LIGHT

Spring 1964 2s. 6d.

A LARGER **LIGHT**

- *How I became interested in the Paranormal*

NANDOR FODOR
LUCIAN LANDAU

W. TUDOR-POLE
DR. ALAN GAULD

- *Man and Nature*
- *Poltergeists and Scepticism*
- *Materialisation Puzzles*
- *Stainton Moses & Williams*
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and other articles

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MEETINGS IN THE SUMMER SESSION

APRIL

TUESDAY 7th at 7 p.m. — For Members only
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 8th. at 3 p.m. — MRS. M. HESSELL TILTMAN
"The Talking Horse of Richmond, Virginia"

TUESDAY 14th. at 7 p.m. — MR. W. ELTON
Demonstration of Psychometry

WEDNESDAY 15th. at 3 p.m. — MRS. IVY SCOTT
Demonstration of Clairvoyance

SUNDAY 19th. at 3 p.m. — **Address:** MISS MARGARET BRICE-SMITH
Demonstration: MRS ROSE HARLEY

TUESDAY 21st at 7 p.m. — DR. R. H. THOULESS, SC.D.
"Are Card-Guessing Experiments Any Use?"

WEDNESDAY 22nd at 3 p.m. — MRS. ROSEMARY LONGCROFT
"Day-to-day Application of Some Psychic and Allied Phenomena"

TUESDAY 28th at 7 p.m. — SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.
"Meditation"

WEDNESDAY 29th at 3 p.m. — MRS. WINIFRED WARD
"Why I am an Occultist"

MAY

TUESDAY 5th at 7 p.m. — MRS. JESSIE NASON
Demonstration of Clairvoyance

WEDNESDAY 6th at 3 p.m. — MISS FRANCES HEDDERLY
"The Science of Phrenology"

TUESDAY 12th at 7 p.m. — MRS. M. C. PETO
"Pursuit of Happiness"

WEDNESDAY 13th at 3 p.m. — MRS. DORA LINDSAY
Demonstration of Clairvoyance

TUESDAY 19th at 7 p.m. — MRS. A. RANDALL
Puppet Show and "At Home"

WEDNESDAY 20th at 3 p.m. — DR. LAURA MCCONNELL
"Extension of Consciousness"

SUNDAY 24th at 3 p.m. — **Address:** MR. GEORGE DOBINSON
Demonstration: MRS. ENA TWIGG

TUESDAY 26th at 7 p.m. — MISS CHARLOTTE WATERLOW, M.A.
"Spiritualism: Past, Present and Future"

WEDNESDAY 27th at 3 p.m. — MRS. ROSE HARLEY
Demonstration of Clairvoyance

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

SPEAKERS. The CPS gives Lecturers and Speakers the opportunity to present their views to Members and the Public, but does not necessarily agree with the views and opinions so expressed.

MEDIUMS. The CPS endeavours to demonstrate mediumship of a high standard, and to provide private sittings with mediums known to be reliable. It is, however, necessary to appreciate that many difficulties associated with mediumship make it impossible to avoid variable results or to ensure success on any particular occasion.

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
The Cranks	*An Editorial*	2
How I became interested in the Paranormal 17.	*Nandor Fodor*	6
18.	*Lucian Landau*	7
Poltergeists, Testimony and Scepticism	*Dr. Alan Gauld*	9
Man and his Relations with the Kingdoms of Nature	*W. Tudor-Pole*	18
Materialisation Puzzles—including Helen Duncan	*Frank Mills*	24
Table-Tilting for the Millions	*Benson Herbert*	30
Sequel to a Murder	*Snaebjörn Jónsson*	36
Obituary: Miss Lind-af-Hageby		40
Stainton Moses and contemporary Physical Mediums 5. Charles Edward Williams	*presented by R. G. Medhurst*	41
Book Reviews		50
The Ghost Club		53
Correspondence		54

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LIGHT exists for the reasoned and courteous examination of all aspects of Psychical Research and Spiritualism and allied matters. The position of the Editor on the issue of survival corresponds to the Policy which he shared in formulating as a member of the Council of the College of Psychic Science. The College does not necessarily endorse any opinion on any subject appearing in LIGHT. Those expressed in signed articles are the authors' own.

The Cranks

AN EDITORIAL

A CRANK is something bent. The word has also meant "sick" like its German relative *krank*. It is nowadays applied with amused intolerance to anyone committed to a cause of which the speaker is ignorant and which he therefore deems ridiculous, perhaps dangerous.

Despite social pressure towards flashy, up-with-the-Joneses sameness, and ferocious efforts by politicians, bureaucrats and tycoons (plus hordes of scientists and most philosophers) to make us all machines minding other machines to the greater glory and power of tycoons, bureaucrats and politicians, we are fortunately all individuals with bents and sicknesses, obvious or occult. The infinite variety of humanity's talents and virtues is its wealth and its hope; its endless range of stupidities, perversions and diseases are the reverse of the medal; its consequent sufferings are correctives to its vanity, warnings of corruption, spurs to learning, without which the progress of a lazy, lustful, quarrelsome and self-satisfied species would be even slower than it is.

