond our own. Experiments, I say, there are, probably experiments of a complexity and difficulty which surpass our imagination; but they are made from the other side of the gulf by the efforts of spirits who discern pathways and possibilities which for us are impenetrably dark (*Human Personality*, Vol. II, p. 275).

This passage is of peculiar interest in view of subsequent developments, developments which bear striking testimony to the correctness of the belief he here expresses. In order to be able to estimate the evidence which has accumulated since Frederic Myers' death, and more particularly the facts which claim to show that he is himself striving to bridge the gulf between the two worlds and to prove his identity to his colleagues, it is desirable to be acquainted in some measure with the motives, aims and characteristics which he displayed in this life. Within the limits of a short chapter it is impossible to do more than indicate some of these in briefest manner, but the reader unfamiliar with his writings

can gather enough from this short outline to recognise that if any discarnate spirit can bear witness from the other sphere of existence to the reality and worth of life beyond death, Frederic Myers would, of all men, be the one we should expect to find so doing.

## CHAPTER II

### MRS. VERRALL'S AUTOMATIC SCRIPT

As this book will probably come into the hands of those who are not familiar with the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, some account must be given of those through whom have come the "communications" presently to be discussed. These were principally Mrs. Verrall, Miss Helen Verrall, Mrs. "Holland" (pseudonym), Mrs. "Forbes" (pseudonym), and Mrs. Piper, and also Mrs. Thompson.

Mrs. Verrall is a member of the Council of the S.P.R., a classical scholar and a lecturer at Newnham College. In *Proceedings*, Part liii, she has given a full account and detailed analysis of her automatic writings, from which we learn the following facts.

Mrs. Verrall had never succeeded in any attempt to obtain intelligible automatic writing, and had come to the conclusion that this was impossible for her; however, in the month

in which Mr. Myers died (January 1901), she resolved to make another and more persistent attempt, but was not successful until March 5. On that day, after a few nonsense words, the pencil, held between her thumb and first finger, wrote rapidly in Latin. She says:—

I was writing in the dark and could not see what I wrote; the words came to me as single things, and I was so much occupied in recording each as it came that I had not any general notion what the meaning was. I could never remember the last word; it seemed to vanish completely as soon as I had written it. Sometimes I had great difficulty in recognising what was the word I wanted to write, while at other times I could only get part of it. When I had filled one sheet of paper I turned up the electric light and read what had been written before going on to the next sheet. On this first occasion, March 5, 1901, my hand wrote about 80 words almost entirely in Latin, but though the words are consecutive and seem to make phrases, and though some of the phrases seem intelligible, there is no general sense in the passage. Till the end of March, with a very few exceptions, I continued daily to write fluently in Latin, with occasional Greek words. The writing was not intelligible throughout, but it improved and was very different from the rubbish with which it began. . . . The actual writing was my own normal handwriting. . . . After the first two or three times of writing I never read what had been written till the end, and though I continued to be aware of the particular word, or perhaps two words, that I was writing, I still retained no recollection of what I had just written and no general notion as to the meaning of the whole (Part liii, pp. 9, 10).

At any early stage the script assumed the character of conversation, conversation interrupted and confused, as if heard through a telephone when the wires "seem to have got into contact, so that the operator hears remarks not addressed directly to him" (p. 69). This is not an uncommon experience with automatic writers; it is curious and significant. In these conversations the sensitive is sometimes spoken of in the third person. For instance, in January 1902, the following was written :—

Patience for you both it will come. Three Latin words can she not write them? would give the clue (p. 69).

On January 15th, 1903, this was written :—

Wait for the word. He said, "I will send the half message to Mrs. Verrall and you have the other half." Tell Hodgson this, but you have not got the word yet (p. 70).

This passage suggests an attempt on the part of some one to produce a "cross-correspondence," and reads as if it were part of a conversation on the subject between two or more persons.

The "communicators" through Mrs. Verrall are very various; some are identifiable, and many are unknown, they are distinguished by names or signs.



One "communicator" appends the Greek cross to his writings. This individuality was specially successful, and seemed to have a particular interest in Mrs. Piper and Dr. Hodgson. This deserves to be noted; for the Greek cross is the sign habitually appended to the script of one of Mrs. Piper's principal controls, called "Rector," and although Mrs. Verrall had read this script, and may therefore have subconsciously noted the fact, she states that she had not consciously done so. In view of subsequent developments the incident has some significance.

Another very significant point in her script is that it frequently makes allusion to the importance of combined efforts. For instance:—

On March 19, 1902, the script says that, without "something composite," the whole is not "in good rhythm," makes a statement about what can be "harmonised," and advises me not to guess but to receive what "thought" casts out (*Ibid.* p. 126).

Later (May 31, 1902):—

"None of all this perpetual chatter" is said "to fit together," and some one "versed in Music or the Muses" (or perhaps Musaeus<sup>1</sup>) is mentioned.

---

<sup>1</sup> Musaeus is a traditional poet or mystic of the same type as Orpheus.

The remarks on July 13, 1902, and June 21, 1903 . . . seem to imply that some kind of "combination" is required. The same idea occurs on January 30, 1903, when the script says that what "you have chattered about" and "she has thought" of fit together, "that joint action" is better, and that "those who would separate" are not the best in this matter, though there are occasions when separation must be made (Part liii, p. 126).

One further quotation on this point may be made, as it is particularly remarkable :—

November 3, 1902—None the less through others not known speaks the fate,—*fatum ineffabile ineluctabile, etsi tu magno contendis corpore contra.*<sup>1</sup> I will give the words between you neither alone can read, but together they will give the clue he wants. *Comperire . . . redintegratio amoris ^ nec non secessus (desunt hi alia et alioquin). Redit iam verbum ipsum—Caritatis vocabulum,* but hers are in English and will fill the gaps— Wait some time for hers— it is hard to give her words. *Tuus —iam nomen habes in mente etsi non in calamo* (*Ibid.* p. 170).

When we reach the consideration of Mrs. Holland's automatic script we shall recognise the importance of the references to combined action. We must remember that Mrs. Holland was at this time quite unknown to Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> *Translation.*—"The fate unspeakable unavoidable, although you with your strength fight against it . . . to discover . . . the restoration of love and not separation (here (?) and elsewhere (?) words are missing). Now the word itself returns—the term Charity. . . Yours—you have the name in your mind now though not on your pen."

Verrall. Her automatic script, unlike that of Mrs. Verrall, was almost entirely written in English, and with reference to the sentence above quoted, "some one versed in music or the Muses," it is interesting to find that Mrs. Holland, when describing her experiences previous to 1903, says, "Any automatic writing that comes to me is nearly always in verse."

This introduces the idea of "cross-correspondences," a term which has gained a technical meaning. When used in psychical research the term "cross-correspondence" denotes the independent occurrence, at approximately the same time, of the same or obviously related ideas, in the script of two or more automatic writers.

In his work on *Psychical Research and the Resurrection* Professor Hyslop mentions that, before his death, Mr. Myers and also Dr. Hodgson had tried occasionally to make experiments of this kind. The importance of such experiments, if successful, is that, when carried through under strictly test conditions, they narrow the problem to be solved by proving that one and the same intelligence must be controlling two independent minds. It is necessary that the reader should grasp this

fact before proceeding to consider the next question, namely, to whom does this controlling intelligence belong? Is it that of one or other of the automatists? Or is there any indication that it is due to the activity of some extraneous mind? If the cross-correspondences contain ideas, *not identical but related*, the hypothesis of telepathy from one of the automatists seems very improbable, and we are compelled to seek for some other intelligent agent; and if, in addition, the correspondences bear the impress of a selective, intelligent purpose, the conclusion that they originate in an independent mind seems well-nigh unavoidable.

Mrs. Verrall's own attitude towards the writing was impartial and critical; at first she was disposed to feel impatient of the apparent futility of the long, often disconnected, sentences, and sceptical as to there being any value in the matter produced. She writes:—

May 16 and 17 were the dates when first it seemed to me that there was something like evidence for an external cause for the writing, and on June 1 of the same year a distinct step in the progressive opinion of which I have spoken was made (Part liii, p. 92).

Her conviction as to the importance of the

script naturally increased with the evidence for its veridical character.

In May 1901 the first obvious cross-correspondence occurred between her and Mrs. Thompson. The case is an interesting one. It is described in Part liii, pp. 207, 208.

Although it is not possible to relate this incident in detail, a summary of it must be given, as it is remarkable. During the early part of May 1901 Mrs. Verrall received an intimation through her automatic writing that before the 17th inst. Mrs. Thompson would say something, of which she would be informed through Sir Oliver Lodge. She was also, on May 8th, between 10 and 10.30 p.m., told that a control, claiming to be Mr. Myers, was *at that time* "communicating" elsewhere. At this period Mrs. Thompson did not usually go into trance or in any way develop her psychic powers; Mrs. Verrall, therefore, expected that anything which Mrs. Thompson might have said would have been said in her normal state. As a matter of fact, however, on the evening of the 8th, Mrs. Thompson, who was dining with Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge, unexpectedly went into trance and purported to be controlled by Mr. Myers, who then made the statement that some

one was calling him elsewhere. This, be it noted, took place at the very hour at which Mrs. Verrall was getting writing from the "Myers control," and was told, "No power—doing something else to-night."

If this incident stood alone it would be remarkable, but it does not stand alone; it is one of many, even more remarkable, cross-correspondences, some few of which we are about to consider.

## CHAPTER III

### MRS. HOLLAND'S AUTOMATIC SCRIPT

SOME account must now be given of the experiences of Mrs. Holland.<sup>1</sup>

This lady says that she attempted automatic writing about the year 1893, obtaining, at first, only short and uninteresting sentences. Later the writing nearly always took the form of verses; these, "though often childishly simple in wording and jingling in rhyme, are rarely trivial in subject." She adds, "I am always fully conscious, but my hand moves so rapidly that I seldom know what words it is forming." (Part iv, p. 171.)

In July 1903, when residing in India, she began to correspond with Miss Johnson, the research officer of the S.P.R.

In June of that year she read Mr. Myers'

<sup>1</sup> The few details given in this chapter are derived from an able report by Miss Johnson (research officer of the S.P.R.), published in *Proceedings*, Part iv.

work, *Human Personality*. She had no recollection of having even heard his name before reading it. "But her own experience and her own temperament had specially prepared her for the reception of it, and the personality of the author strongly appealed to her" (p. 176). It was not surprising, therefore, that the automatic script should from this date be to a great extent associated with the name of Frederic Myers.

Mrs. Holland showed admirable impartiality in her own attitude, and Miss Johnson says that she gave her every possible help in her study of the script.

Not only has she answered fully and freely a very large number of questions, and herself volunteered much information, which I could not have obtained otherwise, about the sources or possible sources of many of the statements in the script, but she has also accepted with the utmost readiness any suggestion of mine as to experiments or methods of procedure. Further, she has consented to remain for months at a time in ignorance of the results of these experiments, and has continued nevertheless to persevere with them (p. 175).

In reply to an inquiry as to whether she had seen any of the S.P.R. *Proceedings* or *Journals*, Mrs. Holland wrote:—

I am delighted to answer any questions that may help me to understand how much of the automatic writing I get is due to subconscious memory,



and how much, if any, comes from other influences. I am so afraid of becoming a self-deceiver, *charlatan malgre moi!* I have never seen any of the *Proceedings* or *Journals* of the S.P.R., and Mr. Myers' *Human Personality* is the only book on the subject I have ever read (*Ibid.* pp. 189, 190).

She then mentions a few collections of ghost stories that she had read, and some flowery "spirit writings" sent to her in MS. by a friend in 1902, which she says she disliked intensely, and adds, "I have never seen any other examples of automatic writing."

She then promised to send her script to Miss Johnson, and added, "Please continue not to give me any clue as to the meaning or meaninglessness of anything that I may send you; I am very anxious not to begin to think of 'hits and misses,' and indeed I feel as if the less I thought of it the less misleading it is likely to be" (p. 190).

This will suffice to show the disinterested spirit which animated Mrs. Holland, and any one at all acquainted with the methods of the S.P.R. will not require to be assured that, on her part, Miss Johnson took every precaution to avoid the possibility that her correspondent should obtain through her letters any information or hint which would

vitiate the experiments. The correspondents did not meet until Mrs. Holland came to England in the autumn of 1905.

The following review of Mrs. Holland's script must be limited to incidents immediately connected with Frederic Myers; other matters, however striking or evidential, do not come within the scope of this work, and even among such incidents as are relevant to our subject only a small selection can be referred to.

In September 1903 Mrs. Holland re-read *Human Personality*.

On September 16 (1903) the following passage was automatically written by her hand:—

(September 16, 7.30 a.m.)

F.

Friend while on earth with knowledge slight  
I had the living power to write  
Death tutored now in things of might  
I yearn to you and cannot write.

/17/

It may be that those who die suddenly  
suffer no prolonged obscuration of consciousness  
but for my own experience the unconsciousness  
was exceedingly prolonged.

/1

The reality is infinitely more wonderful than our  
most daring conjectures.

Indeed no conjecture can be sufficiently daring.

/01

But this is like the first stumbling attempts at expression in an unknown language imperfectly explained. So far away, so very far away, and yet longing and understanding potentialities of nearness.

M.

(p. 192).

Miss Johnson comments on this script as follows:—

It is written on two sides of a half-sheet of paper; the first side begins with the initial "F.," and the second ends with the initial "M.,"; the whole passage is divided into four sections, the first three ending respectively in "17/," "/1" and "/01."

January 17, 1901, was the date of Mr. Myers' death, mentioned in *Human Personality*; but the simple device of separating these initials and items from one another was completely effective in its apparent object. I read the passage a good many times before I saw what they meant, and I found that the meaning had entirely escaped Mrs. Holland's notice<sup>1</sup> (p. 178).

The control calling itself Frederic Myers is characterised by an almost passionate eagerness, and manifests intense longing to be recognised; when the sensitive's incredulity was very pronounced (as it sometimes was), or when the communications seemed

<sup>1</sup> Other occasions on which the sensitive was kept in ignorance of the significance of her script by ingenious devices of this sort will be found in Part IV, pp. 193, 304, 320.

particularly difficult, the apparent consciousness of unavailing effort on the part of the control becomes pathetic.

Another control who signs "G" (Edmund Gurney) shows, on the contrary, somewhat brusque annoyance at her lack of persistence and belief, and he reprimands her with much decision; Myers appears more anxious, but gentler, and tries to encourage, sometimes by courteous pleading, sometimes by explanations.

For instance we read the following :—

(M.) It is such a pity to break the chain— Since you were out in the morning yesterday why did you not try in the afternoon— A few minutes steadily each day are not much to ask from you. . . .

(G.) I can't help feeling vexed or rather angry at the half-hearted way in which you go in for this— you should either take it or leave it— If you don't care enough to try every day for a short time better drop it altogether. It's like making appointments and not keeping them. You endanger your own powers of sensitiveness and annoy us bitterly. G. . . .

(M.) Go on, do go on, you are beginning to establish communication—We shall be able to strengthen your powers of will presently, only do have a little faith and patience (pp. 200, 201).

The following is also an interesting bit of script :—

(M.) I want to make it thoroughly clear to you all that the eidolon is not the *spirit*—only the simula-

chrum (*sic*)— If M. were to see me sitting at my table, or if any one of you became conscious of my semblance standing near my chair that would not be *me*. My spirit would be there invisible but perceptive but the appearance would be merely to call your attention to identify me— It fades and grows less easily recognisable as the years pass and my remembrance of my earthly appearance grows weaker—

If you saw me as I am now you would not recognize me in the least—

“All I could never be—All men refused in me

This I was worth to God whose wheel the pitcher shaped—”<sup>1</sup>

I appear now as I would fain have been—as I desired to be in the very vain dreams of youth—and the time-lined, pain-lined suffering face that some of you remember with tenderness is a mere mask now that I strive to conjure up for you to know me by— But my power is weak and you are not really receptive—

. . . Remember once again that the phantasm, the so-called ghost is a counterfeit presentiment *projected by the spirit* (p. 215).

In this script there is a detail worth noting, and that is, the use of the terms *eidolon* and *simulacrum*.

On this Mrs. Verrall comments as follows:—

Homer (*Odyssey*, XI, 601) describes how Odysseus met in Hades “Great Herakles, his phantom (*εἶδωλον*); himself (*αὐτὸς*) rejoices amid the immortals,” etc. It is a famous passage, as the

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, *Rabbi ben Ezra*; “refused” should be “ignored.”

question of how Herakles came to be in Hades has been much discussed.

It is the passage alluded to by Plotinus, in the extract quoted in *Human Personality*, Vol. II, p. 290.

But the point as regards Mrs. Holland's script is the scholarly and classical use of the words *eidolon* and *simulacrum* . . .