Wilful ignoring of this fact is the most dangerous form of crankiness. Top People, east or west, regard their own particular bents and distempers as the desirable norm to which all with less power than themselves must, by force or guile, be made to conform. But the "normal man" is a figment of statistics, never actually incarnate. Failure to allow for one's idiosyncrasies or those of others may appear fairly harmless when Mrs Jones fondly imagines her Willy is the only boy marching in step. At Hitlerian strength, however, its irksomeness becomes evident to all but extreme patients themselves. It would be an aid to health, both individual and collective, if we all allowed that each has his shade of oddity, ranging from slight originality or genius or saintliness to murderous fanaticism and powerlust, from the Willy Joneses to the Torquemadas and the Hitlers.

As we learn (and *if* we learn) we may change our position in the human spectrum, but this does not mean that we straighten our bents, or that we necessarily should. It can simply signify that we have learnt to use them better or in less disharmony with the cranks around.

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Those who admit to interest in the paranormal—or of whom it can be whispered—soon have to learn to live with the fact that the rest of the world pities them as cranks. There is no escaping the stigma for long, even if you are strictly scientific, or merely curious. Those who go so far as to confess paranormal experiences themselves, especially if this leads to conviction that we survive death,

are soon labelled liars or madmen, and find themselves barred from promotion in their profession or torn down (at least posthumously) from any eminence they have. A great scientist like Lodge or Crookes is all well and good as long as his careful experiments and theories produce useful gadgets; but when he confesses that experience forces him to believe that the human mind does not cease to exist and to love at the death of the body, society disowns him as a crackpot. Soon his scientific achievements are belittled; later, when all the witnesses are dead and the law gives no protection, his morals will be smeared by techniques which no reputation could withstand, not even the smearers'. Not long ago, the survival-for-all heresy was for burning. Now it is for smearing.

There are signs that the process is being turned on Jung, whose posthumous book makes plain what he said perhaps more guardedly in his lifetime: his knowledge and study of the paranormal was not merely from "the literature" but from a wide range of phenomena actually experienced in his surroundings and his person. A British professor of psychology from Cambridge admits in a progressive daily paper that he is "held" by the wisdom of the insights of one who was "still exploring and still creating new relations between his personal life and what he sees in the universe". But the professor is "dismayed" by Jung's "occultism":

"A streak of superstition runs through the whole book: precognitive dreams, apparitions of the living, hauntings, poltergeistery, premonitions, magical coincidences ('synchronicity'), the lot. Here, inescapably, one sees that he really believed it all (turning for respectable cover, of course, to J. B. Rhine's inferences from the statistics of guessing games). Some may feel compelled to believe in these things, but, if so, nothing stands between them and the morass of superstition, soothsaying and witchcraft out of which educated people have dragged themselves in the last few centuries."

Apparently this professor is an educated person while Jung was not. It was "educated people" who through the last few centuries expressed themselves similarly about such superstitions as the globular earth, the existence of oxygen, the "splittable" atom—before these things turned out to be "scientific". But perhaps we have wronged the professor's style. Would he be meaning that the morass of superstition etc. produces educated people?

The outlook for a science of *mind* is grim indeed when its teachers repudiate the only world figure among them who took into account, from *experience*, a vast field of mind activity which most of them ignore. As physical science moves more and more into the erstwhile paraphysical, academic psychologists look like being the last Victorian materialists. However, on another page of this issue, a younger psychologist from Cambridge studies "poltergeistery" seriously.

With rank and file, the task of the denigrator is even easier than with the eminent: one merely suggests, without perhaps putting it in plain English, that "spiritualism" is a form of madness, and that if spiritualists are not mad to start with, they inevitably become so.

A contemporary which has the appearance of disliking any who can be dubbed with this term, recently carried an article giving the impression that spiritualists (not defined) suffer from schizophrenia. The author's qualifications were not printed, nor any authorities but a Dr. Yap, who has studied sixty-six Hong Kong Chinese said to be suffering from "Possession Syndrome", or delusions of being possessed by demons. What connection sixty-six Chinese neurotics (in the world's most overcrowded city, bursting with refugees, where "demons" are part of traditional culture) can have with alleged madness in western spiritualists is not explained, only assumed, like the author's strict normalcy.

The article would have been valuable if it had offered terms of comparison, e.g. statistics of the number of schizophrenics among Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Seventh-Day Adventists or anti-spiritualist occultists—or even the number of mentally sick spiritualists. But only one case of the latter is cited, dating from about 1880, and the authority for it, Mr. T. Hall, does not claim for certain that spiritualism *caused* the mental illness. The standard of proof in this article is scarcely up to what the author would demand from spiritualists.

Of course schizophrenia and other mental illness occurs among spiritualists, as in any numerous body of people. If to have schizophrenia means that one's mind or personality is divided or fragmented, then some celebrated and successful mediums would be diagnosed schizophrenic by present medicine. The author of this article probably draws the line between non-spiritualist mediums and sitters, who believe their "controls" and so forth are merely parts of themselves, and those who believe that the best material given by mediums and controls comes from minds outside them. An impartial judge might think that the description of a divided mind applied to the former rather than the latter, but it appears that the author of this article considers belief in survival and communication the criterion of Schizophrenia.

If that is so, quite a few orthodox and respectable citizens who adhere to Christian and other systems of belief are tainted, since they believe stories of resurrections, apparitions, healings, "speaking with tongues" and so on. Here again, an impartial judge might imagine that the split minds among Christians were the large number who think they follow the God of the New Testament but for whom resurrection or survival are dead letters.

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The world as it wags is composed of cranks. One thinks of medicine-men who calculatedly torture millions of animals on the claim that humanity can benefit from inhumanity, though they know that animals and humans do not react the same to either disease or drugs, and that animal bodies in fear and agony are not likely to give useful information: the rôle of the "unconscious mind", which changes our physical tissues, is ignored in these sadistic rituals. Then, too, the number of schizophrenics among spiritualists is undoubtedly less than the number of "arms of the Law" who perjure themselves to obtain wrongful convictions, or "frame" or beat up arrestees and people disliked by the party in power, including in the recent past Spiritualist mediums and women whose only crime was to desire to vote or to have peace. Human "justice" is so intent on its ritual of vengeance on "criminals" (who sometimes turn out to have been innocent) that it does nothing to compensate the victims and little to reform the guilty. The idée fixe of revenge in fact dominates all our relationships: the state may discourage the individual from too openly doing it himself, but it is the basis of the state's own conduct. At home, communications from our "obedient servants" all begin or end with threats of penalties. As a foreign policy, our rulers have said they cannot defend us, but expect us to be happy that they have arranged for our liquidation to be spectacularly avenged. Meantime it appears that military high-ups have to watch each other with finger cranked round trigger to ensure that sudden madness in one of them does not press the button of general madness without orders from higher up. . .

Do anti-spiritualists really think spiritualism more dangerous to humanity than such activities as these? If so, it must be because they share the death-wish, the revenge syndrome, the nihilism in which our materialist civilisation feels—paradoxically—secure, and hate any who believe evidence that physical destruction does not get rid of people you dislike or an existence you can make nothing of; nor, fortunately, put an end to the best in us, that gives meaning to life on any plane. Does this belief harm anyone? Unlike party lines and sectarian dogmas, it is imposed on no one in defiance of his own experience and enquiry.

Note. We spell "spiritualism, spiritualist" with a small s, to include, beside religious Spiritualists, those who accept that man's mind or spirit is not completely identified with his perishable tissues.

A larger LIGHT

As an experiment LIGHT has been enlarged by eight pages with the aim of accommodating more or longer articles and book reviews. This has been made possible by the generosity of a member of the Council of the College of Psychic Science. We should be glad to

hear from readers whether they welcome the change and wish it to continue.

The number of sold copies of LIGHT has approximately doubled since the change of editorship two years ago. This phenomenon, unaided by publicity, seems evidential! But in these days of high printing costs, it is not enough. LIGHT continues, and sells at its present low price, only because it is written and edited gratis by volunteers and administered by the CPS. The circulation must double again if LIGHT is not to be a burden on those who are subsidising it because they believe it important.

This doubling is a simple matter. If each reader obtains at least one new reader, it is accomplished! Our silent increase in circulation shows that many readers have already done this. We ask all who find LIGHT valuable to share in assuring its future by bringing it to the attention of their friends.

How I became interested in the Paranormal

Our series of "human documents", in which well-known personalities tell how their interest in psychic matters was aroused, continues with Dr. Nandor Fodor, the American psycho-analyst, author of many books and articles (Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science, On the Trail of the Poltergeist, Mind over Space, etc.), *formerly Assistant Editor of* LIGHT*; and Mr. Lucian Landau, industrial consultant and inventor, director of several industrial and property companies, member of both the SPR and CPS, of which he was Treasurer for some years.*

We remind our readers that their own contributions to this survey are invited.

17. DR. NANDOR FODOR

MY discovery that psychic phenomena were a matter of serious scientific inquiry was accidental. Browsing in the New York Public Library, I came across, in 1922 or 1923, Lombroso's *After Death —What?* It fascinated me and set me reading. In a short time I had a shelf-full of books and, in order to organise the new knowledge, began a kind of alphabetical inventory. While I did not follow through at the time, it was this attempt that led to the inception later (1934, in England) of *The Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science.*

I was a journalist in those early days, always after the sensational. It happened that I dropped in at a meeting organised for Arthur Ford at Carnegie Hall. Houdini tried to break it up by making a disturbance and distributing pamphlets on how he exposed 'Margery'. Seeing my bewilderment, Arthur Ford invited me to his house to attend a joint séance with William Cartheuser.

This séance was a turning point in my life. It left me convinced that my father lived and communicated with me. The messages came in

broken Hungarian, and while twenty years later I found out that Cartheuser was born in Hungary and still could talk a rudimentary Hungarian, the discovery in no way affected the overpowering value of the evidence.

I arrived in England in 1928 as a Spiritualist. I was on the first Lord Rothermere's personal staff for nine years, and my duties left me with plenty of time to adventure into psychic investigations. The Spiritualist gradually changed into a Psychical Researcher. I lectured widely, acted for two years as Assistant Editor of LIGHT, became a member of the Board of the Survival League which founded the International Institute for Psychical Research, and I ended up as its Director of Research.

The third phase of my psychic life, that of the psychoanalyst, was not long in coming. It started with the Thornton Heath Poltergeist, over which a crisis developed at the Institute. This crisis was happily resolved for me by Sigmund Freud, who read the MS of this investigation (published twenty years later under the title *On the Trail of the Poltergeist*) and warmly commended it. His letter has made psychoanalytic history. It is printed in full in Ernest Jones's biography of Freud.

Ever since returning to the United States in 1939 I have been trying to build a bridge between Psychical Research (or Parapsychology) and Psychoanalysis through articles, ten books (four more are in manuscript), radio and television appearances; I recently made fifty of the latter in nine days, speaking on psychic phenomena under the aegis of Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer in connection with their film, *The Haunting*.