While we should not expect this usage to be known to one who was not a classical scholar, it would be likely to be familiar to readers of Homer and Lucretius, and in the quotations from Plotinus in *Human Personality*, we have direct proof (if it were wanted) that Mr. Myers knew the passage in XI *Odyssey*, the *locus classicus* for the special use of *εἶδωλον*.<sup>1</sup> (p. 216).

It is difficult and often impossible to differentiate between the impressions received by the sensitive and her own interpretation of these. Occasionally, however, the distinction can be made without difficulty, and these cases are instructive; for they show how easily false interpretations of genuine impression may be made, quite in good faith, and therefore with how much reserve and caution mediumistic "messages" should be received, and more particularly if these profess to give guidance for practical conduct.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Holland cannot have derived the term from *Human Personality*, for although Myers refers in that work to the above-named passage from the *Odyssey*, he does not use the term *eidolon* when so doing.

In a later script (Nov. 7, 1903) occurs a detailed description of a tall man about sixty years of age. Mrs. Holland took this to be a picture of F. W. H. Myers. In this she was quite mistaken.

The description applied to Dr. A. W. Verrall, and was correct in almost every particular.

On re-reading the description later Mrs. Verrall writes:—

The attitude strikes me as particularly good. The trick of leaning forward and gesticulating when interested in what he talks of is very characteristic in the case of Cambridge friends and especially of Mr. Myers (p. 188).

Now, although Mrs. Holland was mistaken in her interpretation of the picture, there was remarkable appropriateness in Myers' friend, Dr. Verrall, being described on this occasion, for the script began with the words:—

MY DEAR MRS. VERRALL,

I am very anxious to speak to some of the old friends—Miss J.—and to A. W.,

and it concludes as follows:—

Get a proof—try for a proof if you feel this is a waste of time without Send this to Mrs. Verrall,  
5, Selwyn Gardens,  
Cambridge.

This script was prefaced by the initial "F."

Referring to this experience Mrs. Holland writes :—

I have never been in Cambridge, but in the two pages of automatic writing I enclose, what purports to be an address there is thrice given, and the third time it is stated to be Mrs. Verrall's.

I remember that lady's name in connection with experiments with crystal vision in *Human Personality*, but I have no means of knowing if "Selwyn Gardens" is a real place (p. 185).

From an evidential point of view the incident would be much less interesting if the man described had been like Frederic Myers, for Mrs. Holland might possibly have seen a portrait of him; but Mrs. Verrall tells us that, as far as she knows, no portrait of her husband had ever appeared in an illustrated paper (p. 188), and the last photograph of him represented him at the age of forty, so that it is impossible that Mrs. Holland could have known his appearance.

On the day after this script reached Miss Johnson (in the autumn of 1903), she mentioned to Mrs. Verrall that her name and address had occurred in the script of a lady in India; but nothing further was told Mrs. Verrall about this script until October 1905.



On November 25, 1903, the following suggestion was made in Mrs. Holland's script by the control signing "G."

Now there is an experiment I want you to make—suggest to the P.R. (to Miss J.) that some one with a trained will—she will have no difficulty in finding some one of the sort—is to try—for a few minutes—every morning for at least a month—to convey a thought—a phrase—a name—anything you like to your mind (p. 206).

This suggestion was not immediately acted upon; a gap occurred in Mrs. Holland's writing whilst she was travelling, and no experiment of the kind was tried until March 1905.

Miss Johnson then arranged with Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland that they should write once a week on the same day, both scripts being eventually sent to her for comparison; the writers remained unknown to each other and held no communication whatsoever. "The identity of each writer was first disclosed to the other in October 1905" (p. 252).

The suggestion, be it observed, was made by the control in November 1903; but on January 17, 1904, more than a year before the suggestion was acted upon by the sensitives, a cross-correspondence occurred in the scripts of Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland.

It looks almost as if the controls, finding the operators on this side would not attempt the experiment, determined to try and carry it out entirely on their own account. The details of this cross-correspondence must be greatly epitomised. It will suffice to say that Mrs. Verrall's script refers to the "seal of the letter," and added, "The question<sup>1</sup> is answered and the text given."

Mrs. Holland's script on the same date is as follows:—

Attempt to get a message through. Sealed envelope not to be opened yet.

1 Cor. xvi. 13. Take the message to you all.

(This text had a special association for Mr. Myers and Mrs. Verrall.)

Here more follows of an intense and emotional nature expressive of yearning to prove his identity "amid unspeakable difficulties." The text, although not the one which had been asked for, and to which Mrs. Verrall supposed that her script referred, is one which had associations for both Frederic Myers and Mrs. Verrall, inasmuch as it is inscribed, in Greek characters, over the gate-

<sup>1</sup> To explain what this question refers to would involve too wide a digression.

way of Selwyn College, Cambridge, which Mr. Myers must often have passed in going from his house to Mrs. Verrall's.

This text turns up in the script again more than a year later, in connection with Mrs. Verrall, and before Mrs. Holland had been informed that there was any significance in its first appearance (p. 253).

The fact that we have here a cross-correspondence due to something more than coincidence will hardly be questioned. It is rendered more striking by the fact that a few weeks before, on December 5th, Mrs. Holland was told:—

I fear you will never be really responsive trying alone—at least not to influences unknown to you while they lived. You need the connecting bond.

The subject of the sealed envelope involves a perplexing problem which must be dealt with in a later chapter.

On March 1 the two sensitives began to experiment together, as above mentioned, and cross-correspondences continued to appear at intervals in the two scripts. Both in Mrs. Verrall's script and in Mrs. Holland's the writing frequently urges combining and weaving together, as for instance (March 31, 1901): "To one super-posing

certain things on certain things every thing is clear." This thought seems also to be expressed in the following lines written automatically by Mrs. Verrall's hand (July 20, 1904):—

So flash successive visions in a glass  
the while we dreaming scarce behold them pass.  
Yet all the while on the awakened soul  
each fitting image helps imprint the whole  
and superposed on what was first impressed  
fills so the outline, colour, and the rest,  
and while we only watch the master's hand,  
no glimpse vouchsafed us of the building planned,  
stone upon stone, the battlements arise,  
till the fair fabric flashes in the skies.

(Part iv, p. 378.)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE 'SYMPOSIUM' EPISODE

AT an early period in the development of Mrs. Verrall's automatic script an idea emerged which formed the subject of a cross-correspondence with Mrs. Forbes, and is of so significant a character that it will be interesting to trace it through its various stages. This can only be done by putting together and comparing the pieces of writing in which this idea appears. Some demand must be made on the patience of the reader, as the process of comparing these writings may be rather tedious. The episode in question is associated with a passage in Plato's *Symposium*, in which Socrates says that he will repeat what he learnt from Diotima, a prophetess of Mantinea. Love is, says Diotima, one of the race of spirits whose function it is to act as interpreters and mediators between gods and men. (See *The Banquet*. Also Part liii, p. 311.)

Mrs. Verrall's attention was first drawn to this subject in the following manner:—

It was on May 31, 1901, that the script made the first recognisable and direct reference to the dialogue in the words "Diotima gave the clue." I looked the passage up to see what Diotima said, and how far it could be described as a "clue." I noted at the time what I conceived to be intended as the clue, namely, that she told Socrates that Love was neither a god nor a man, but a great spirit, and that the spiritual, being between God and man, had the power of interpreting and conveying messages from God to man and man to God; that all the intercourse and talk of God to men, whether sleeping or waking, is through spirits, one of these is Love.

I was struck with the appropriateness of the message in itself and with the form in which it was conveyed—not directly in words, but by an allusion to Plato. I was certain that I had never seen the passage, and therefore that no emergence of forgotten knowledge could account for its appearance, so that the effect upon me was considerable and lasting (pp. 311, 312).

On Sunday, March 17, Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Forbes were both writing automatically, not together, but unknown to each other. Mrs. Verrall's writing contained, for the first time, what she regarded as a vague allusion to Mrs. Forbes. Later, on May 11, through Mrs. Thompson, the "Myers control" said, "I tried on Sunday with— I saw the receptacle but not this one."

Sir Oliver Lodge has suggested that this statement made in Mrs. Thompson's trance,

"may, perhaps, be connected with the sudden impulse on Sunday, March 17, which induced Mrs. Verrall to write automatically, and which produced the first reference to Mrs. Forbes in what eventually became a long series of cross-correspondences between those two automatists." If this suggestion is correct it looks as if, already, at this date, Mr. Myers had observed Mrs. Forbes, had noted her capacity as a "receptacle" and had tried to work through her.

It was not until September 20, 1901, however, that a definite mention of Mrs. Forbes appeared in Mrs. Verrall's script, thus:—

Ask Mrs. Forbes if she has a message for you—something about Gima or some such word. Gima dion looks the length. γιμᾶ Διὸς.

Then follows another incoherent attempt to get this word written, and the script continues:—

One single word . . . I can't get it.

As I read this it occurred to me that "Gima dion" may probably represent an early attempt (evidently unsuccessful) to produce a cross-correspondence with Mrs. Forbes in connection with the passage in the *Symposium*.

“Gima dion looks the length” of the name “Diotima,” G being substituted for T, and “dion” for “dio.” (See Part liii, p. 356; compare also the script of December 18, 1901, p. 243.)

Noting that in her report Mrs. Verrall remarks that this bit of her script seemed unintelligible, I wrote and asked her whether she did not think that it might have this connection with the “single word,” “Diotima.” With her kind permission I append her reply, which is of considerable interest.

5 Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge,

Feb. 12, 1909.

I am much obliged for your suggestion, which had not occurred to me. I think it is quite possible that you are right, and that the script of September 20, /01, represents that an attempt is being made to get the word Diotima from Mrs. Forbes. “Gima dion” does “look the length,” and the syllables reversed are not unlike “dio tima.” It is also true that in Mrs. Forbes’ later attempts, after my mind was attracted to the *Symposium*, the word *Dion* actually emerged (*Proceedings*, Vol. XX, p. 244).

It never occurred to me to see this meaning in “Gima dion”; I was probably put off by the Greek  $\gamma\epsilon\mu\hat{\alpha}\ \Delta\iota\omega\varsigma$ , which follows; for that makes the vowel after g short ě, whereas the i of *tima* is long ī. But the shortening of the vowel may be due to a desire to make a sort of sense of “Gema dion,” for the words  $\gamma\epsilon\mu\hat{\alpha}\ \Delta\iota\omega\varsigma$  mean—or rather seem to mean—“is full of Zeus.”

If you are right it certainly makes the *Symposium* episode neater. For then, after the allusion in my script of May 31, comes on September 20, /01,



the suggestion that the word (skilfully disguised) is to be found in Mrs. Forbes' writing.

Then, when this came to nothing, and a year afterwards I read the Dialogue, "they" seized the opportunity to draw Mrs. Forbes' attention to my reading, and so, by fixing my attention on the *Symposium*, to get an allusion to the subject and the name "Dio-" in her script. In this case it looks as if the attention of the "controls" had been steadily fixed on that passage in the *Symposium*, as the subject for what we now call a "correspondence" between Mrs. Forbes and me.

Mrs. Forbes' script does not *at this date* show any reference to the *Symposium*. The next reference to the subject occurs in Mrs. Verrall's script of June 27, 1902 :—

Peace on earth tranquillitas super omnia maria terrasque omnes.<sup>1</sup> Then listen to the fiery news—an arch of light bridges the chasm between earth and sky (p. 314).

This is rather indefinite, but it obviously contains the thought that Love is the bond between the worlds, which is the main idea of the passage in the *Symposium*.

On November 26 Mrs. Forbes' script says :—

H. wishes Mrs. Verrall to open the last book she read for him in which is the true word of the test (p. 241).

This script ended with the injunction, "let the letter be sent to-night."

<sup>1</sup> *Translation*: "Calm over all the seas and all the lands."

This missive reached Mrs. Verrall November 28, and she tells us that it completely puzzled her until at length she remembered that during November 26 and 27 her thoughts had been much occupied with Plato's Dialogue of the *Symposium*, having arranged to lecture on it on November 29.

On the chance that this was the book referred to in Mrs. Forbes' script, Mrs. Verrall deliberately set her mind upon this Dialogue before writing automatically on November 28, hoping that by so doing she might enable Mrs. Forbes to receive a clearer reference to the subject. Had this occurred, thought transference would have been the ready explanation, but no reference was found in either script until nearly a month later, when, on December 18, Mrs. Forbes' script contained an obvious reference to this subject:—

(a) . . . word . . . H. make it—. . . with the Dionysus<sup>1</sup> Dion—

(b) Edmund writes to tell the friend—  
who writes with Talbot—word of the Test will be Dy . . . Will you give the sense of the message write to Mrs. Verrall and say the word will be found in Myers' own . . . will you send a message to

---

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Forbes marks Dionysus as a guess.

Mrs. Verrall to say H. will see <sup>1</sup> with her on Friday—will you be so kind as to send this to-day?

(c) . . . Talbot writes to say you can be sure . . . it is one of the most Hymeneal Songs—Love's oldest melody (p. 244).

On this Mrs. Verrall makes the following interesting comments :—

Not the least interesting point in this script is the dramatisation.

The first communicator with great *difficulty* produces only an attempt at a word. The second describes that word as part of a test, says that it concerns me, and attempts to add a further point for its identification. The third, in a few words, written with comparative ease, gives a description of the book such as suits very well the supposed situation, viz. that of an intermediary not himself acquainted with the passage in question but endeavouring to help in the transmission under difficulties of a somewhat technical allusion (p. 245).

That Mrs. Forbes herself was completely unaware of the significance of what she wrote is obvious from her letter enclosing the script, in which she said, "If it turns out that you have anything to do with weddings to-morrow, or are reading any special book with a hymeneal song in it, I shall be very much delighted."

<sup>1</sup> Or "sit"; word not clear. Sir Oliver Lodge has since stated that "H." represents the "Myers control." When Mrs. Verrall's report was published it was considered undesirable to publish his name.

Mrs. Verrall received this on December 19, 1902, and on that date her script contained the sentence :—

In the sealed book<sup>1</sup> is the word the message to men, the new and old Diatessaron.

This was followed by the drawing of a book.

The interpretation which should be given to the "sealed book" and the "word" is somewhat uncertain. Was the book referred to Myers' book in which he proclaimed his "message," his joyful news to men?

But if so, why is it called a "sealed book"? It looks as if there were here an indication of confusion between two distinct subjects. A sealed pamphlet had already been mentioned in the writing, and the incident of the sealed pamphlet may perhaps throw some light on a perplexing circumstance which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

On December 26, 1902, Mrs. Verrall was assured by her script, "Mrs. Forbes will get

<sup>1</sup> Tatian's Harmony of the Four Gospels is known as Tatian's *Diatessaron*; of this Mrs. Verrall was aware, but she only subsequently learned that there is also a Pythagorean *Diatessaron*. This renders the expression "new and old Diatessaron" appropriate.

the word I want." This assurance was repeated in January 1903.

On January 6 (1903) we find in Mrs. Forbes' script apparent attempts to write the word *Symposium* :—

Son . . . son suspuro suspiro sryseo sym.on H. eros.<sup>1</sup>

Faint scribbles follow, containing a suggestion of Greek letters, but these are not verifiable.

On January 11 unmistakable isolated Greek characters are legible,  $\omega$ ,  $\epsilon$ ,  $\rho$ ,  $\sigma$ ,  $\phi$ ,  $\varsigma$ ,  $\alpha$ ; and are described as part of an uncompleted test (p. 246).

Mrs. Forbes does not know the Greek alphabet, and has never consciously written Greek characters (p. 246).

On January 21 (1903), after a reference to the *Symposium*, comes the sentence, "Wait for the word from Mrs. Forbes," and this is immediately followed by an obvious reference to some papers Dr. Verrall had lost. Mrs. Verrall writes :—

In the last half of January there came, closely following upon one another, five statements which I interpreted to mean that the passage in question was alluded to and emphasised in Mr. Myers' forthcoming book, *Human Personality* (p. 315).

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<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* The god of Love?

These are as follows :—

January 14, 1903. The book will help—our word is there contained.

January 22, 1903. In Myers' book is a word that ought to make things plain—read it to see—not at the head of a chapter, but quoted in the text—it should have been and surely is—

January 23, 1903. Read the book for me and look there for the helping word.

January 25, 1903. Between God and man is the *δαιμονιόν τι*—you will see that quoted in the book—Love is the bond.

January 31, 1903. Look for what I have told you in the book—Myers' book. The passage is important, "To the ends of the earth." That is the countersign (pp. 315, 316).