18 LUCIAN LANDAU

I HAVE always had an enquiring mind, and I remember, when I still had to look up to see the door handles, I was interested in funerals, coffins, and what it was all about. I must have been four or five, and was familiar with live, dying, and dead insects. Information about dying or dead people was hard to extract from my mother, and this, naturally, only served to increase my curiosity. It was clear to me, however, that people, like insects, did die, and were placed in coffins, which were then carried through the streets in special vehicles, horse-drawn, of course, a number of visibly upset people usually following. It was also obvious to me that some people lived to an old age, and some died in childhood, for I observed that coffins were sometimes very small indeed.

I found this problem of death most intriguing, perhaps because the explanations provided by my mother seemed to me so very unsatisfactory. I knew that coffins, containing the lifeless bodies, were buried in quiet gardens, but I could not imagine the end of a person's

existence or an end to the state of thinking and 'being'. Going to sleep was a poor analogy, for in those days I invariably had vivid dreams, full of interesting experiences and adventures.

Some three or four years passed, and I still could not obtain an explanation that would satisfy me. During that time my maternal grandmother died, and so did two or three other people known to me. As far as everyday life was concerned, they simply disappeared. The Bible gave me no solution, but Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, with their appearances of ghosts, made me more than ever determined to find out the truth.

I suppose the real climax came on that frosty morning in 1922 when, in broad daylight, I met in the street, and exchanged a few words, with a lady, a neighbour of ours. I have told this story before, but will tell it again.

It happened, I think, in February, when I was on my way to school, early in the morning. It was a bright, sunny morning, but extremely cold, with gusts of penetrating wind, the dry granular snow on the ground forming swirling patterns. The street was almost deserted, but approaching me, and some hundred yards away, was a lady, wearing a flowery summer dress and no coat. This most unusual attire for the time of the year attracted my attention, and, observing her dress being blown about by the wind, I thought how cold she must have felt. My thoughts wandered to other subjects, and, when I looked up again, the lady was quite close. She smiled and said something to me. I recognised her and said 'Good morning'. She lived near us, and frequently spoke with my mother about her various troubles. She was probably no more than 35, but to me she seemed rather old.

We passed each other, when suddenly I remembered that she had died about three weeks earlier, and I had watched her funeral through the window. I turned quickly and, as you can guess, she was not there. She could not have turned off, or entered a building, for there were only iron railings on that side of the street. I remember feeling a peculiar satisfaction: I had found out that ghosts did exist, even if my mother did not think so. I felt I then knew more than she did, but I kept it to myself for many, many years.

Since then, my psychical experiences have been many and varied, but somehow I no longer look upon some of them as being in any sense paranormal. And, as for people walking about in the streets and then suddenly disappearing, the incident described above, although undoubtedly unusual, does not appear to have been unique (See SPR *Journal* December 1960, page 432).

Future Contributors:
JAMES LAVER, ELIZABETH JENKINS, BRIG. BROWNLOW

Poltergeists, Testimony and Scepticism

(From a lecture at the College of Psychic Science)

ALAN GAULD, M.A., PH.D.

THIS paper has two aims: firstly to describe two poltergeist cases which, in contrast to those usually quoted, are quite recent; secondly to use this material as an excuse for treating an issue crucial to all general discussions of poltergeist cases. This is the claim of the robust sceptic that so-called poltergeist cases are one and all examples of deceit and illusion. Of course in many cases the sceptic's contention does not readily square with all the alleged facts; so if possible he usually begins by softening up his opponents with a demonstration that the various testimonies conflict with each other in certain ways. Then he mounts a crafty attack upon the reliability of human memory and observation in general, and leaves the field clear for his own view—that imposture magnified by illusion sufficiently explains the alleged phenomena. When discussing the cases which I have selected for detailed examination I shall try to state the sceptical position as scrupulously and as strongly as I can.

The Hannath Hall Poltergeist

The first of these cases is one which Mr. A. D. Cornell and I investigated several years ago. It took place at Hannath Hall, an attractive Tudor house not far from Wisbech in Cambridgeshire. The tenants of the house at that time were a family who will here be called the Prices. It consisted of a husband and wife; two children, aged at that time three and five; and Mrs. Price's mother. They moved into Hannath Hall in August 1957, and during the next few months were frequently disturbed by inexplicable happenings—mostly thumps and raps, but occasionally footsteps and groans, and once a violent jolt imparted to a bed. A local journalist learned of these strange happenings, and contacted the SPR; in consequence, Mr. Cornell and I visited Hannath Hall on the evening of Nov. 16, 1957. We were accompanied by Mr. D. J. Murray, secretary of the Cambridge University SPR, and Mr. (now the Rev.) J. M. Brotherton, a member of the same society; and also by the journalist and two of his friends, who met us at Wisbech to guide us to the house.

We arrived about 10.30 p.m., and during the next hour and a quarter we interviewed the members of the family (apart of course from the children), and carefully examined both the outside and the inside of the house. Hannath Hall has only two floors, and all the rooms on the upper floor open from a single large gallery. The phenomena reported had all taken place on the upper floor, though they were not confined to any particular part of it. The bedroom at the northern

end of the gallery had been christened "the haunted room", but seemingly for no better reason than that a 19th-century owner was reputed to have left the body of his deceased wife lying there several weeks.

At about quarter to twelve Mr. Cornell organised a ouija board séance in the living room downstairs, chiefly to ensure that all the hands in the house were in plain view; whilst I stationed myself in the gallery upstairs, which was somewhat dimly lit by a single bulb. At 12.08 a.m. I heard a sharp snap from the haunted room; I put this down to a drop in temperature, and did not investigate. At 12.10 I thought I heard quiet footsteps on the stairs. The steps ceased before they reached the gallery. I went to the head of the staircase and found there was no-one on the stairs; I concluded I had probably misinterpreted some noises from below. At 12.30 I was driven downstairs by the cold; during my vigil the temperature in the gallery had dropped from 60° to 52°.

At 1.25 a.m., whilst the others continued the séance downstairs, Mr. Cornell and I went into the haunted room upstairs with a view to settling down there for the night. The room had no electricity, and we searched it again by the light of our torches. It was used as a storeroom for unwanted furniture and oddments; across the floor lay two mattresses end to end, and on these we settled down feet to feet, with one blanket over our legs. The thermometer had by now sunk to 49°, at which it remained during the ensuing events. We extinguished our torches.

A few minutes later we heard gentle raps coming from the floor on my left and Mr. Cornell's right, at a point roughly equidistant from both of us and about three feet from the mattresses. Our torches showed nothing but bare boards in the region concerned. We found that we could get specific numbers of raps at request. The raps became louder and moved nearer to the wall of the room; this meant that they came from a position about three feet from Mr. Cornell's right shoulder. We questioned the raps by means of the obvious code, and found that they would answer leading questions readily, but could not spell out coherent messages. In response to the aforesaid leading questions, the rapper claimed to be a woman who had been murdered in the house in 1906—a claim which we have not been able to substantiate. After a while we heard a series of six or seven knocks, growing in loudness, from the position in which the rappings had begun; the last one was of such intensity that I flashed my torch in its direction. The knocks ceased instantly and there was nothing but the bare floor in the region from which they had come.

Meanwhile the séance downstairs had broken up, and the reporter and his two friends had departed. Messrs. Murray and Brotherton came up to the gallery, and heard the rappings. Mr. Brotherton ran

downstairs, leaving Mr. Murray outside the door of the haunted room. He found the Price family sitting round the table in the living-room, and then rejoined Mr. Murray, who informed him that the raps had continued throughout his brief absence. Both then at once went downstairs to search the room immediately under the bed-room.

These activities caused a certain amount of noise, and we decided to leave the haunted room to ask the others to keep quieter. I went to the door and Mr. Cornell followed me; as I was passing through the doorway we heard a noise behind us, and found that a wooden dining-room chair, which had been stacked about five feet from the mattresses was now lying on top of them. I then left the room, whilst Mr. Cornell replaced the chair. He turned to follow me and heard the chair drop behind him again. This time it had simply fallen down; he replaced it more firmly and left the room.

We returned to the haunted room about ten minutes later. Mr. Murray went with Mrs. Price into the room underneath it, and Mr Brotherton and Mr. Price stood in the gallery. This left Mrs. Price's mother on her own in the living room. We soon heard loud raps, but this time from a position on the other side of the mattresses and about three feet from them; that is on my right and Mr. Cornell's left, and again about equidistant from us. Mr. Murray and Mrs. Price in the room below could also hear the raps, and noted down some of the sequences. The raps confirmed, though still in reply to leading questions, some of the information previously given. We then asked the month of the supposed communicator's death and heard eleven raps. We then asked the day of the month; there commenced a series of raps which moved along the floor towards Mr. Cornell's head. The sixteenth rap seemed to him to come from the air behind his head. He switched on his torch, and the raps ceased immediately. He put out his torch, and we asked the rapper to begin again after ten. The raps were much fainter, and continued up to eighteen. We then made some not very successful attempts to ascertain the rapper's age at death; the raps quite soon died away altogether, and after a few minutes we returned downstairs. at 2.45.

Meanwhile, not long after we had returned to the haunted room, the journalist and his two friends had come back to the house. They said that their car had broken down; Mr. Price took them to Wisbech in his own car, and did not return until 2.50.

Mr. Cornell, Mr. Murray and I returned to the haunted room at 3.34 a.m. I walked into the room first, Mr. Murray second and Mr. Cornell last. Mr. Cornell slammed the door, and we heard a sharp rattle. We turned, and saw by the light of our torches that a brass toasting fork with three prongs had been thrust behind the metal

plate to which the door bolt was attached; one of its prongs was inserted through the staple into which the bolt normally ran, thus "bolting" us into the room from the inside.

There were no other phenomena of much interest on that or any of our numerous subsequent visits to the house, and the house has been quiet since the night of our first visit. On one occasion we brought a non-professional medium to the house, and held a séance in the haunted bedroom. A lady calling herself Eliza Cullen or Culler came through and said she had made the raps. She said she had buried her baby in the garden. But we could not trace any person of that name.

How could a sceptic set about trying to demolish this case? He could hardly claim that the memories of the investigators present had magnified the events of the evening, because all four of us wrote preliminary notes on the phenomena within a few minutes of their occurrence. He could, however, point to various discrepancies between the statements of the different witnesses. In particular, the times of events, despite the fact that we synchronised our watches at the start of the investigation, are very imperfectly recorded, and different witnesses' guesses sometimes conflict with each other. This makes it, of course, very difficult to say with certainty whether the journalist and his friends were or were not under observation during any given set of phenomena, which is obviously an important flaw in the evidence.