Mrs. Verrall did not know at the time of writing whether these statements were correct. Mr. Myers had never talked over his book with her, and the only portions she had seen in proof were Chapter VI with its appendix and the headings of chapters. She says she had no means of knowing whether it was likely that her script was correct, and she was very anxious to test this. On receiving the volume, therefore, which was published on February 10, 1903, she searched it with considerable interest, and she found that Vol. I, pp. 112, 115, contains paragraphs dealing with Plato's view of love, and particularly with the above-mentioned Dialogue

in the *Symposium*. Frederic Myers says, "Love becomes, as Plato has it, the Interpreter and Mediator between God and man."

In Vol. I, chap. iii, p. 113, we find a brief sketch of the ideas expressed in the Dialogue, and in a footnote he speaks of this utterance, placed by Plato in the mouth of Diotima, as unsurpassed among the utterances of antiquity:

It is obvious, therefore, that the passage in Plato's *Symposium* occupied a large place in Myers' thoughts when writing his book. Moreover, in Vol. II, p. 282, we find a further allusion to it which should be compared with the script of June 27, 1902.

Speaking of telepathy he says, "Again its action was traced across a gulf greater than any space of earth or ocean, and it bridged the interval between spirits incarnate and discarnate, between the visible and the invisible world."

Further comment is not necessary. The episode requires close attention to be appreciated, but it repays the trouble which its study involves. No one who considers the matter carefully can fail to be impressed by the indications of purpose which are apparent in the development of this incident. Beginning

with an early attempt to impress Mrs. Verrall (and perhaps also Mrs. Forbes) with the name "Diotima," the control works persistently towards the idea that the passage in the *Symposium* (containing the Dialogue) would be found in "Myers' own" work, not at that time published.



## CHAPTER V

### THE SEALED ENVELOPE

FREDERIC MYERS, before his death, entrusted to the care of Sir Oliver Lodge a sealed envelope containing some words which it was his intention to try to communicate after his death. Of this fact Mrs. Verrall was aware.

On July 13, 1904, a statement was made in her script to the effect that this envelope contained the passage from the *Symposium* about Love.

July 13, 1904—I have long told you of the contents of the envelope. Myers' sealed envelope left with Lodge. you have not understood. It has in it the words from the Symposium about Love bridging the chasm.

They are written on a piece of single paper, folded and put in an envelope. That is inside another envelope which has my initial at the bottom, left hand, and there is a date on the envelope too, the outside envelope not in my writing. The whole thing has been put with other papers in a box, a small box clamped with metal. (Part liii, p. 424.)

(Here follows a reference to another enve-

lope supposed to have been left by Professor Sidgwick.)

Mrs. Verrall's script repeatedly urged that this sealed envelope should be opened. When this was done, however, the statement as to its contents was found to be incorrect. No explanation of the error has been found, or, at least, no conclusive explanation; there are, however, a few considerations which may throw a little light upon it and may suggest a clue as to the possible causes of the erroneous statement.

Between April 27 and May 8, 1901, there occurred repeated references in the script to a lost book, indicating that it was to be searched for in a certain room (recognised from the description as Mrs. Sidgwick's room), and adding, "It is a test." Mrs. Sidgwick had forgotten altogether about the existence of this pamphlet, which was not found until nearly two years later, *i. e.* in December 1903, and then was discovered in the place described in the script.

The following extract from Mrs. Verrall's report refers to this matter:—

"When in the spring of 1901 (April and May) Mrs. Sidgwick was asked if, among Dr. Sidgwick's papers, there was such a sealed

packet, she replied that there was not. . . . It thus appears that at the time when inquiries were made of Mrs. Sidgwick about a sealed packet the script was writing a description of a place containing some sort of book—a place corresponding closely enough with the place where the missing pamphlet was found.” (Part liii, p. 198.)

References to a sealed packet, or envelope, occur in many other places, associated sometimes with Professor Sidgwick, sometimes with Dr. R. Hodgson.

Even after Mrs. Verrall had learned that the latter had no such envelope her hand still wrote as if he had one. It is not surprising that the communications concerning the passage in the *Symposium* and those connected with a sealed packet should have become mixed together in her mind. Both these ideas, as we have seen, were associated with tests which had been verified. One had been verified in connection with the passage from the *Symposium*, quoted in Frederic Myers' book, and the other by finding among Dr. Sidgwick's papers, in the place specified, a missing pamphlet in a sealed envelope.

It seems probable that the definite assertion of July 13, 1904, is due to a mistaken

inference of her subliminal mind, based on this confusion. The character of the script of this date rather favours this hypothesis. If it is compared carefully with what has gone before, with the broken sentences and obscure allusions quoted in the preceding chapter, it will be observed that the difference between the clear flowing statement of July 13 and those other scripts is very marked, and may well be due to the fact that the earlier scripts really do give us the halting attempts of a "control" to express ideas through Mrs. Verrall's brain, whereas the fluent writing of July 13 emanated mainly from her own subliminal consciousness.

Sensitives are very liable to mistake their own inferences for impressions received, and it is often difficult, sometimes impossible, for them to distinguish between the two. This is also more likely to occur if the subject occupies the sensitive's mind in its normal state in the intervals between writing; for in this case it is well-nigh impossible to exclude conjectures and surmises. I do not, of course, intend to suggest that Mrs. Verrall had consciously associated the sealed envelope with the *Symposium*, but merely that the two subjects had become associated in her subliminal

consciousness; and since it is this region which is tapped through automatic writing, it would be natural that this connection should appear in the script.

This interpretation is confirmed by Mrs. Holland's writings. In her script the error is attributed to the intervention of Mrs. Verrall's own thoughts. The passage is an interesting one and deserves careful consideration. In order to appreciate it some extracts must be quoted from Miss Johnson's report.

The envelope had been opened on December 13, 1904, and the result was published in the *S.P.R. Journal* for January 1905, which appeared on the 17th.<sup>1</sup> "*The Westminster Gazette* on the same date contained a paragraph stating briefly the facts given in the *Journal*, and this paragraph was widely copied in other English papers." (Part IV, p. 242.)

On February 15, 1905, Mrs. Holland wrote to Miss Johnson:—

I have discontinued my practice of automatic writing for nearly a year, as the shock and jar of any chance interruption seemed out of all proportion

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<sup>1</sup> From an evidential point of view, of course, this fact renders the subsequent allusion to the subject in Mrs. Holland's script less valuable than it would have been had the dates been in reverse order, but it is still of considerable interest.

to the value of anything I obtained. However, this morning I had an unexpected impulse to write—sentences which as usual mean nothing to me personally—and I enclose the message. . . .

[M.] “Under other conditions I should say how much I regretted the failure of the envelope test, and I do regret it because it was a disappointment to you—otherwise it is too trivial to waste a thought upon—

. . . “Imperfect instruments imperfect means of communication. The living mind, however sensitive, intrudes its own conception upon the signalled message. Even now my greatest difficulty is to combat the suggestion of the mind whose hand writes this, though the owner tries to be passive. Short of trance conditions which are open to even graver objections, the other mind is our greatest difficulty. And they tire and flag so soon.

“Eternally,

“F.

“‘Life touching lips with Immortality.’”<sup>1</sup>

(Part IV, pp. 241, 242.)

Miss Johnson, on receiving this, naturally concluded that Mrs. Holland had seen the newspaper accounts of the incident; she therefore wrote and inquired of her whether she had heard anything at all in connection with the S.P.R. since coming to England. Mrs. Holland replied:—

I very seldom hear the name of your society mentioned, and as I am in the habit of concealing the interest I take in it, I never hear any news con-

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<sup>1</sup> D. G. Rossetti, for a Venetian Pastoral by Giorgione.

cerning it or its members. I have never seen any of the *Proceedings*, and *Human Personality* is the only book in connection with it I have ever read.

I remember an article in the December *Fortnightly* on "The Progress of Psychological Research" (p. 243).

(This article contained no mention of the sealed envelope or of Sir Oliver Lodge.)

Miss Johnson did not refer to the subject again in writing, but in October 1905 she had a long interview with Mrs. Holland. She then learned that this lady had no conscious recollection of having heard anything at all about the opening of the sealed envelope.

She remembered the passage in *Human Personality* recommending such experiments to be made (Vol. II, p. 499), and told me of another magazine article which she had read some time ago, which she thought might have contained reference to the subject. (I afterwards read this article, and found in it only a reference to supposed communications from Mr. Myers through automatic writing.)

At a later interview with Mrs. Holland (May 29, 1906) I showed her the paragraph in the *Westminster Gazette* about the opening of the sealed envelope, and cross-questioned her as to the possibility of her normal knowledge of it. She repeated that she was certain that she had never heard of it till I told her, and that she thought it quite impossible that she could have seen it and forgotten it (p. 244).

Whilst we are on this subject it may be well to consider some other possible causes

of confusion which must be reckoned with by students.

It is not only the sensitive on this side who is liable to become confused, the controlling intelligence is liable to be so also. For if sensitives can receive impressions from their "controls" it is obvious that, the condition of *rapport* once established, the control may also be liable to receive the thoughts of the sensitive. This reciprocal telepathy, whilst it is essential for communication, is probably the source of many errors; since fusion of thought at the moment when it is of urgent importance that the "control" should formulate a distinct idea may frustrate the very object of the contact, and may result in the sensitive receiving his own thought returned to him, mixed up, perhaps, with thoughts of the communicator. It is easy to see how misleading such a mixture of ideas might be.

In an early report on Mrs. Piper's trance (published in 1892) Dr. Hodgson points out that when the communications lack lucidity this is, apparently, not always due to the sitter, and he quotes the following remark made by "Dr. Phinuit," who at that time purported to be Mrs. Piper's chief control.



Sometimes when I come here, do you know, actually it is hard work for me to get control of the medium. Sometimes I think that I am almost like the medium, and sometimes not at all. Then [when the control is incomplete] I am weak and confused. (*Proceedings*, Part xxi, p. 9.)

I will here add an entry made in a notebook of my own after reading the automatic script of a friend, as it bears on this point under consideration.

March 30, 1903—Record indicates anxiety on the part of X. (*i. e.* the communicator), lest control should mean a merging of individualities—a danger to both—

“But you hold on,” he adds, as if this saved the situation.

That is to say, my friend’s capacity to “hold on” to her own distinct personality safe-guarded *both* from the risk of fusion of thought and consciousness.

Further I find the following extract:—

“Glory is the ineffable majesty of the eternal God;” the communicator adds, “partly your thought, I put mine behind it—to shine through, that’s the way we correspond, interact on each other’s minds.”

Again another incident which has come under my observation corroborates this.

A young friend of my own used at one time to write and speak automatically, and some-

times went into trance. On one occasion, in the trance state, the "control" said, the medium is "dreaming, and her dreams get in my way," and then added that the word "Gehenna" was in the medium's mind, and offered an obstruction. Being at a loss to understand how such a word should be in the girl's mind, she was questioned on the point when she had come out of the trance state. She then said she did not know what the word meant, and that she had been wondering as to its meaning during the previous day. This incident suggests the kind of obstructions which may have to be overcome by both the "control" and the sensitive.

Through the hand of the same girl a fuller account of these difficulties was written in reply to an inquiry as to the source of erroneous messages.

It may be of interest in this connection to quote this in full.

I do not think you have been deceived, but I have no doubt that confusion has crept in. It does so to such an extraordinary extent that you would marvel if you could watch the process. Let me try to describe to you a little bit of our feelings when we control. We find ourselves entering a dense mist. It blinds us, deafens us, and clogs our senses. Then we seek to make some movement, often not knowing what will be the result. The result is often—is usually—totally unexpected by ourselves.

It is as though you meddled with some large machine whose properties you do not understand. It is quite terrifying sometimes if you are very confused and cannot understand what your machine is doing. As you remain isolated, lonely, confused, some word floats through the medium's atmosphere. You seize on it with gladness, believing very often in your confusion either that it is the message you had yourself intended sending, or that it is a word from your spirit friend reminding you of what you had wanted to say— One idea once started in a medium's mind often starts and suggests another idea, and often then a whole story is fabricated, the communicator sincerely believing that he is speaking the truth.

Then when we leave the medium we look back on a collection of falsehoods which quite appal us and can only wait for another opportunity of rectifying the mistake— It is a heavenly relief to return to the spirit atmosphere— But you must not think that this is the case with all spirits, for to many of us it is comparatively easy—

To myself especially so now, though at first it was not so.

In reply to the inquiry whether the power of communicating between that state and our own would grow stronger, in connection with the work generally, the following reply was given :—

Yes, certainly— They intend perfecting the work which is at present only half begun.

*Question.* What did you mean by some word floats through the medium's atmosphere?

*Answer.* Either in the medium's mind or spoken by one of the circle.

This script came through the hand of a girl

who had read little of the literature on the subject, though she was doubtless familiar with the idea that many difficulties attend the effort to communicate.

If this graphic description correctly indicates the nature of these difficulties, it is easy to understand how such an error as that connected with the sealed envelope may have arisen.

In a report published in June 1909 Sir Oliver Lodge expresses in not dissimilar language what he conceives to be the condition during some of these attempts to communicate. He says:—

They are attempts at doing something rather beyond the power of the operators—who arrive approximately at their aim without achieving what they want exactly. They are trying to get something definite through, let us say, and something like it comes. Occasionally they hardly know it comes, it is a puzzle to them as to us, and often they don't know what it is that we have got; but sometimes they too seem to be spectators, aware of the result, and to be worried by the misconception and the misunderstanding which they see will arise, but which they are powerless to prevent—except, as here, by trying to instruct us and awaken our intelligences into a condition in which we too can understand and grapple with the unavoidable difficulties of the situation. (Part lviii, p. 218.)

It is interesting to compare these two quotations, remembering that one was written

through the hand of a girl who had not studied the Piper records, and the other from the pen of a Professor who is summing up some of the impressions made on him by prolonged study of these and other experiences.

It is very important that students should realise that such causes of error are factors more or less present in all psychic experiences. They have been dealt with at length by Dr. Richard Hodgson in *Proceedings*, Part xxxiii, which students would do well to read carefully.

The causes of confusion may be classed as follows :—

1. First, the fact that thoughts telepathically received from those still in the flesh may blend with, or be mistaken for, messages from the discarnate.

2. The thoughts of the medium, whether in trance or out of trance, may act in a similar way.

3. The Intelligence desiring to communicate may be unable to concentrate his mind sufficiently to control the medium's brain, and may have to use an intermediary,<sup>1</sup> who may fail to receive the message correctly.

<sup>1</sup> This will be further explained in dealing with Mrs. Piper's trance.

4. Several spirits may attempt to communicate their thoughts to the medium at the same time, and may interfere with each other without being aware that they are doing so.

5. The eagerness or possible agitation of the communicating spirit is also a disturbing cause; and to this may be added the fact—

6. That the very act of controlling another brain causes partial oblivion. Perhaps the common experience of forgetting a name when we are particularly desirous of recalling it may be a somewhat analogous experience. We say, "I shall remember it if I don't try to think of it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The subject of confusion arising from possible difficulties of communication is further dealt with in *Objections to Spiritualism (Answered)*, by H. A. Dallas, published by the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

## CHAPTER VI

### MRS. PIPER'S MEDIUMSHIP

As Mrs. Piper's mediumship has played such an important part in the more recent developments in connection with Frederic Myers, it is desirable to put the reader in possession of some of the particulars concerning this remarkable sensitive which have been published from time to time by the S.P.R.

The earliest account of her appeared in 1890. (Part xvii.) She had then been more or less under observation for about five years. Professor William James made her acquaintance in the autumn of 1885. In the report which he made to the American S.P.R. of his experiences with her he said: "I am persuaded of the medium's honesty and of the genuineness of her trance." He attempted to hypnotise her, but succeeded only "as far as muscular phenomena and automatic imitation of speech and gesture go; but," he

adds, "I could not affect her consciousness, or otherwise get her beyond this point. Her condition in this semi-hypnosis is very different from her medium trance. Suggestions to the 'control' that he should make her recollect after the medium trance what she had been saying were accepted, but had no result . . . no clear signs of thought transference as tested by the naming of cards during the waking state. . . . Trials of the 'willing game,' and attempts at automatic writing gave similarly negative results." (Part xvii, pp. 653, 654.)

Professor Hyslop has recently stated that he, too, has found her *not suggestible*; he writes in the *Journal of the American S.P.R.*, October 1908:—

I believe only one person has ever been able to hypnotise Mrs. Piper effectively. But in her trance she is not suggestible at all as that is understood by Psychopathologists. . . . Suggestibility means imitative and apparently automatic response to an operator's command or request. Now Mrs. Piper does not do this at all (p. 545).

The importance of this fact will be recognised later when we discuss the development called "Cross-correspondences."