Can these discrepencies be said to invalidate the case for the paranormality of the raps? I think not. It seems quite certain that the journalist and his friends returned to the house while the rappings were still in progress, and so were actually observed at a critical period. In any case there are arguments against the possibility of producing the rappings fraudulently which do not depend upon showing that any given persons were under observation at given times.

Let us consider the hypothesis that there was actually a practical joker concealed unbeknown to us somewhere in the house. Of course we measured the whole house inside and out and could detect no place where a trickster could have lurked; but even if there *had* been such a person, he would still have needed to instal rapping machinery under the floor of the haunted bedroom. Accordingly we removed all furniture from the room and examined every inch of the floorboards with a magnifying glass; the boards were tongued and grooved together; we could detect no tool marks or splintering, and are convinced that no floorboards had ever been taken up. We removed a board that ran through the positions where we had first heard the rappings, but could see nothing suspicious under it or under the neighbouring boards. We then likewise examined the ceiling of the room below, which was also made of boards tongued and grooved

together, and reached a similar conclusion. After examining the structure of the floor we were convinced that rapping machinery could have been installed under the floor only by removing boards from the floor of the haunted bedroom or from the ceiling of the room below; and that no boards had been removed from either of those places. It therefore does not seem that the case for the paranormality of the raps leans very heavily on proving that certain persons were under observation at given times.

There is a marked difference of emphasis, though hardly a conflict, between Mr. Cornell's statement and mine. He devotes much of his report to the chair incident, whilst I devote most of mine to the rappings, treating the chair incident very briefly. There is also a minor error in my statement in this connection. I say that I left the room and then ran into a cotton trap set outside the door by Mr. Brotherton, and that, hearing a noise, I then returned to the haunted bedroom, and learned about the chair. In fact I quite certainly knew about the chair movement before I ran into the trap, because for a moment I was inclined to think that the objects which fell on me (two music stands) were paranormally thrown! Accordingly it seems likely that when the chair fell Mr. Cornell was just inside the door (which is what his report says), and I was just, but only just, outside it, and that I did not run into the trap until I went through the door a second time. We discussed the matter very fully when we came to read each other's statements. However these points seem trivial in view of the fact that in any case the evidence for the chair incident depends entirely upon Mr. Cornell's testimony; for it is not denied in either of our statements that he was behind my back when the chair fell, and hence could have thrown it himself. To the issue of the trustworthiness of witnesses I shall return again in a little while.

Another possibility which a sceptic might explore would be that of illusions of the sense of hearing. He might suggest, for instance, that the rappings were really quite random, and produced by subsidence of the house; we were in a state of nervous expectancy due to being in a reputedly haunted house, and *interpreted* these random noises as intelligent responses to questions. Or else he might suppose that the practical joker was outside the house tapping on the window sills with a stick—and certainly in the still hours of the night noises in the haunted room could be clearly heard from outside the house, and of course the flashing of torches could be seen through the uncurtained windows. None the less I do not think there is much to be said in favour of either of these possibilities. All four investigators heard the raps; and all agreed that in general raps did not come while we were asking questions. Immediately a question had been put raps came in an even tempo, and at a rate of one a second or somewhat faster.

They were appropriate in number to the questions asked, for example one for "yes", eleven for a month of the year; and once a question had received an answer there was nearly always silence until the next question had been posed. Nor does there seem the slightest reason for supposing that we mistook raps made by a mischief-maker from outside the house on the walls, windows or window sills of the haunted room for raps made inside it. Auditory localisation in an ordinary room (as distinct from localisation in an anechoic chamber or out of doors) is much more accurate than is commonly supposed; and we conducted extensive experiments in the haunted room to ascertain whether or not we were liable to confuse rappings made from the outside of the house with rappings made inside the room itself. The answer was unequivocally that we were not.

The only remaining possibility for a sceptic to put forward is that of fraud by a member or members of the family, or by the investigators themselves.

It is certainly possible that the toasting fork incident was fraudulently produced. We found that if we pushed the toasting fork behind the metal plate so that its prongs just missed the staple when we closed the door, and then slammed the door, the fork would jump a little and "bolt" us into the room. Almost anyone in the house could have placed the fork in the necessary position while we were absent from the room between quarter to three and 3.34—although I should add that the journalist and his friends were definitely absent from the house during this period, and that the members of the family, apart from the children, have all signed statements that they were in no way concerned in the production of the phenomena. Incidentally, we are convinced that the two children were too young to have been responsible for any of the phenomena; and in any case whilst the phenomena were actually in progress we several times checked up that they were safely asleep.

There is, I am afraid, no escaping the conclusion that the only persons who could have faked the remaining phenomena were Mr. Cornell and myself. In our original statements we each considered the possibility that the other had produced the phenomena fraudulently, and, while there is no doubt that Mr. Cornell could have tipped over the chair without my seeing him, we neither of us thought that the other could have faked the various series of rappings. I am quite sure that when the rappings began we each suspected the other of conducting a psychological experiment, and in consequence we watched each other like hawks. There were no curtains in the windows of the haunted room and so we were each able to keep a fair check on the other's position. We switched our torches on and off without warning, several times interrupting series of raps, and I am prepared to

assert quite definitely that if either of us had been making the noises with his hand or with a reaching rod he would have been detected. We are left only with the possibility that Mr. Cornell and I conspired together to produce the phenomena fraudulently; and to this I must confess I cannot find a ready answer. No sceptic worth his salt would accept our avowals of honesty, even if supported by evidence for our moral worths, as refuting the hypothesis of fraud, for he could always conceive of overriding motives which might have impelled us to throw our habitual scruples to the winds—the desire for publicity, for instance, or the sheer joy of deceiving other people. Such unswerving scepticism can be dealt with only by invoking general principles about the nature of good evidence, but I will delay my invocation until I have considered a second case.