The testimony to her honesty borne so unequivocally by Professor William James



is corroborated by Mr. Myers, Dr. Richard Hodgson, Professor Hyslop and Sir Oliver Lodge. The latter writes :—

That the Phenomenon is a genuine one, however it is to be explained, I now regard as absolutely certain; and I make the following two statements with the utmost confidence :—

1. Mrs. Piper's attitude is not one of deception.
2. No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts. (Part xvii, p. 446.)

Any one desiring further assurance on this point should read the opening pages of the two reports published in Parts xvii and xxi of *Proceedings*, in which are described the precautions taken by investigators to satisfy themselves with regard to the honesty of the Medium and the reality of her trance, of which Professor James affirms he has not "the remotest doubt," at the same time giving it as his conviction that Mrs. Piper is "an absolutely simple and genuine person." (Part xvii, p. 654.)

She seemed anxious that the phenomena connected with her state should be investigated by scientific men, as she did not profess herself to understand it at all, and she showed "the fullest readiness to accept suggestions in any way whatever, for the purpose of ascertaining the meaning of the

Phinuit personality," who formerly manifested in her trance state. Both she and Phinuit gave full permission to Dr. Hodgson to try any tests which might seem to him desirable. The Committee appointed by the American S.P.R. to investigate Mrs. Piper's case, report in a similar way of the aid afforded them by the "generous co-operation of the Medium." (Part xxi, p. 2.)

The following particulars quoted from Sir Oliver Lodge's report are of considerable interest:—

These trances cannot always be induced at pleasure. A state of quiet expectancy or "self-suggestion" will usually bring one on; but sometimes the attempt altogether fails. . . . The first time that it occurred (as Mrs. Piper informs us), it came as an unwelcome surprise. . . . There was often a marked difference between the first few minutes of a trance and the remaining time. On such occasions almost all that was of value would be told in the first few minutes; and the remaining talk would consist of vague generalities or mere repetitions of what had already been given.<sup>1</sup> Phinuit, as will be seen, always professed himself to be a spirit communicating with spirits; and he used to say that he remembered their messages for a few minutes after "entering into the medium," and then became confused. He was not, however, apparently able to depart when his budget of facts was empty. (Part xvii, p. 441.)

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<sup>1</sup> The student should observe this tendency to repetition, which is a marked feature in experiences of this sort and a factor to be reckoned with.

In the trance state, under the Phinuit "control," she seemed to be partially anæsthetic, sensations of touch being somewhat enfeebled,<sup>1</sup> and the senses of taste and smell apparently lacking. (Part xxi, pp. 4, 5.)

The communications which purported to be made at the earlier stages of her mediumship, were not by writing but through the voice.

Speaking of the voice of the Phinuit "control," Sir Oliver Lodge says:—

It sounded like a man, and I quite forgot that it was a woman who was speaking for the rest of the sitting; the whole manner and conversation were masculine . . . the occasional irrelevance faintly coming in every now and then amid the more constant coherent and vigorous communication, reminded me of listening at a telephone, where, whenever your main correspondent is silent, you hear the dim and meaningless fragment of a city's gossip, till back again comes the voice obviously addressed to you and speaking with firmness and decision. . . . The details given of my family are just such as one might imagine obtained by a perfect stranger surrounded by the whole of one's relations in a group and able to converse freely but hastily with one after the other; not knowing them and being rather con-

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<sup>1</sup> A medium with whom physical manifestations occurred, but who did not go into the trance state, experienced the opposite; she has told me that when phenomena were occurring she has become painfully and acutely sensitive to sound and even to the touch of a fly lighting upon her.

fused with their number and half understood messages and personalities. (Part xvii, pp. 144, 145.)

Mrs. Piper's health appears to have benefited rather than otherwise from her strange state. Previous to the year 1893 her health was not good, in that year she underwent an operation necessitated by an injury received some time before in a collision with an iced sled; another operation was performed in February 1896, and "since then," Dr. Hodgson says, "her health has been uniformly better—and she may now be regarded as a thoroughly healthy woman." (Part xxxiii, p. 288.) This statement was endorsed in a personal letter which I received from Mr. Myers in December 1898, in which he says:—

The actual facts have been carefully watched throughout, and noted by first-hand observers, medical and otherwise,<sup>1</sup> in successive Reports. In her earlier years of trance Mrs. Piper would give various jerks and gasps during entry into and exit from trance. She was unconscious of this and made no complaints, nor was there ever any ground to suppose them injurious to her. Of recent years, *e. g.* when I saw her in 1893, and ever since—she has passed into and out of trance, just as she would into and out of sleep, with perfect calm. . . . The probable view is that the trances—or the "controls"—have improved Mrs. Piper's health.

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<sup>1</sup> Professor William James is a physician as well as a psychologist.

It is interesting, in view of later developments both of experience and opinion, to observe the guarded comments made by Mr. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Hodgson and other investigators in the earlier reports in Parts xvii and xxi. None of them were at that time prepared to commit themselves to *any* interpretation, even provisionally, as a working hypothesis; but various possible hypotheses were under consideration. These will be referred to in the next chapter.

In Dr. Hodgson's Report published in 1892 (Part xxi), after referring to thought transference, clairvoyance, secondary personality, etc., and endeavouring to show how far they might apply to some of the phenomena, he concludes by saying :—

The hypothesis which for a long time seemed to me the most satisfactory is that of auto-hypnotic trance in which a secondary personality of Mrs. Piper either erroneously believes itself to be, or consciously and falsely pretends to be, the "spirit" of a deceased human being. . . . Several facts which I have mentioned . . . seem to point strongly towards this view. My confidence, however, in this explanation has been considerably shaken by further familiarity with the P'hinuit personality and other allied "manifestations" of Mrs. Piper's trance-state, and I have no certain convictions that any single theory which has been put forward is the real one. (Part xxi, pp. 57, 58.)

To this he adds a note at a later date :—

The foregoing report is based upon sittings not later than 1891. Mrs. Piper has given some sittings very recently which materially strengthen the evidence for the existence of some faculty that goes beyond thought transference from the sitter and which certainly *prima facie* appear to render some form of the spiritistic hypothesis more plausible (p. 58).

It was this hypothesis to which he ultimately committed himself in the report published in 1898. (Part xxxiii.)<sup>1</sup> In this report he deals very fully with the reasons which led him to this conclusion, and with the probable difficulties which have to be surmounted by any spirit trying to use the organism of another as a channel of self expression. The whole subject is dealt with in a masterly manner, with clearness, with weighty reasoning and comprehension, the result of long and patient experiment through upwards of ten years.

In this report he points out that, whilst the errors and confusions are not incomprehensible, if we take into consideration the great difficulties and the conditions generally, they "are not the results we should expect on the hypothesis of telepathy from the living," and that the spirit hypothesis is that which most satisfactorily accounts for these and other facts.

<sup>1</sup> A document of great importance to any student who wishes to gain a clear grasp of the subject.

## CHAPTER VII

### THEORIES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED

ALTHOUGH Dr. Hodgson stated in his report of 1898, that he no longer had any doubt that the chief communicators through Mrs. Piper are veritably the personalities which they profess to be (*Proceedings*, Part xxxiii, p. 406), he did not, at that date, claim that the correctness of his conclusions was absolutely proven, but only that the weight of the evidence was strongly, and in his opinion convincingly, in their favour. I will now briefly touch upon some of his reasons for regarding this hypothesis as a more adequate one than any other, but readers must bear in mind that it is impossible to do full justice to his argument in so cursory a survey.

To begin with, he attached some weight to the fact that the communicators not only persistently asserted themselves to be the spirits of deceased persons, but also produced marvellous simulation of the de-

ceased, accompanied by their specific memories and "by the presentation of each character in its unity, showing a clear self-consciousness, a working intelligence of its own, and a morality in no case less than that of the persons concerned when living, but showing rather a more definite upward movement, a stronger determination towards the things that are higher."

He could not reconcile "all this apparently complete independence and power of reasoning and lofty ethical aspirations" with the supposition that they were "either lying or mistaken about the fact of their existence itself, and must be assumed to be, one and all, merely fragments of Mrs. Piper." (Part xxxiii, p. 369.)

To those who are only superficially acquainted with the phenomena the hypothesis that these personalities are "fragments of Mrs. Piper," that is to say, secondary personalities of Mrs. Piper, is likely to seem more probable than to those who have closely and profoundly studied them. Persons who have not paid much attention to scientific definitions have sometimes a vague general notion that a "secondary personality" is capable of displaying all sorts of super-



normal faculties, and that there is no limit to the capacity for acquiring information with which it may be credited.

The following paragraph from a letter by Professor Hyslop<sup>1</sup> will show that this notion is quite erroneous.

The Scientist has to have a term to denote the subconscious production of matter which is neither supernormal nor spiritistic, but derivable from the normal experience of the subject, and latent to the normal consciousness and memory.

As secondary personality is known to the Scientist it has no traces of the supernormal. . . . We must remember that the term secondary personality is not a name for any special power of the mind other than the normal, as many people have supposed, but is as I have defined it. . . .

Mrs. Piper shows no traces of secondary personality as defined and recognised in psychiatry or pathology.

In Professor Hyslop's opinion, therefore, the hypothesis of secondary personality will not account for the supernormal acquisition of knowledge.

Is the hypothesis of telepathy more satisfactory? Are the facts such as to justify the conclusion that Mrs. Piper (in the trance state) obtains information from the minds

<sup>1</sup> Not intended for publication, but quoted with his kind permission.

of living persons, and, impersonating the character of the deceased, retails this information to their friends?

We must bear in mind that the information imparted is often unknown to any person present, so that, if the theory of thought transference (or telepathy) be accepted, it will be necessary to assume that the agents are persons at a distance from the percipient, that she has, subliminally, access to the minds of persons of whose existence she has, normally, no knowledge, and that she can receive from their minds facts of which they are not consciously thinking.

Now it can be claimed as *experimentally demonstrated* that ideas consciously in the mind of one person can, when thought has been concentrated on these ideas, be transferred to the mind of another person at a distance, and such transference may take place without the agent having the intention of transmitting anything; but it cannot be claimed that the kind of thought-transference which has to be assumed to explain the phenomena which occur with Mrs. Piper, has ever been experimentally demonstrated at all.

Sir Oliver Lodge lays emphasis on this fact in his discussion of the case. He says :—

Whereas the kind of thought-transference which has been to my knowledge experimentally proved was a hazy and difficult recognition by one person of objects kept as vividly as possible in the consciousness of another person, the kind of thought-transference necessary to explain these sittings is of an altogether freer and higher order—a kind that has not yet been experimentally proved at all. (Part xvii, p. 452.)

And further on he repeats :—

It ought to be constantly borne in mind that this kind of thought-transference without consciously active agency has never been experimentally proved (p. 453).

Dr. Hodgson endorses this statement and says that, judging from his own experience, and that of other sitters, the results “would prove conclusively that the information was not obtained by a process like that involved in experimental thought-transference, and that for the kind of telepathy, if telepathy it be, involved in these manifestations there is no experimental basis whatever.”

If the phenomena are to be attributed to the activities of Mrs. Piper’s subliminal consciousness alone, we are compelled to make the arbitrary supposition, not only that Mrs. Piper’s subliminal mind gets into relation with the minds of distant living persons, but also that this part of her consciousness is

endowed with a selective capacity as to occurrences, and a discriminative faculty as to the persons related to the occurrences; otherwise the information acquired would not be correctly associated with the persons whom the events in question concerned. Her impersonations (if they are to be so denoted) manifest "emotional remembrances and desires and intelligence characteristic of the alleged communicators and urging further towards higher aspiration and noble deeds, and constantly affirming their independent existence." (Part xxxiii, pp. 394, 395.)

Moreover, here is another significant fact: the failures which occur in many attempts to communicate present features of a character in accordance with what might be expected, if the communicators are what they claim to be, independent entities, but they are *not such as we should expect on the hypothesis of telepathy from the living.*

Dr. Hodgson again writes:—

Having tried the hypothesis of telepathy from the living for several years, and the "spirit" hypothesis also for several years, I have no hesitation in affirming with the most absolute assurance that the "spirit" hypothesis is justified by its fruits and the other hypothesis is not. (Part xxxiii, pp. 392-396.)

In this connection the statement made by Professor Hyslop, already quoted, should not be forgotten, namely, that Mrs. Piper in her trance is "*not suggestible at all.*" (See *Journal American S.P.R.*, Vol. II, p. 545, October 1908.)

The above facts deserve very careful consideration: those who desire to form a fair judgment as to the bearings of these phenomena as a whole must rid their minds of all ambiguity as to the assumptions which it is necessary to make if the spirit hypothesis is rejected, and they must fully realise that neither the theory of secondary personality, nor that of telepathy, can be applied to account for the phenomena without extending the significance of these terms to include faculties *the existence of which has not up to the present been scientifically demonstrated*; and therefore that it cannot be argued in favour of these interpretations that they have the advantage of being already proven. The recognition of this is important, for there is, perhaps, no greater hindrance to growth in understanding and conviction than to allow the imagination to be captivated by a hypothesis, under the illusion that it rests on demonstrated facts,

when it is really only an unproven speculation.<sup>1</sup>

Speculation is perfectly legitimate if it is recognised to be merely speculation, it may even be useful by suggesting a direction for fruitful investigation, but if a false value is attached to it, its effect is mischievous; mental areas which should be receptive and open become prepossessed and closed, and thus the discovery of a truer and more adequate hypothesis may be indefinitely postponed.

I will now give a few details as to the manner of Mrs. Piper's trance, and what appear to be the conditions under which communications are made through it. Dr. Hodgson says in his report that the trance exhibits four definite stages. In Stage I, Mrs. Piper appears to have two modes of consciousness, which he calls respectively normal (or supraliminal) and subliminal. In this stage the normal consciousness is beginning to disappear; she is still dreamily conscious of the persons beside her, and at the same time she is also dreamily conscious

<sup>1</sup> *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, by Thomson Jay Hudson, appears to me to be a speculation of this misleading kind.

of "spirits." She seems to be partly conscious, as it were, of two worlds.

In Stage II her normal consciousness "has entirely disappeared and the subliminal consciousness only is manifest. It is as though her own personality held much the same relation to her organism as Phinuit or other 'spirit' controller of the voice. . . . She seems then to possess not the dreamy consciousness of the previous stage . . . but a fuller and clearer consciousness . . . which is in direct relationship, not so much with our ordinary physical world, as with another world."

In Stage III *this consciousness also disappears*; "it seems to be withdrawn from any direct governance of her body, the upper part of which becomes inert and apparently lifeless." The upper part of her body falls forward, and her head is supported upon cushions on a table.

In Stage IV a very slight disturbance arises in the upper part of the body, "which becomes less inert and which appears to have come to some extent under the control of some consciousness . . . and the right hand and arm . . . begin to make movements suggesting writing." (Part xxxiii, pp. 397,

398.) In the earlier phase of Mrs. Piper's experiences the voice alone was controlled; later, when writing developed, "the personalities controlling respectively the hand and the voice showed apparently a complete independence . . . seemed to be entirely distinct from each other, and frequently carried on separate and simultaneous independent conversations with different sitters" (p. 398).

The intelligence communicating through writing seems to be unaware of the effect which is produced on Mrs. Piper's organism, "as little aware as a person talking into a phonographic mouth-piece is aware of the registration on the revolving cylinder. . . . The writing . . . is liable to include occasionally remarks not intended to be written, words apparently addressed by an indirect 'communicator' to the consciousness of the hand . . . or by indirect communicators to one another . . . or the wandering thoughts of the direct communicator were apparently produced in writing in incoherent fragments. . . . But there never seemed to be any confusion between the personality moving the hand . . . and the personality moving the voice" (pp. 398, 399).



When passing out of trance, which Mrs. Piper does more slowly than when entering the trance state, she frequently utters words or sentences which seem to have been made to her by communicators, she seems like a spirit not in full control of her body. "She frequently has visions, apparently of distant or departing communicators" (p. 40). In this returning stage of the trance some valuable utterances have been made (valuable, that is, from the point of view of evidence), and communications which could not be given during the state of deep trance have not infrequently been successfully conveyed during the waking stage.

For instance, Miss Edmunds was holding a sitting on behalf of a lady who was not present. As Mrs. Piper was coming out of the trance, her voice shouted excitedly, "Tell Aleck Bousser (pseudonym) not to leave them alone." Miss Edmunds knew nothing of Aleck Bousser, but he was well known to Dr. Hodgson. He was an intimate friend of a communicator (G. P.), who was quite unconnected with the lady for whom the sitting was held, but who had, nevertheless, written a few words during the trance. Dr. Hodgson writes, "I sent the

message immediately to A. B., and received the following reply:—

“There certainly do happen to be some people I just was happening to have been debating about in my own mind in a way that makes your short message perfectly significant and natural. I am sorry thus to be obliged to feed your credulity, for I hate your spirits.”