The Sauchie Poltergeist

The principal events in this case took place at the end of November 1960, in the town of Sauchie, Clackmannanshire. Dr. A. R. G. Owen, an SPR member, of Trinity College Cambridge, visited Sauchie in the middle of Jan. 1961, and obtained statements from the chief witnesses. He has published a short account of the case, and has most kindly allowed me access to a more detailed typescript account, the substance of which he is publishing in his book on poltergeists.

The phenomena in the Sauchie case centred around an 11-year-old schoolgirl, Virginia Campbell. Virginia was brought up by her parents in County Donegal, Eire; she had a rather lonely life, her chief companions being her pet dog, Toby, and a little girl called Anna. In the Autumn of 1960, Virginia came to live with the family of her elder brother Mr. Thomas Campbell, in Sauchie; the Campbells had two children, and Virginia shared a room with her niece Margaret, aged 9. In Mid-October 1960, Virginia was sent to Sauchie Primary School. According to her teacher, Miss Margaret Stewart, Virginia, though shy, was outwardly quite placid and normal. She was big for her age, fond of games, and had an IQ above average. She was, Miss Stewart said, of a very honest disposition.

The first curious phenomenon occurred on the evening of Tuesday November 22nd, 1960, when a sound like a ball being bounced was heard in the bedroom where Virginia slept. On the following day, at tea time, Virginia was sitting near the sideboard; Mr. and Mrs. Campbell saw it move spontaneously a distance of about 5″ and return to its original position. That evening while Virginia was in bed, though not asleep, loud knocks were heard in her bedroom. A neighbour summoned the Rev. T. W. Lund, the Church of Scotland minister of Sauchie. Mr Lund investigated the knockings, and concluded that they came from the bedhead. He moved Virginia down the bed so that no part of her body was in contact with the bedhead, and also

verified that her feet were tucked in under the bedclothes; the knockings, however, continued. Mr. Lund then saw a linen chest, 27″ x 17″ x 14″, which was standing a foot and a half from the bed, rock, and raise itself, and then travel jerkily across the floor for a distance of about eighteen inches and back again. Mr. Lund and the neighbour before mentioned lifted the linen chest, which weighed about 50 lbs, out on to the landing. Eventually it was proposed that Virginia's niece Margaret should rejoin her in the double bed; at this suggestion there was a burst of "violent and peremptory knocking."

On Thursday 24th November Mr. Lund came again in the evening. He heard more raps, and witnessed further rockings of the linen chest. Dr. W. H. Nisbet, a physician, of Tillicoultry, who had been called in by Mr. Lund, also came, and heard knockings and a mysterious sawing noise. He saw a curious rippling movement pass across the surface of the pillow on which Virginia's head lay, but could find no way of explaining the phenomen.

Virginia had stayed away from school on the 23rd and 24th of November, but returned again on the afternoon of Friday 25th November. During a period of silent reading that afternoon, Miss Stewart, Virginia's teacher, saw her trying to hold down her desk-lid which several times raised itself to an angle of 45° to 50°. Miss Stewart could see Virginia's hands flat on the lid of the desk, and her legs underneath the desk. A little later Miss Stewart saw an empty desk behind Virginia rise up about an inch and settle down again gently a little way from its original position. Miss Stewart went to it immediately and made sure that no strings etc. were attached to it.

That evening Dr. Nisbet sat in Virginia's bedroom before she went to sleep. He heard knocks even when Virginia was lying motionless on the bed without bedclothes over her. On a number of occasions he saw the linen chest move about a foot. He carried it to the other side of the bed, and then its lid opened and shut several times in succession. He saw horizontal rotations of up to 90° of the pillow under Virginia's head, and also saw curious ripples move over the bedclothes.

On Saturday November 26th Dr. William Logan, Dr. Nisbet's partner, sat up in the bedroom. He witnessed a puckering of the coverlet on the bed, and pillow rotations similar to those reported by Dr. Nisbet. On the morning of Sunday Nov. 27th Dr. Logan visited Virginia again. He brought his dog, and Virginia was much taken with him, saying that he reminded her of her own dog in Ireland. Mr. Lund arrived in the evening. When Virginia went to bed she passed into a restless sleep in which she called out loudly for her dog Toby, and struck about her with her fists; but when everyone left the room she became quiet and passed into a normal sleep.

On Monday November 28th Virginia went to school in the

morning. She had occasion to come to Miss Stewart's table, and stood in front of, and somewhat away from, it with her hands clasped behind her back. A black-board pointer lying on the table began to vibrate, and travelled across the table until it fell off. While the pointer was moving Miss Stewart put her hand on the table and found that it was vibrating. The right hand end of the table began to move away from her, so that the whole table swung round anti-clockwise Virginia started to cry, and said that it wasn't her. Miss Stewart, to conceal it from the class, hastily told her to help straighten the table.

That afternoon Virginia was taken to stay with a relative at Dollar, a few miles away. Dr. Nisbet visited her and heard loud knockings.