It was subsequently explained to Dr. Hodgson that Madame Elisa, the sister-in-law of Aleck Bousser, had wished to give this message, but that she was not in time to do so before the close of the trance, and therefore G. P. had given it to the “returning consciousness” of Mrs. Piper. Dr. Hodgson adds, “that Madame Elisa should select some significant circumstance in connection with living friends or relatives, is intelligible; but to suppose that a fragment of Mrs. Piper’s personality selects it is not intelligible—it is not explanatory, and suggests no order.” (Part xxxiii, p. 372.)

## CHAPTER VIII

### CAUSES OF CONFUSION

THE Phinuit control has now been superseded and has rarely manifested since the year 1897. One of the perplexities connected with this control is that when he seemed to find it particularly difficult to give correct information he appeared to guess, or fish, for facts from the sitters, or sometimes "eke out the scantiness of his information from the resources of a lively imagination." (Part xvii, p. 449.)

The first explanation which presents itself is, of course, that Phinuit was dishonest, but Sir Oliver Lodge recognised, even at an early stage of the investigation, that there might be other reasons for Phinuit's apparent fishing. He says:—

Whenever his supply of information is abundant there is no sign of the fishing process. At other times it is as if he were in a difficult position—only able to gain information from very indistinct or inaudible resources, and yet wishful to convey as much infor-

mation as possible. The attitude is then that of one straining after every clue and making use of the slightest indication whether received in normal or abnormal ways: *not, indeed, obviously distinguishing between information received from the sitter and information received from other sources.* (Part xvii, p. 449. The italics are mine.)

After mentioning that the fishing is most marked when Mrs. Piper herself is not well, which is what might be expected under any hypothesis, he continues:—

He seems to be under some compulsion not to be silent. Possibly the trance would cease if he did not exert himself. At any rate he chatters on, and one has to discount a good deal of conversation which is obviously, and sometimes confessedly, introduced as a stop-gap.

He is rather proud of his skill, and does not like to be told he is wrong; but when he waxes confidential he admits that he is not infallible; he does the best he can, he says, but sometimes “‘everything seems dark to him,’ and then he flounders and gropes and makes mistakes. . . . Personally I feel sure that Phinuit can hardly help this fishing process at times” (p. 450).

Sir Oliver Lodge then points out that although it seems to us that it would be better if the “communicator” would desist when conditions are unfavourable, rather than pro-

duce this worthless chatter, which has "a deterrent effect on a novice to whom that aspect is first exposed," yet it may be that, if we understood the process better, we should change our opinion, and he adds:—

After all he probably knows his own business best, because it has several times happened that after half an hour of more or less worthless padding, a few minutes of valuable lucidity have been attained. (Part xvii, p. 450.)

With this should be compared a footnote in Dr. Hodgson's Reports:—

On January 14, 1894, G. P. (a communicator) wrote, "I don't think it wise for you to ask Dr. Phinuit much now he is inclined to try too much at times . . . and thinks he hears things when they are not close enough to him. He is a mighty good fellow, but exaggerates a little occasionally when he is dull. Better not tell him I say this." (Part xxxiii, p. 369.)

The statements made by the communicators as to the *modus operandi* on the other side are interesting, although, of course, there is no way in which they can be strictly verified. They say that "we all have bodies composed of luminiferous ether enclosed in our flesh and blood bodies."

The relation of Mrs. Piper's ethereal body to the ethereal world, in which the communicators claim to dwell, is such that a special

store of peculiar energy is accumulated in connection with her organism, and this appears to them as a "light." Mrs. Piper's ethereal body is removed by them, and her ordinary body appears as a shell filled with this light. "Several communicators may be in contact with this light at the same time. . . . If the communicator gets into contact with the 'light' and thinks his thoughts, they tend to be reproduced by movements in Mrs. Piper's organism."

"Upon the amount and brightness of this light the communications depend. . . . In all cases coming into contact with this 'light' tends to produce bewilderment, and if the contact is continued too long, or the light becomes very dim, the consciousness of the communicator tends to lapse completely." (Part xxxiii, p. 400.)

Several pages of Dr. Hodgson's Report are devoted to the consideration of the confusion which occurs and with its probable causes. He compares the trance condition with the condition which may be observed when a person is partially under anæsthetics, or recovers consciousness gradually after it has been suspended, and he notes that this return to consciousness is liable to be accom-

panied by "the manifestation of memories vivid in that consciousness, just before it ceased to act through its organism, often mingled with other ideas which it seems to have had just before renewing its manifestations" (p. 404).

It seems very probable that the conditions of a communicator during Mrs. Piper's trance are very similar to those of ordinary states of partial consciousness. Prolonged observation of the writing process and the scripts themselves convinced Dr. Hodgson that the intelligence using the hand was "not conscious of writing," and until informed did not know in what way thoughts were being registered. It is easy to understand under these circumstances that confusions would be liable to frequently arise.

The question may here suggest itself: Is this process injurious either to the communicating spirit or to Mrs. Piper? Under some circumstances it might be so, but under the prudent care of those, both on this side and on the other, who have been conducting the experiments, there seems to be no reason to suppose the experiences are at all detrimental. It has already been mentioned that Mrs. Piper's physical health has improved,

and since January 1897 the improvement has been very marked. At that date a new group of controls replaced that of Phinuit. They gave themselves the titles of the controls who had previously manifested through Mr. Stainton Moses, known as "Imperator," "Rector," and "Doctor," but it seems to be very doubtful whether they should be identified with these. They informed Dr. Hodgson that "the light" was much worn by use, and offered to repair it as much as possible. After having obtained Mrs. Piper's consent (in her normal state) Dr. Hodgson agreed to leave the control of "the light" in the care of this group of intelligences, and there has been no reason to regret the decision. "Imperator" stated that there were many difficulties in the way of clear communication, due chiefly to the fact that so many inferior and perturbing communicators had been using the medium.

Most remarkable has been the change in Mrs. Piper herself, in her general feeling of well-being, and in her manner of passing into trance. . . . She passes into trance calmly, easily, gently, and whereas there used to be frequently indications of dislike and shrinking when she was losing consciousness, the reverse is now the case; she seems rather to rejoice at her "departure," and to be in the first instance depressed and disappointed when after the trance is



over she comes to herself once more in this "dark world" of ours and realizes her physical surroundings (p. 409).

We have no reason to fear that the confusion induced by contact with the medium's "light," *if not too much prolonged*, is to the communicators more than a temporary experience.

They on their part enter voluntarily into these conditions, and we need not scruple to accept this service, which they so gladly offer to help and comfort and bring assurance to sad and doubting hearts. There can be no greater joy for liberated and advancing spirits than the joy of service, and if this joy involves laying aside, temporarily, the realisation of a higher state and submitting themselves to the experiences of our limitations, they are but following the example of the highest Spirit known to us in thus taking on themselves some of the conditions of their still incarnate brothers.

It seems, however, as if the "control" of a medium by the same intelligence, *if too prolonged*, may have undesirable consequences, and may blunt the memory, for a time, for the Emperor group have stated that Phinuit, who for years was her chief "control,"

would require to be absent from Mrs. Piper for a long time before he would regain consciousness of his past earth life. (See *Journal American S.P.R.*, Vol. III, p. 67.)

We know too little to be able to form any certain conclusion on this point, but it is worth bearing in mind. We know that among incarnate human beings the sense of independence and distinct personal identity varies considerably in degree. Some are influenced very readily, and are in danger of becoming mere echoes of their friends; others are not at all liable thus to lose their own distinctness. Similarly in the case of spirit control the effects on the spirit controlling and on the medium are likely to be very various. These possibilities should be recognised and guarded against. As we learn to understand better what these phenomena involve we shall be better able to deal with them effectively. Heedless and purposeless experimentation will become rare; those who are physically, mentally, or morally unfitted to develop their psychic faculties will learn to recognise the risk they incur by so doing; and those who are fitted, and feel themselves called to develop them will know how to safeguard themselves from undesirable consequences.

Hitherto, through ignorance, many mistakes have been made, energy has been wasted and health of mind and body has sometimes suffered, discredit being thereby brought upon the whole subject.

If the psychic faculties belong, as is probable, to that "ethereal body" which will be our normal organ of expression and communication after death, it is easy to recognise that the use of these faculties will demand much care and circumspection. In some cases they manifest readily and spontaneously, in others they can only be evoked by prolonged effort; in either case the experimenter should recognise that only those whose mental and emotional nature is well balanced, and thoroughly *under the control of the will*, are likely wholly to avoid injurious consequences or to obtain the most valuable results.

## CHAPTER IX

### MRS. PIPER'S VISIT TO ENGLAND

IT has been necessary to devote many pages to the consideration of Mrs. Piper's personality, and the experiences which have already been published in connection with her, in order that the recent communications which purport to come from Mr. Myers may be fairly estimated. Those who read these communications, having no acquaintance with the history of Mrs. Piper's mediumship, are not in a position to do justice to the evidence they present. The cursory survey made in the last three chapters does not, of course, claim adequately to represent the value of that history, but it is hoped that it may in some measure enable the student to recognise the importance of the past experiences in relation to the subject which we are considering, namely, the evidence for the conclusion that Frederic Myers is attempting to communicate from the sphere of his present existence.

Mrs. Piper came to England in November 1906. The Committee of the S.P.R., having detected the cross-correspondences between Mrs. Verrall and other automatic writers (particularly Mrs. Forbes and Mrs. Holland), determined to conduct experiments with Mrs. Piper with a view to encouraging the development of these cross-correspondences, and also with the object of encouraging, as far as possible, the manifestation of the "controls," Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers, and Richard Hodgson.

In Mr. Piddington's report of this group of experiments, he says:—

The Sidgwick control played but a minor part; the Hodgson control showed much activity as a go-between . . . but gave little evidence of identity and did not, I think, fully maintain the life-like character of its earlier manifestations in America; while the Myers control, which had formerly been lacking in dramatic vitality, displayed a marked advance, particularly in the *vraisemblance* of the personation. (Part Ivii, p. 19.)

One hundred and twenty experiments in cross-correspondences were made between November 15, 1906, and June 2, 1907.

During this period Mrs. Verrall produced 63 scripts, Miss Verrall 17, and Mrs. Holland 38 (the period in Mrs. Holland's case

being extended to July 10). Mrs. Verrall's script and Miss Verrall's were done in England and Mrs. Holland's in India, and we are told that she remained throughout the entire series of experiments—

in absolute ignorance of what was written by the other automatists. So likewise did Mrs. Piper, unless it be that she remembers in her normal state things said to her during her trances; and even then the evidential value of the result would be unaffected, for all she could have learnt in this was either that an experiment had been successfully accomplished or that it had failed. Mrs. Verrall saw at various dates certain portions of Mrs. Holland's and of Miss Verrall's script; and Miss Verrall read or was informed of a few passages in Mrs. Verrall's script. Careful note was taken at the time of the extent of the knowledge thus normally acquired and of the dates on which it was acquired by Mrs. and Miss Verrall (p. 22).

Mrs. Verrall had ten sittings with Mrs. Piper; Miss Verrall had five. They did not enter the room till the trance had begun and left it before Mrs. Piper had recovered consciousness; no communications passed between them and Mrs. Piper, except at these sittings.

Over one hundred subjects for experiment were chosen by the trance personalities, only eighteen by the sitters, and of the eighteen "only one can be said with certainty to have been successfully transferred."

The successes were therefore almost entirely restricted to those experiments in which the subjects were chosen by the "controls."

Notes were taken during the experiments of all that was said, including remarks made by the sitters.

The trance-script was always kept out of Mrs. Piper's sight and taken away at the end of the sitting, so that she never saw it or had access to it at any time. In her normal condition she neither asked for nor received any information whatever about what had happened at the sittings, except that she was occasionally told that the results were considered interesting and promising, and that they were of a different nature from what had previously been obtained. Since there is strong ground for believing that in her normal state she remembers absolutely nothing of what has occurred in the trance state, it would seem impossible that in the intervals between the sittings she could have got up any information bearing on them, even had she wished to do so. (Part lvii, p. 25.)

The external features of the trance are thus described by Mr. Piddington:—

Mrs. Piper sits at a table with a pile of cushions in front of her, and composes herself to go into trance. After an interval varying from two or three to ten minutes her head drops on the cushions with the face turned to the left and the eyes closed, her right hand falling at the same time on to a small table placed on her right side. A pencil is put between her fingers and the hand proceeds to write. . . . After the hand has ceased to write the

medium remains quiescent for a few minutes. She then raises herself slowly and often with difficulty from the cushions. When the body is erect she begins to speak (p. 24).

The supposed *modus operandi* on the other side, as far as it can be gathered, is explained by Mr. Piddington in a letter in reply to an inquiry in the *Journal* of the S.P.R., December 1908.

At the present time and for a good many years past Rector, with rare exceptions into which I need not enter, acts as intermediary and amanuensis or spokesman for both sides; that is to say, he receives messages from the spirits, and by writing or speech conveys them to the sitters; and he receives oral messages from the sitters and conveys them to the "spirits." In other words, all communication is effected through Rector, and he is the only "spirit" who communicates or is communicated with directly. Rector does not understand Latin, and consequently, to make sure that he should transmit correctly sounds unfamiliar to him, the Latin words were spelt out to him letter by letter. . . . I may point out that the phenomena show a remarkable consistency in that the difficulty of communication is not confined to one side, for just as Rector appears to find it difficult to transmit unfamiliar words to Myers<sub>P</sub>,<sup>1</sup> so Myers<sub>P</sub> appears to find it difficult to transmit unfamiliar words to Rector (pp. 332, 333).

It was under the conditions as above

<sup>1</sup> Myers<sub>P</sub>, Myers<sub>V</sub>, and Myers<sub>H</sub> are the three terms used to distinguish the communications which purport to come from Mr. Myers through Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland respectively.



described that the experiences about to be considered occurred. Whether Rector be regarded as an independent entity or not, the fact remains that this "trance personality" is a factor in the experiences which cannot be overlooked.

I propose to deal with only two out of the experiments successfully carried out, and I would ask the reader to bear in mind that the abridgment necessary for the purpose of this work must make the incidents appear less weighty than they actually are when all their details are taken into account. Any one who wishes to acquaint himself with the evidence more fully should obtain Part lvii of *Proceedings*,<sup>1</sup> in which full details concerning the incidents which are about to be considered will be found set forth in their completeness.

Since the above chapter was written, another Part (lviii) of *Proceedings* has been issued (June 1909) in which Sir Oliver Lodge says with reference to Mrs. Piper:—

It is not an impertinence, but is justified by the special circumstances of the case, to state that the family is an admirable one, and that we regard them

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<sup>1</sup> To be obtained from the office of the S.P.R., 20, Hanover Square, London, W., 10s. net.

as genuine friends. . . . It is as the duty specially allotted to her that she has learnt to regard her long service, now extending over a quarter of a century. (Part lviii, p. 136.)

In relation to the "controls" he says:—

In the old days the tone was not so dignified and serious as it is now: it could in fact then be described as rather humorous and slangy; but there was a serious undercurrent constantly present even then; the welcomes and farewells were quaint and kindly—even affectionate at times—and nothing was ever said of a character that could give offence. . . . Great care was taken of the body of the medium, both now and previously, by the operating intelligence (pp. 133, 134).

## CHAPTER X

### THE LATIN MESSAGE

THE complexity of the recent developments, which we have now to consider, will be inexplicable unless we bear in mind the peculiar object in view and also the special reasons which made that object difficult to effect.

Communications through mediums of various kinds have been the subject of study for many years. Frederic Myers' aim was not merely to add one more testimony to the truth of survival of precisely the *same* kind as the preceding; his intention was obviously to give evidence of a different character; evidence which, by its very complexity, would preclude the hypothesis of thought transference from the incarnate, which, as he well knew, is the explanation usually accepted by those who are sceptical concerning the possibility of "messages" coming from the "dead."

In carrying out the scheme of this difficult and complex kind of evidence (which seems to have originated on the other side, not on this), Myers was further hampered by his inability to communicate directly, and the consequent necessity of using Rector as an intermediary.

In a letter dated January 1894, Mr. F. W. H. Myers spoke of his "unfortunate *impermeability* to psychical influence," meaning evidently that he was not gifted with the faculties known as mediumistic; this "impermeability" seems in some degree to persist, so that on the other side he cannot control Mrs. Piper directly, but is obliged to transmit his messages through the agency of Rector, and with the help of other spirits more capable of communicating in this way.

An ardent, almost passionate, desire to reach his friends and to complete the work he had begun in this life is very apparent in these recent communications; but it is also apparent that much restraint is exercised by the communicator.

The "passion" to reach his friends is so much force which has to be concentrated upon a definite object; it is as if a mill-stream had to be passed through a narrow pipe;

at moments the pent-up emotion breaks a way through, and one seems to hear the beat of a human heart, and to feel the quickened pulse of the man, Frederic Myers, as he calls to his friends across the veil.

Through Mrs. Holland we hear almost a cry, "I have tried so hard to reach you and always I seem to try in vain." Through Mrs. Piper there is a tone at times of exultant joy, but we are also made to realise that the difficulties to be encountered are exceedingly great, and the success reached is only attained as the result of steady persistency and immense patience. The strength of his affection and the intensity of his will, together, have, at length, resulted in producing purposeful and evidential communications of the special and subtle kind he had in view.

It is impossible to do more than slightly indicate their nature, or to convey an adequate notion of the impressiveness and life-like character of these conversations across the border, which are ably reported and discussed in Mr. J. G. Piddington's record. (Part lvii.)

It seemed to members of the Council of the S.P.R. that cross-correspondences might "be

so elaborated as to afford almost conclusive proof of the intervention of a third mind, and also might produce strong evidence of the identity of the communicating mind." (See Part lvii, p. 312.)

With this end in view the following plan was devised. A short message was composed in English and translated into rather obscure Ciceronian Latin so that the meaning would be difficult to discover by any one not familiar with Latin, even with the help of a dictionary. This Latin message was read and spelt out to Rector during Mrs. Piper's trance,<sup>1</sup> with the request that he would transmit it to Frederic Myers.

The message was as follows:—

*English version* (a).—We are aware of the scheme of cross-correspondences which you are transmitting through various mediums; and we hope that you will go on with them. Try *also* to give to A and B two different messages, between which no connexion is discernible. Then as soon as possible give to C a third message which will reveal the hidden connexion.

*Latin version* (b).—Diversis internuntiis quod invicem inter se respondentia jamdudum committis, id nec fallit nos consilium, et vehementer probamus.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Piper does not know Latin, and Rector states that he also does not know that language.

Unum accesserit gratissimum nobis, si, cum duobus quibusdam ea tradideris, inter quae nullus appareat nexus, postea quam primum rem per tertium aliquem ita perficias, ut latens illud in prioribus explicitur (p. 313).

Mr. J. G. Piddington conducted this experiment with Mrs. Piper during the first few months, after which Mrs. Sidgwick took charge. The English translation was *not* given to Mrs. Piper.

When the first part of the Latin message had been read out to Rector (December 17, 1906), Mr. Piddington added:—

I attach great importance to this message and its being correctly transmitted. One object in sending this message in Latin is to see whether Myers can understand it. To show that, he must send an *intelligent* reply to it; not merely such a reply as "I understand," or "Yes" or "No," but a reply that will show that he has grasped the purport of it (p. 314).

To this Rector replied, "We U.D."<sup>1</sup>

The first nine words as far as *committis* were then pronounced and spelt out letter by letter. This portion of the message merely states that the investigators had recognised the attempt to convey through different intermediaries "things which correspond mutually between themselves," that is

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* understand.

to say, they had noticed a kind of *harmony in diversity*.

The last word *committis* was written down at 12 o'clock in London, and at that hour, precisely, Mrs. Verrall, in Cambridge, sat down to write. Her script was in verse, very much in the style of Frederic Myers. It ends thus:—

Each single unit played its several part'  
 Discoursing symphony with god-sent art,  
 Till the majestic music of the whole  
 Throbbled in pulsation:—and the throbbing Soul  
 Saw through the sound the burning of the flame  
 Felt the lost Presence—to the Presence came.

(p. 310.)

The point to be noticed in this script is that it embodies the idea of the contribution of single parts to form a harmonious whole, and thus to reveal a presence—a presence which has been lost, but which is to be found again by this “music.”

As Mrs. Verrall was aware of the contents of the Latin message, we should not be justified in attaching any evidential value to this appropriate script, were it not for the fact that subsequently *through Mrs. Piper* F. W. H. Myers claimed to have given “music” to Mrs. Verrall and associated this with his answer to the Latin message.



On May 6, 1907 (through Mrs. Piper), he wrote :—

My reply was about the poem, and long ago I gave the word Music, which came to me as appropriate to my answer, and U.D. [*i. e.* understanding] of the message. . . . You must patch things together as best you can.

Remember we do not give odd or singular words without a deep and hidden meaning . . . in all our messages through both lights there is always more or less of the human element in them, which cannot be avoided, for your U.D. . . . But you must discriminate and dissect (*sic*) . . . the spiritual from the material, and you will see and U.D. much (p. 308).

Gradually the whole of the Latin message was spelt out, and it was finally completed on January 2, 1907.

No immediate reply was given, but assurances were conveyed that it was, at least partly, understood and that a long answer was being prepared. Occasionally Mr. Piddington was asked to repeat a part of the sentence, and he was urged to be patient and not to hurry the communicators in their reply.

In order to assist the recognition of cross-correspondences by readers of the script, Mr. Piddington suggested (through Rector) that Mr. Myers should indicate a word or sentence which he intended to be part of a

cross-correspondence, by drawing a triangle inside a circle, as an accompanying sign. This idea was accepted, and the sign was affixed shortly afterwards to a very interesting and important script of Mrs. Verrall's, a script which formed part of a cross-correspondence with Miss Verrall and Mrs. Piper and embodied a part of Myers' reply to the Latin message.<sup>1</sup>

After an anagram on the word "star," on January 23, Mrs. Verrall wrote:—

But the letters you should give to-night are not so many, only three

a. s. t.

On January 28 Mrs. Verrall's script was as follows:—

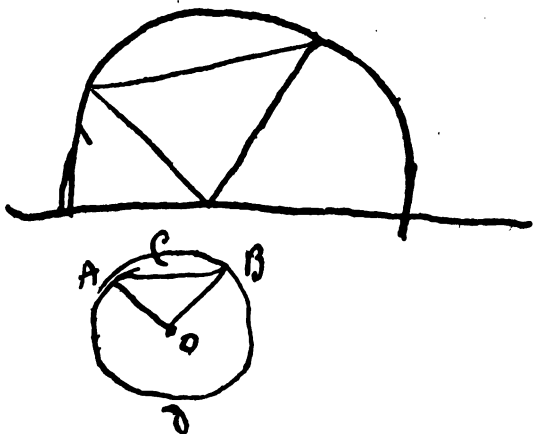
Aster [star]  
*τερας* [a sign or wonder]  
 The world's wonder  
 And all a wonder and a wild desire—  
 The very wings of her.  
 A WINGED DESIRE  
*ἰπόπτερος ἔρως* [winged love]  
 Then there is Blake  
 And mocked my loss of liberty.

---

<sup>1</sup> On March 6, 1907, Rector said, Myers "will be very glad to U.D. that the triangle came through as he did see the circle, but could not be sure absolutely of the whole triangle . . . he also wrote something about bird" (p. 339).

But it is all the same thing—the winged desire  
*ἔρως ποθεινός* [passion] the hope that leaves  
the earth for the sky—Abt Vogler for earth.  
too hard that found itself or lost itself—in the sky.  
That is what I want  
On the earth the broken sounds  
threads

In the sky the perfect arc  
The C Major of this life  
But your recollection is at fault.



A D B is the part that unseen completes the arc  
(p. 324).

Mrs. Verrall saw no particular meaning in this at the time, and when she received a letter from Mr. Piddington on February 12, telling her that her script of January 12 contained a "splendid success," she noted this in her diary with the comment:—

What was good on January 28, I have no idea. The script was full of Browning—and wings—and oddly capped a wrong quotation from *Abt Vogler* by an explanatory drawing, which showed that the idea was there but not the words (p. 329).

If we label this script of Mrs. Verrall's as "A," the next strand in the threefold cord of the experiment suggested in the Latin message, strand "B," will be found in Miss Helen Verrall's scripts. On February 3, before she had any knowledge of the contents of Mrs. Verrall's script, her hand wrote:—



The crescent moon,



remember that [here followed rough drawing of crescent moon and star] and the star [also a rough drawing of a bird and the word bird].<sup>1</sup>

About a week later, on the 17th, there



were further pertinent allusions in her script to harmony, "many together." A star was

<sup>1</sup> *Vogel* is the German for 'bird.'

drawn, and she was told "that was the sign; she will understand when she sees it." . . . "The mystic three." . . . "And a star above it all rats everywhere in Hamelin town. Now do you understand, Henry."

Rats is, of course, an anagram of *star*, and Hamelin town is reminiscent of Browning's *Pied Piper*.

We therefore find in both these scripts the ideas of "Star" and of "Browning," and more obscurely, "Vogler" can be traced in the word "bird" = *Vogel*.

If these coincidences are not attributable to chance (and there are not many who will suggest this explanation in view of the mass of cross-correspondences which exist between the sensitives), then it is evident that the intelligence at work is both capable of exercising considerable ingenuity in rendering the correspondence sufficiently obscure not to thrust its significance upon the scribe, and sufficiently obvious to be recognised on comparison.

The third strand in this treble harmony, strand "C," is supplied by Mrs. Piper, and until the clue was given through her, Mr. Piddington did not guess that "the *Abt Vogler* quotation had any connexion with the Latin message."

Through Mrs. Piper, on February 17 (about a week after Miss Helen Verrall had received the drawing of the star and bird, but before she received the allusion to Browning) Myers said, "*Look out for Hope Star and Browning,*" and intimated that his reply to the Latin message was partly given.

After this statement Mr. Piddington re-read Mrs. Verrall's script and recognised its significance for the first time.

Frederic Myers thus plainly showed that he understood the suggestion that had been made to him that he should try to give to "A" and "B" two different messages, between which no connexion is discernible; then as soon as possible give to "C" a third message which will reveal the hidden connexion.

I will give the episode in Mr. Piddington's own words:—

I then read Browning's *Abt Vogler*, with which I had no previous acquaintance, and immediately was struck by the extraordinarily apt answer to the second sentence of the Latin message which could be extracted from one of the only two passages in the poem in which the word "star" occurs.

This passage runs:—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that  
can,

Existent behind all laws, that made them and lo  
they are!

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed  
to man,  
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth  
sound but a star.  
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is  
nought;  
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all  
is said:  
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my  
thought:  
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider  
and bow the head!

Were one to search English literature for a quotation pertinent to the experiment suggested in the Latin message it would be difficult to find one more felicitous than these lines from Stanza VII of *Abt Vogler* (p. 326).

Myers explained through Mrs. Piper, at a later date, that the Latin message had immediately suggested this poem to his mind.

“It suggested it so strongly,” he said, “I rushed off to Mrs. V. gave it to her rushed back here and although you did not U. D. it. at the time you did later.”

When Mr. Piddington had personally understood, however, he still pressed for further, clearer statements, so as to meet the objections which might be raised by doubters, and this, at first, evidently caused some disappointment to Frederic Myers, who himself began to doubt whether his aims had been recognised.

He said (February 27, 1907):—

Now I believe that since you sent this message to me I have sufficiently replied to your various questions to convince the ordinary scientific mind that I am at least a fragment of the once incarnate individual whom you call Myers. Is it not so?

. . . Do you understand from my first utterances that I at all U.D. your messages? (p. 332, 333).

In reply Mr. Piddington explained that he did, personally, believe that Myers had shown that he understood the Latin, but that for the sake of eliciting more evidence he had "to play the part of a stupid person, who has to have everything explained to him."

To this Myers rejoined :—

"Oh, I see your point."<sup>1</sup>

Although willing to make yet another effort, Myers seemed puzzled as to what further statements were required, but Mr. Piddington finally succeeded in conveying to him that he had not made clear *through Mrs. Piper* wherein the appropriateness of the Browning poem specially lay. This elicited the following statement through her.

After mentioning (April 8) that he had drawn a crescent in addition to a star, he said<sup>2</sup> :—

<sup>1</sup> Later, on the same date, he alluded to Browning's lines . . . as given through Mrs. Verrall and another which I referred to before (pp. 332-335).

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of clearness I have here prefaced



[F. W. H. M.] I was very much afraid my message would not be U. D., therefore I drew the star to make *sure* . . . I am most anxious to make Rector understand about the name of the poem. . . . I am very sorry Rector does not seem to grasp the word as I spell it . . . a difficult word to get through . . . but I shall try until he U. D. it (pp. 363, 364).

April 24. After a star had been drawn Mrs. Sidgwick remarked:—

a star—good

[F. W. H. M.] Yes

I remem(ber) Vol

Vol as it came to my memory

E. M. S. Is that a poem?

[F. W. H. M.] Yes Yes

E. M. S. I don't quite understand

[F. W. H. M.] Vol gar

E. M. S. I think I see. Why are you telling me about it?

[F. W. H. M.] Because I promised I would.

E. M. S. Yes you were going to think over the name of the poem.

[F. W. H. M.] Yes and that is it.

E. M. S. What was the poem about?

[F. W. H. M.] Vol is right

E. M. S. You have got something like the name of a poem.

It is not quite right, but if you tell me what is in the poem I think I shall understand.

[F. W. H. M.] Hope Star Horizon

Horizon<sup>1</sup> comes elsewhere

the sentences purporting to be messages from Mr. Myers by his initials, although this is not done in *Proceedings*, and "Rector's" own words by this name.

<sup>1</sup> This word refers to another cross-correspondence which was successfully carried out, and will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Yes, do not get confused, dear Mrs. Sidgwick.

E. M. S. I will not get confused.

[F. W. H. M.] V. M.

V. M.

(Rector communicating)

[Rector] Almost right he says

[F. W. H. M.] (Myers apparently encouraging Rector to try again.) Yes, I do wish it very much just to keep my promise and complete my U. D. of the message.

(to E. M. S.) You know my interest

E. M. S. Yes, I know it well.

[F. W. H. M.] And my desire to prove the survival of bodily death

E. M. S. Yes, I know well.

[F. W. H. M.] A. B.

Volugevar

E. M. S. You've really very nearly got it

(Rector communicating)

[Rector] I can't quite repeat the last two letters, but he caught me after I left the light and told me what it was. R

[F. W. H. M.] Yes, as Star follows Star so I follow that message.

I gave Rector one more letter  
how do you pronounce

A. B. t.

E. M. S. Abt.

[F. W. H. M.] VO (hand inquires of E. M. S.)

E. M. S. Vogler.

[F. W. H. M.] Correct

(the hand is tremendously pleased and excited and thumps and gesticulates. The impression given is that of a person dancing round the room in delight at having accomplished something.—*Contemporaneous note by E. M. S.*)

(Rector communicating)

[Rector] He pronounced it for me again just as you did, and he said Rector, get her to pronounce

it for you and you will U. D. he whispered it in my ear.

E. M. S. Just as you were coming out?

[Rector] Just as I left the light

Vogler

Yes

E. M. S. Good

(Myers communicating)

[F. W. H. M.] Now, dear Mrs. Sidgwick, in future have no doubt or fear of so called death, as there is none

as there is certainly intelligent life beyond it.

E. M. S. Yes, it's a great comfort

[F. W. H. M.] Yes, and I have helped to proclaim it for you all

E. M. S. You have indeed

[F. W. H. M.] I wish to continue from time to time to help you by given (*sic*) some sign to assure you I am with you. . . . And that my interest is still keen and that I hold (?) the deepest affection for you at all times, also that I look forward to meeting you on this side (pp. 371-374. Date of this sitting, April 24, 1907).

Myers then goes on to state that the uncertainty of Abt and the faith which he held had recalled to his memory his own experience and prompted him to quote that particular poem. He adds:—

I chose that because of the appropriate conditions mentioned in it which applied to my own life (p. 376).

[F. W. H. M.] Do you remember when I said I had passed through my body and returned?

I tried to give it, and clearly, but was not sure that you U. D.

E. M. S. Do you mean you gave the name of the poem?

[F. W. H. M.] Oh yes. I mean I tried to give another part also which referred to completed happi-

ness in this life. and the possibility of returning to the old world again.

to prove the truth of survival of Bodily death these words were lingering in my memory, and I gave it as peak followed Star (p. 379).

After referring to Abt's joy and "sublime truth" and "delight" because of his achievement, he adds that he believes they will understand when he tells them he has returned to breathe in the old world which, he adds significantly, "is not, however, better than our new."

His own understanding of the Latin message he affirmed to have been "very clear," the difficulty had been to make his reply clear to Rector, and it was at this point that he referred (in the passage already quoted) to having long ago given the word Music, which he said came to him as appropriate to show his understanding of the message (see p. 100), and he added:—

There was great joy yet much hope in the lines which I wish to give you. . . . Do you remember the delight and joy of Abt and then the longing and final hope?

E. M. S. Yes quite

[F. W. H. M.] Yes, well, now do you U. D.? (p. 384, 385. Date of this sitting, May 6, 1907.)

At a later date a fresh effort was made to make the matter still clearer, and Myers said:—

If the fourth is a Star what would the third be?  
do you U.D.

In my Passion to reach you clearly I have made Rector try to—draw a star for me so there can be no mistake. . . . Now are you satisfied? (p. 388–390. Date, May 7, 1907.)

During May, when Mrs. Piper was staying with Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge, at Edgbaston, several further references were made to this subject. Sir Oliver Lodge said:—

Thank you, Myers. I only want to say that I think what you did about Browning, Hope and a Star, was very fine.

[F. W. H. M.] I am glad to have succeeded in making it clear to Rector, but I *did* have a time of it in making him understand my meaning. (Part lviii, p. 249. Date May 19, 1907.)

At a later date a partially successful attempt was again made to translate the Latin message. I will give a few extracts from Sir Oliver Lodge's report, published June 1909.

O. J. L. Do you wish to translate to me Piddington's Latin message?

Yes, you have long since been trying to assimilate ideas.

O. J. L. Cannot read all that. (I thought at the time that this was a sentence addressed to me; whereas I now realise that it was the beginning of a translation. O. J. L.)

Sir O. Lodge tells us that at this date he "had no previous knowledge of the words

of the Latin message" which was thus rendered by the "control."

You have been long since trying to assimilate ideas, but I wish you to give through Mrs. Verrall a proof—such proof of the survival of Bodily death, in such a way as to make such prove conclusively *conclusively* the survival of Bodily death. (Part lviii, p. 251.)

Then followed more on the same subject, with a definite statement that Myers was referring to the Latin message.

On June 2 Sir Oliver Lodge was told:—

Myers will open first this day.

He says when messages came from him he understands that the language is not always as he would speak it, but it gathers so much on the way when it is being transmitted it sometimes loses its natural tone. Understand?

Remember, when Piddington gave me his message, the special point in it was for me to give definite proof through both lights. . . . The first thought I had was to repeat a few words or lines of Browning's poem, but in order to make it still more definite . . . I registered a star, and the lines which I quoted to you before . . . were the most appropriate I could find.

I believe you will understand this to be conclusive, that I fully understand and have fairly well translated his message (p. 254).

It will be seen that the rendering is not entirely correct, for the message suggested that more than two sensitives should complete the test; and this was evidently under-

stood by the "control," for *three* were actually employed, namely, Mrs. and Miss Ver-rall as well as Mrs. Piper.

As I have already said, this brief survey of an important episode in the history of psychological research necessarily loses much of its impressive and convincing character, through being greatly curtailed and shorn of many details. The brief quotations made are barely sufficient to indicate the character and purport of these impressive conversations. To do more than this is impossible within the compass of a small volume; readers who will consult the full reports will find that they contain a large amount of important matter which it has been necessary to omit here.

In the next chapter I will make a similar brief survey of another episode, passing over a great many others which deserve the careful consideration of students. Among those which have to be omitted is an interesting incident connected with an inquiry as to which of Horace's Odes was most closely associated with Myers' former life and experience.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PLOTINUS EPISODE

MRS. VERRALL had been struck with the resemblance to Mr. Myers exhibited by the personality manifesting through Mrs. Piper in her trance, and also with the knowledge shown of unpublished portions of her own script connected with him; she therefore determined, at her next sitting with Mrs. Piper, to ask a test question, a question which it would be reasonable to suppose that Frederic Myers (if he were indeed communicating) might be able to answer.

It was decided that this question should conform to certain conditions. It must be unintelligible to Mrs. Piper herself. It must be complex, without being lengthy, *i. e.* the answer should not be capable of being expressed in one word or phrase, but "should require for completeness allusions to more than one group of associations." It should concern a subject with which Frederic Myers



could be proved to have been thoroughly familiar; also, "the question should in fact, though not in appearance," be connected with a range of subjects already alluded to in Mrs. Verrall's own script by the "Myers control." (Part lvii, p. 108.)

The subject for this test question was determined upon in the following way.

At a *séance* with Mrs. Piper, held on January 15, 1907, Myers claimed that he had given Mrs. Verrall the words "celestial halcyon (*sic*) days," and asked:—

"Have you it? Do you recall it?"

This exact phrase was not found in her script, but a few days later,<sup>1</sup> on January 22, the word "supern" was written, and this recalled to her mind an earlier script which had undoubtedly expressed the *idea* of "celestial halcyon days." This script contained the following broken but significant sentences:—

For her a message of peace— contemplation on high summits— stillness in the air . . . No you confuse—the storm and whirlwind consume the blue clear space between the worlds, but the supernal peace is undisturbed. (Part liii, p. 64.)

The reader will at once recognise that the

<sup>1</sup> On the same day Mrs. Piper in the waking stage uttered disconnectedly the words "halcyon days."

main idea of this script is that of unbroken heavenly peace, and that it may be aptly expressed in the words, "celestial halcyon days."

This idea is also embodied in the phrase *αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων*, used by Plotinus in a passage in which he describes the condition best fitted for communion with the Spiritual World.

The Greek phrase may be translated, "*the very heavens waveless*"; it was chosen by Frederic Myers as a Greek motto for his sonnet on Tennyson,<sup>1</sup> and it is also translated (omitting the Greek) in *Human Personality*, Vol. XI, p. 291. It occurs in the middle of a paragraph and is rendered, "calm be the earth, the sea, the air, and let heaven itself be still."

The following quotation from Mrs. Verrall's diary will make it quite clear why this passage was chosen by her for her test question.

Copy of Mrs. Verrall's Diary of January 24, 1907:—

I propose to make the following test, wh., if F. W. H. M. is really concerned in the trance, ought to come off. I will ask for his associations with a

<sup>1</sup> See *Fragments of Prose and Poetry*, p. 117.

short Greek sentence to be given to me in English. I shall take *καὶ αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων* for these reasons— (1) My sc[ri]pt of January 22 had the word "Supern," wh. referred me back yesterday to an earlier sc[ri]pt, wh. represents the celestial halcyon days wh. the P.[iper] trance F. W. H. M. [*i. e.* Myers<sub>p</sub>] said he had given me. The phrase c.[elestial] h.[alcyon] days seems to me to refer to the idea of Plotinus, quoted in *H.[uman] P.[ersonality]*, Vol. II, p— [blank left unfilled], and there is a flavour of Plot[inus], too, in my Sc[ri]pt. (July 3—/03.)

(2) The four Greek words are printed as the motto to his Tennyson poem in *Frag[ments]*.

(3) I think it possible that the same idea is at the base of this reference in my sc.[ri]pt to the windless calms.

Therefore, (1) would give a chance that the point is familiar enough to be remembered. (1) also suggests that it has been selected as a test. (1) and (2) make it evidential, as the words can be proved to have had associations for F. W. H. M. not to be discovered by Mrs. P.[iper]'s normal powers from the printed books.

I have mentioned these words to no one (p. 141).

In the event of a complete answer being given, Mrs. Verrall therefore expected:—

1. A translation into English of the words *αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων*.

2. A reference to Myers' poem on Tennyson.

3. A reference to Plotinus and the latter part of *Human Personality*.

These expectations were all fulfilled, a very complete answer being given through Mrs. Piper as well as through Mrs. Verrall's

own script. Moreover, the allusion made to Tennyson led her to re-read *In Memoriam*, and thus to discover a probable reason why Myers had selected these words as the motto for his sonnet on Tennyson—a reason which had not previously occurred to her or, apparently, to any literary critic. I must again quote Mr. Piddington's report on this interesting point.

The continued references in her script to Tennyson, the introduction of *In Memoriam*, and especially the recurrence (on March 11) of Tennyson's name in connexion with communion with the unseen, led Mrs. Verrall not only to believe that there was a more definite connexion between Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and the passage from Plotinus than she had hitherto recognised, but also to read the poem again in the hope of tracing it. . . . On re-reading *In Memoriam* in the light of the suggestion thrown out by her script, she was at once struck with the resemblance in language as well as in thought between the stanzas (section xciv-v) which describe the poet's trance and its antecedent conditions and the passage in the fifth book of the *Enneades* where Plotinus lays down the antecedent conditions desirable for ecstasy—the passage, namely, which contains the words *αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων*, and which is translated in the second volume of *Human Personality* (pp. 117, 118).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It cannot be absolutely proved, of course, that Frederic Myers had this definite reason for associating the words of Plotinus with his sonnet, but it seems highly probable. In any case it is an interesting fact that the script should have led to the recog-

The question was put on January 29, 1907, each Greek word being first pronounced and then spelt out to Rector. Mrs. Verrall asked:—

Mrs. V. If I say three Greek words could you say what they remind you of?

I might grasp the words and I might not but I could try

Mrs. V. Yes. You could either translate them into English, or tell me of what they make you think.

Do what?

Mrs. V. Tell me of what they remind you

Oh yes, of what they remind me, but what have they to do with our experiments?

Mrs. V. I think you have spoken of them to me before, or something like them.

Yes

When the Greek words had been repeatedly pronounced and carefully spelt out, Myers replied:—

Oh yes, I . . . D. better, farewell F. W. H. M. (agitated movement of the hand)

Adieu R. H. (pp. 141-143.)

It will be remembered that a similar agitation was shown when Myers was told that the answer to the Latin message had been successfully given.

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dition of a close resemblance between this passage and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, a resemblance which appears to not have been previously noted by any commentators (see pp. 118, 122).

If, as seems probable, Mr. Myers had some time before tried to direct Mrs. Ver-rall's attention to the idea of "Celestial Halcyon days," *i. e.* to the thought of heavenly calm, it is quite easy to understand that the choice of these words, which showed that this attempt had at last succeeded, should cause a thrill of excitement; for to him it must have seemed as an approach to the fulfilment of a long-cherished hope, the hope, namely, expressed with a note almost of despair, in a script written by Mrs. Holland in January 1904:—

Oh if I could get to them—could only give you the *proof positive* that I remember—reca<sup>n</sup>—know—continue.

We cannot be surprised if the recognition, that a great opportunity was now afforded him of proving that he did indeed "remember," awakened such strong emotions of hope and joy as to react in agitation on the instrument through whom he was communicating.

It is impossible to adequately convey in a summary like this the feeling of tension, of strenuousness, which pervades the communications in which Myers answered the "test question" concerning the Greek

words; but a sympathetic reader of the report cannot fail to recognise this. It is as if the communicator was exercising great self-restraint; was holding back intense, almost painfully intense, eagerness and emotion, which at moments find vent in exclamations such as "Amen, Amen, at last." The life-like character of the whole episode is very striking: this cannot be reproduced. I must content myself with briefly indicating the main points in Frederic Myers' reply.

Through Mrs. Piper, who, be it remembered, does not know Greek, the Greek quotation was paraphrased as a "cloudless sky beyond the horizon"; the Greek words were also definitely associated with Tennyson both in Mrs. Verrall's and Mrs. Piper's script. Through the latter Myers said: "I thought of Tennyson directly she gave me the words." Also through Mrs. Piper allusions were made to Arthur Hallam, and through Mrs. Verrall to the poem *dedicated to Arthur Hallam, viz. In Memoriam*. Through Mrs. Piper remarkable and subtle references were made to a passage in *Human Personality*, which will be found close to that in which Myers has translated the words of Plotinus; and, finally, again

through Mrs. Piper, came the distinct statement, "say to Mrs. Verrall Plotinus." "Plotinus is my answer"

In addition to the interest attaching to so full a reply, this incident also involved a particularly striking cross-correspondence on the subject of Tennyson's poem, *Crossing the Bar*.

On February 26 (1907) Mrs. Verrall's hand wrote :—

αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύνων

I think I have made him [probably Rector] understand. . . . I think I have got some words from the poem written down—if not stars and satellites, another phrase will do as well. And may there be no moaning at the bar—my Pilot face to face (p. 114).

And on March 6—

I have tried to tell him of the calm, the heavenly and earthly calm, but I do not think it is clear. I think you would understand if you could see the record. Tell me when you have understood

Calm is the sea—

and in my heart if calm at all, if any calm a calm despair. That is only part of the answer—just as it is not the final thought. The Symphony does not close upon despair—but on harmony. So does the poem. Wait for the last word (p. 115).

The Communicator evidently alludes to Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and to some other poem. It is open to question whether the sentence, "so does the poem," refers to



Browning's *Prospice* or to Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*; both may be said to close "on harmony"; probably both are meant, but there is a point which connects the words directly with *Crossing the Bar*.

If the reference is to Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar* the sentence "wait for the last word" becomes very significant; the last word of this poem of Tennyson's is the word "bar."

Now on March 6, during the waking stage of the trance, Mrs. Piper said:—

Moaning at the bar when I put out to sea. . . .  
I'm glad I've entered— (p. 150).

and then a little later twice she repeated "Arthur Hallam." And on March 13, 1907, Myers said:—

I referred to



J. G. P. Well?  
saying I had crossed it  
yes did she U. D.?

J. G. P. You said it to whom?  
both lights. . . .

J. G. P. I have not looked yet. I purposely did not look.

O yes, I U. D. why. . . .

I saw Mrs. Verrall and gave her a sign like this.

[Here two bars were drawn.]

and said I have crossed it

. . . . I thought she might get a glimpse of my U.D. [*i. e.* understanding] of her Greek.

J. G. P. I have a message from her to you; but before I give it will you describe in a word the thing which you said you crossed?

BAR. . . .

[The question was then asked :—]

Did Mrs. V. draw a bar?

J. G. P. Shall I look?

Yes

J. G. P. Then wait please.

let me call Myers first, I want him to hear (a pause)  
(Myers communicating) yes. are you here? . . .

did she draw a

(a figure intended to represent a bar was again drawn at this point, but so faintly that it cannot be reproduced)

(Meanwhile J. G. P. had opened for the first time the envelopes containing Mrs. Verrall's script of March 11 and 12 and read the contents.)

J. G. P. I cannot see that she did.

She D

J. G. P. (interrupting) Oh, Myers, one moment.

yes

J. G. P. I forgot. She wrote, "may there be no moaning at the bar," but she didn't *draw* a bar.

When I put out to sea

J. G. P. Yes.

Why didn't you say so before.

J. G. P. It was some days ago she wrote it, and I was looking out for a picture.

I am not so sure that I gave her this full impression, but I did quote those lines to her. I also quoted them to this light (pp. 154, 155).

A little further on Myers again said he

had drawn a bar for her, and had said "Arthur Hallam."

Mr. Piddington understood this to refer to Mrs. Verrall, and replied:—

"You wrote 'Pilot face to face,' but not Arthur Hallam, so far as I remember."

To this Myers answered, "Yes. No, I mean I gave it to the spirit of this light while it was returning" (p. 156).

This agrees entirely with what had occurred. It was in the waking stage that Mrs. Piper pronounced the name Arthur Hallam.

Careful consideration of this cross-correspondence must lead to the conclusion that the intelligence communicating through Mrs. Piper was identical with the intelligence controlling Mrs. Verrall's script; each script shows knowledge of what is contained in the other. This incident is a striking contribution to the mass of evidence which exists for a purposeful directing mind distinct from that of the sensitives.

There are many short incidents recorded in Part lvii, and one long one which is very ably analysed by Mr. Piddington in a section of some forty pages under the heading, "Light in the West." It is too complex to deal with here, and in order to properly

appreciate it the student should be equipped with a knowledge of classical literature, for many of its allusions are classical.

The main subject for the cross-correspondences involved seems to have arisen out of the last lines of section xcv of *In Memoriam*, which is closely associated with *αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων*. The lines are these :—

And East and West without a breath  
Mixt their dim light, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day—

The conception underlying this passage is obviously the union of opposites in the reconciling calm of heavenly light.

Perhaps it is only the mystic or the student of mysticism who will grasp the significance of the expression “the union of opposites.”

Professor William James in his book on the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, referring to the mystical state, says :—

Looking back on my own experiences they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably a reconciliation. It is as if the opposites of the world, whose contradictariness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. Not only do they as contrasted species belong to one and the same genus, but *one of the species*, the nobler and better one, *is itself a genus and so soaks up and absorbs its opposite into itself*. This is a dark saying, I know,

when thus expressed in terms of logic, but I cannot wholly escape from its authority, I feel as if it must mean something like what the Hegelian Philosophy means, if one could lay hold of it clearly. Those who have ears to hear let them hear; to me the living sense of its reality only comes in the artificial mystic state of mind.

Perhaps it was this reconciliation of opposites in the light of Truth that Frederic Myers was trying to suggest. It is something of this sort, in any case, that Mr. J. G. Piddington seems to have discovered in the scripts.

He says, "the parent idea" of this episode "from which all the other ideas were developed" by association, was "the Union of East and West."

This idea he traces in references made in various scripts to Dante's *Purgatorio*, to Tennyson's *Maud* and to Hercules as the classical type of the union of East and West. The words "East and West" also occur in *Human Personality* in connexion with the idea of unification, and the passage may perhaps lend some further support to Mr. Piddington's interpretation of the allusion. After speaking of the impossibility of finding a scientific basis for religion in the early ages of the world, Myers says:—

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What could best be done was to enforce some few great truths—as the soul's long upward progress, or the Fatherhood of God—in such revelations as East and West could understand. Gradually Science arose, uniting the beliefs of all peoples in one scheme of organised truth, and suggesting—as has been said—that religion must be the spirit's subjective reaction to all truths we know (Vol. II, p. 275).

The conclusions to which this class of evidence points have been forcibly summed up by Sir Oliver Lodge in an article in *The Church Family Newspaper*, Nov. 5, 1909. He writes:—

What we are quite clear about is that ingenuity of a high order has been at work, even though it be only deceptive ingenuity—nothing that can with any justification be styled “imbecility”—and that, to whatever agency the intelligence may ultimately have to be attributed, intelligence and scholarship and ingenuity are being very clearly and unmistakably displayed. Of that we have no doubt whatever. The scholarship, moreover, in some cases singularly corresponds with that of F. W. H. Myers when living, and surpasses the unaided information of any of the receivers.

Of that, too, I have myself no doubt; and some of us have supposed that all this would gradually become clear to a careful reader. . . . We are working in accordance with our best and ripest judgment. That we are working with assistance from, and in co-operation with, the other side is a matter on which there is a very legitimate difference of opinion, and it is only one of several hypotheses; but however that may be, and whatever reception our records meet with, in that work we shall continue, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

ANY one who has taken the trouble to consider attentively the selection of incidents here dealt with will, I venture to hope, recognise that they cannot be lightly put aside, but that they, at least, constitute a case for further consideration and inquiry.

In the present chapter I do not propose to deal any further with the question of evidence, but briefly to consider certain deductions which may legitimately be drawn from these communications, on the assumption that they proceed from Frederic Myers. I wish to ask: Supposing for the sake of argument, that the identity of the communicator is established, what is his "message"? What may we gather from these communications concerning the next stage of existence?

To begin with, they indicate, not only that Frederic Myers has survived bodily death

(as he was persuaded he would do), but also that he retains his former characteristics, and that the subjects which occupied his thoughts and energies in this life still interest him in his present state.

The importance of this deduction can hardly be overestimated, for it carries with it inferences of great practical value in relation to our present and future life. We will therefore consider the point a little more at length.

Frederic Myers' earthly life from early childhood was a life full of ideation. He lived in ideas, which to him became *ideals*, and it is noteworthy that the Myers communications deal little with actions or details of every-day life, but almost entirely with ideas.

That the communications are stamped with the mental characteristics of Frederic Myers there can be no manner of doubt.

On this point Mr. J. G. Piddington writes :—

On the problem of the real identity of this directing mind—whether it was a spirit or group of co-operating spirits, or the subconsciousness of one of the automatists, or the consciousness or subconsciousness of some other living person—the only opinion which I can hold with confidence is this : that



if it was not the mind of Frederic Myers it was one which deliberately and artistically imitated his mental characteristics. (Part lvii, pp. 242, 243.)

Therefore, if we accept these communications as from him, we have proof positive that death has not destroyed the special characteristics which distinguished the man and the writer, endearing him to a wide circle of friends and readers.

The script exhibits the activity of the same earnest, ardent nature, and the tastes of the classical scholar and lover of literature are conspicuous in the many references to Greek, Latin, and English authors. In his autobiography (*Fragments of Prose and Poetry*) he tells us that on his sixth birthday his father began to teach him Latin, and a few months later gave him the *First Æneid of Virgil*.

The scene is stamped upon my mind : the anteroom at the parsonage with its floor of bright matting and its glass door into the garden, through which the flooding sunlight came, while I pored over the new revelation with awestruck joy (p. 6).

This joy of the child of six years old developed into a growing passion for one after another of the Greek and Latin poets.

From ten to sixteen, he says, I lived much in the inward recital of Homer, Æschylus, Lucretius,

Horace and Ovid. The reading of Plato's *Gorgias* at fourteen was a great event; but the study of the *Phædo* at sixteen effected upon me a kind of conversion (p. 17).

It is entirely consistent that the communications of one so imbued with classical literature, and so influenced by it, should be full of allusions to classical writers. Plato, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Plotinus, Homer, Euripides, Dante, Wordsworth, Browning, and Tennyson, are all mentioned (the two latter very frequently), sometimes through Mrs. Piper, sometimes through other sensitives.

We are thus led to the conclusion that those who die to the physical environment do not necessarily forget and leave behind those things which interested them during their life here. What is true of Frederic Myers applies equally to others, and this affords a clue, of general application, to the life beyond.

But have we any means of ascertaining *which* interests are most likely to persist, and which will probably fade?

Some indications on this point may be gathered from the Piper records; for instance, on one occasion inquiry having been made by a sitter for a particular friend,

Phinuit replied that he could not find her as she had "grown too far away from the world." "Do they then forget this world?" he was asked, and to this he answered :—

All that is material is forgotten as of no consequence. It is all a spiritual growth, and spiritual growth here will help you there. (Part xxi, p. 115.)

Experiences after death will probably differ widely. We cannot doubt that those who have turned the pursuits of this life into means of spiritual progress will have a fuller, richer memory of the past than others who have only lived on the surface of life here and have harvested little that is worth remembering.

If these experiences testify to their continued interest in matters which occupied them during their earthly life, still more emphatically do they assure us that love and friendship continue unabated, and that these liberated spirits are moved by enduring affection to help us in our need. We have seen how eagerly Frederic Myers reached "over the bar" to assure his friends of his faithful remembrance of them. In his work on *Human Personality* he has said :—

What can there be at once more intimate and more exalting than the waking reality of converse with

beloved and enfranchised souls? So shall a man feel the ancient fellow-labour deepened, the old kinship closer still; the earthly passion sealed and hallowed by the irreversible judgment of the blest. (*Human Personality*, Vol. II, p. 259.)

And, as if to endorse this from the other side of death, we find him speaking in these communications of his "passion" to reach those he had left on earth, and persistently directing their attention to the passages in his book in which he had referred to the Dialogue (in the *Symposium*) respecting love, a dialogue in which love is described as *the bond* between heaven and earth.

In measure as we realise the *consolation* involved for us in these "messages," in that degree must we also recognise the *obligations* devolved on us by the truths they contain. It rests not alone with them, but to a great extent also with us, to facilitate intercourse, to deepen the fellow-labour, to draw closer the old kinship. It rests with us to furnish the conditions which make communion and communication possible and profitable.

If we forget them, or persistently think of them as *dead*, or if we allow selfish lamentation to darken our mental horizon, or suffer the higher life to be crowded out by the

“cares and riches and pleasures of this life,” we raise barriers to their approach, which they may be unable to remove or surmount, and by so doing we not only dwarf our own lives and narrow our outlook, but we may also grieve and disappoint them, and may even hinder and disturb their progress as well as their peace.

That they can be affected by our thoughts concerning them is obviously indicated by many communications: thought is magnetic, and attracts thought.

When we think of our friends we apparently, by so doing, enable them to become more aware of us, and, in some way, which we at present cannot explain, to see us more clearly. They see into our minds when our minds are occupied with thoughts of them,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Myers seems to have been aware of the publication of his book after his death and to have felt the effect of the many thoughts of him that were set in motion. He says:—

“The publication of the book was a tremendous help to me—and to others of us— It set new strength—new power free in our direction—and even blind interest—unintelligent thoughts can be an assistance.” (Part iv, p. 204.)

The following conversation between Dr. Hodgson and Mrs. Piper’s “control,” “George Pelham,” will also be read with interest in this connexion:—

Friend. George, you said you had been following

and it seems likely that in this way they become cognisant of much of our condition and even of our physical environment, and probably they can thus still participate both in our interests and delights, and in some measure in our sorrows also. Obviously this affords a strong incentive to cultivate those spiritual virtues which will make their association with us a joy and not a grief, a gain and not a loss; by our courage, our faith, our hope, and, above all, by our love, we can still bless those whose love still blesses us.

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Jim. Do you know where he is now, or where he went?

G. P. He has gone to see his friend Fenton (correct); saw him not three quarters of an hour ago, as near as I can tell by the time.

R. H. Well, it was more than three quarters of an hour.

G. P. That I can't specify.

Friend. George, do you know what Fenton and Jim were talking about?

G. P. About this very subject and about me (correct). (Part xxxiii, p. 424.)

On another occasion G. P. told Dr. Hodgson that he would try to see him if he (R. H.) would "send out his spiritual body to him (G. P.) as much as possible."

Presumably this implied that Dr. Hodgson must direct his thoughts to G. P. if he wished to be seen by him.

As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,—  
So Nobleness enkindleth Nobleness.—*Lowell.*

In this life of continued friendship Frederic Myers, Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, seem to be still co-operating for the same ends. The hope has been cherished for many ages that friendships may be thus continued, but, at times, this hope has almost flickered out in the fogs of materialistic philosophy. The certainty that love and friendship remain unbroken, and that they may grow and develop after death, affords not only comfort in bereavement, but a powerful incentive to loyalty, endurance, and all the nobler fidelities that make life worthy. There is nothing which affection cannot endure if the soul is assured that the partings caused by death are only a brief episode in a life of unending fellowship.

This conviction ought to produce a great change in men's thoughts of death and in their funeral customs. "There is no sadder mistake than to imagine that by mourning for the dead their state of happiness is increased—Love they desire, but not lamentation." (Part iv, p. 217.)

This and other messages remind us that

we can do much to keep open the avenues for their approach by reserving spaces for quietness, for thought of them and with them, we and they can still grow together and be enriched by each other's sympathy, companionship and influence.

Mrs. Holland was told that, "Many a thought that seems to come unprompted is really whispered by an influence near at hand." (Part IV, p. 211.) But a mind pre-occupied mainly with the material things which *they have forgotten* will be likely to be deaf to these whispers from the Unseen. Seers have always recognised that quietness, stillness of body, mind and spirit are essential to the best and most perfect kind of communion.

As we have already seen (Chapter XI) this condition of stillness is the leading idea in one of the most interesting series of communications, on a subject originally chosen, apparently, by Mr. Myers himself.

The idea is connected with the test question which was put to Mr. Myers through Mrs. Piper and her control "Rector." In this test question Mrs. Verrall asked him what associations he attached to the three Greek words *αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων*



(The very heavens waveless). The reader will remember that she was led to the choice of these words as the subject for her question by a passage in her own script which had embodied the idea of "Supernal peace undisturbed," and by Mr. Myers saying, through Mrs. Piper, that he had already given to her the thought of "celestial halcyon days."

The passage in *Human Personality* which embodies this thought from Plotinus, runs thus :—

So let the soul that is not unworthy of that Vision contemplate the Great Soul; freed from deceit and every witchery, and collected into calm. Calm be the body for her in that hour, and the tumult of the flesh; ay, all that is about her, calm; calm be the earth, the sea, the air, and let Heaven itself be still. Then let her feel how into that silent heaven the Great Soul floweth in. . . . And so may man's soul be sure of Vision, when suddenly she is filled with light; for the light is from Him and is He; and then surely shall one know His presence when, like a god of old time, He entered into the house of one that calleth him, and maketh it full of light. . . . And how may this thing be for us? Let all else go. (Vol. II, p. 291.)

A careful study of the whole episode from its earliest incipience to its close, suggests that Frederic Myers was anxious to draw attention to the idea of stillness as a con-

dition for communion with the unseen world, and that he had with this object himself started the associations which determined Mrs. Verrall's choice of this quotation as the basis of her experiment.

The message is one greatly needed: the rush of modern life is increasing, and it is hard, very hard, to withstand its influence, and to secure sufficient leisure for listening to the unseen speakers; our very eagerness for communications may prevent communion.

Peace for the Seer who knew that after—after—the earthquake and the fire and the wind, after, after, in the stillness comes the voice that can be heard. (Part lvii, p. 115.)

The voiceless communing and unseen Presence felt. . . .

The Presence that is in the lonely hills (p. 145).

These things, and more besides, were doubtless said as a part of Frederic Myers' scheme for self-identification, but not, I think, without reference to the teaching they convey to all who would realise the conditions for lofty and inspiring intercourse with liberated spirits. The central thought of this particular group of communications is finely embodied by Tennyson in his *In Memoriam*, in the familiar passage:—

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
 With what divine affections bold  
 Should be the man whose thought would hold  
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
 The spirits from their golden day,  
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.

If we are warranted in recognising a significant message in the incident connected with *αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀχύμαν* we are also clearly bound to find one in the selection of *Abt Vogler* as the subject for Myers' answer to the Latin message. In this connexion he said :—

“The uncertainty of Abt and the faith which he held . . . brought to my memory the experience I have had myself.” (Part lvii, pp. 374, 375.)

Thus Frederic Myers appropriated the thoughts in this poem as his own, and reminded Mrs. Sidgwick of the “joy” and “sublime truth,” which in his own case had

followed upon doubt and disappointment, saying, "I am trying to explain to you his doubts and fears—then his acceptance of God; yes, and faith in Him" (p. 375). In answer to the inquiry, "Why that poem was so appropriate as an answer to the Latin message"? he replied—

I chose that because of the appropriate conditions mentioned in it which applied to my own life . . . and nothing I could think of so completely answered it to my mind as those special words. (p. 376.)

And Rector added :—

He says other words about disappointment and how he hoped. . . .

joy and sublime truth and delight because of his achievement

do you U. D. what he is talking about? . . .

Oh I do not, R. but I will register what he says.

Peace Heaven made whole sky and Heaven meet.

Then Myers broke in with the words :—

I believe you will [u<sup>n</sup>derstand] when I tell you

I have returned to breathe (*sic*) in the old world, which is not, however, better than our new (pp. 379, 380).

And further :—

Listen. In all our messages through both lights (mediums) there is always more or less of the human element in them which cannot be avoided . . . but you must discriminate and dissect (*sic*) the spiritual from the material and you will see and U. D. much. There was great joy and *much* hope in the lines which I was to give you. (p. 384.)

He also said with reference to the poem :—

I tried to give another part also which referred to completed happiness in this life, and the possibility of returning to the old world again to prove the truth of the survival of bodily death.

The whole of *Abt Vogler* should be read attentively in order to understand the full significance of his choice, and with this may be compared the following from Mrs. Holland's script which came in the name of Mr. Myers :—

If it were possible for the soul to die back into earth life again I should die from sheer yearning to reach you . . . to tell you that all that we imagined is not half wonderful enough for the truth—that immortality instead of being a beautiful dream is the one the only reality—is the strong golden thread on which all the illusions of all the lives are strung. (Part Iv, p. 233.)

If you saw me as I am now you would not recognise me in the least—

All I could never be—all men refused in me

This I was worth to God whose wheel the pitcher shaped—<sup>1</sup>

I appear now as I would fain have been. (Part Iv, p. 215.)

What is the essence of this message but the assurance that our hopes shall not be disappointed? “that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the

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<sup>1</sup> Browning : *Rabbi ben Esra*.

heart of man to conceive " those things which are prepared for souls whose affections are sanctified by the love of the Highest?

The *Symposium* episode carried with it the assurance of love's potency, love's power to surpass all obstacles, "triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time!"

The Plotinus episode reminds us of the steadfast calm, the heavenly peace in which we must seek to possess our souls if we would inherit the beatitude of the peacemakers and realise unbroken fellowship with sons of God in the many mansions of our Father's house.

And the *Abt Vogler* incident conveys the promise of fulfilment, the affirmation that—

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good  
shall exist;

Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good,  
nor power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for  
the melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

With this thought of fulfilment I bring my task to an end, with the consciousness that it has been but inadequately carried out, but not without the hope that those ministering spirits who are sent forth to cheer and encourage us, as we grope for light in a

world so full of mystery, and for many so full of pain, may be able to use this little work, inadequate though it be, as a means by which to direct some truth-seekers into a path which may lead them, as it has already led many, into the realisation of "great joy" and "much hope."

## L'ENVOI

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### ON TIME

FLY, envious Time, till thou run out thy race;  
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping Hours,  
Whose speed is heavy as a plummet's pace;  
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,  
Which is no more than what is false and vain,  
And merely mortal dross;  
So little is our loss,  
So little is thy gain!  
For, whenas each thing bad thou hast entombed,  
And last of all thy greedy self consumed,  
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss  
With an individual kiss,  
And Joy shall overtake us like a flood;  
When every thing that is sincerely good  
And perfectly divine,  
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever  
shine  
About the supreme throne  
Of Him, to whose happy-making sight alone  
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,  
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,  
Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee,  
O Time!—MILTON.