On Tuesday 29th November Dr. and Mrs. Logan (also a qualified physician) went out to Dollar. They heard several bursts of rappings, originating fron the neighbourhood of Virginia. Mrs. Logan, who had previously been sceptical, satisfied herself that Virginia was not responsible, but how she satisfied herself of this is not clear from her husband's statement.

Later in the evening Virginia went into a trance; she talked loudly and unnaturally, called for Toby and Anna, and tossed around in her bed. She answered questions in an unusually free and uninhibited way. She woke after about 10 minutes.

On Wednesday 30th November she returned to Sauchie. There were no phenomena.

On Thursday 1st December Drs. Nisbet and Logan went round in the evening armed with a tape recorder and a cine-camera. Virginia went up to bed at 9.00 p.m. Between 9.00 and 10.30 there were continuous rappings, occasional loud sawing noises and some ripplings of the bed-clothes. Some tape recordings of the noises were obtained, but attempts to catch the ripplings of the bedclothes on cine-film were unsuccessful. Between 10.30 and 11.00 Virginia talked a good deal in a rather uninhibited and hysterical way. At 11.00 p.m. Mr. Lund and two ministers arrived to conduct a service of intercession; during the service there were several knocks. Late in the evening Virginia's father arrived; he had been brought from Ireland by two reporters, who were seemingly shooed away by Dr. Nisbet.

After December 1st phenomena diminished considerably. The best authenticated occurrence happened on Monday January 23rd 1961. Virginia placed a bowl of bulbs on Miss Stewart's table in the classroom; it moved across the table-top.

A curious fact about the case was that rappings and other physical phenomena did not occur during Virginia's trances; it seemed as though the rappings and the trances might be alternative outlets for the suppressed emotions of a girl deprived of the background she was used to, and subject to the stresses of an early adolescence.

(To be concluded)

Man and his Relations with the Kingdoms of Nature

W. TUDOR-POLE
Author of *The Silent Road, The Upper Room*

FOR the first time in recorded history Man has succeeded in devising a means through which all physical life on this planet could be extinguished overnight. Ignorant and unwise interference with the rhythm of Nature's laws, mainly through the processes of nuclear fission and their tragic aftermath, could rapidly convert our world into a vast cemetery, as the results of atomic warfare, or even by experiment or accidentally.

For how much longer can we expect the spiritual Powers-that-be, and our Elder Brothers, to go on protecting us from ourselves and from those who support the stock piling of atomic weapons? We may have the power as human beings to destroy ourselves in a bodily sense, but who gave us the right to endanger the health and the life forces contained within the Kingdoms of Nature, for the welfare of which we are so largely responsible?

We are well aware that Energy infused with a living intelligence of its own, and in myriad forms, exists and evolves, not only in the mineral, vegetable and animal Kingdoms, but in the Kingdoms of fire, air and water as well.

We have come to regard our own species as Lords of Creation, whose dominion over all other forms of life on this planet is not only taken for granted, but is considered our rightful heritage. In our self-centred egotism, we look upon the denizens of the other Kingdoms as our slaves and therefore expendable solely at our ignorant, selfish or wilful discretion.

Is it not time that we seriously examined anew our relations with, and our obligations to the life forces in Nature, with which our own evolution and future welfare are so largely linked? Our responsibilities towards all forms of life on this earth of ours are greater than we realise. Can it be said that we recognise this fact and are striving to do our duty by it? To take an example—even if the vivisection of animals could be proved on balance to bring benefits to the human race, are we sure that such benefits are not being bought too dear?

In another field of human action, what right do we possess to subject animals, birds, fish, insects, plants, soil and trees to the perils of destruction through the widespread release of poisonous radio-activity into their midst?

We appear to have the will to accept such risks for ourselves,

mistaken though we undoubtedly are, but why should we think we have the arbitrary right to bring disaster to all other forms of life on this earth, which is as much their home as it is ours?

A minority of thoughtful people in the West is beginning to question our right to breed and kill animals, birds and fish to satisfy our appetites. Nature is capable of providing us with ample supplies of nourishment, in the form of grain, cereals, fruit, nuts and vegetables. Is it not foolish, therefore, if not actually wrong (a failure to comply with the evolutionary law) to accept Nature's bounty at second hand, through animal flesh, rather than direct and at first hand.

From time to time it is my privilege to attend Conferences at which are present Intelligences concerned with the rhythms and the laws appertaining to the animal and the vegetable Kingdoms of Nature. I prefer to go to such gatherings with as little blood on my hands as possible, this being one of the main reasons for my abstention from a diet of fish, flesh and fowl.

We humans have now evolved to the point where most of us abstain from eating each other, even if we continue to kill each other for various reasons. Nor do we feed to any large extent on animals who are themselves flesh eaters. Our meat diet is mainly confined to the flesh of animals who are vegetarian, and these we breed in immense quantities, both naturally and by artificial insemination.

When religion or fashion demands it, we allow animals to bleed to death whilst fully conscious, in order that the resultant meat may be as white and "pure" as possible.

Whale hunters seek out the females who are pregnant, as being the most profitable "catch". These are not killed outright, but are lashed to the sides of the parent whaler ship, and are then dragged through the seas often for days before death brings them mercy that Man withholds from them.

The Life Force which permeates all the seven Kingdoms of Nature is in a certain sense a Unit. Progress or retrogression takes place as a unit, also, and we are foolish indeed if we believe that human evolution can proceed in the right direction and upward unless similar progress is taking place within the other six Kingdoms.

My main object for touching upon the fringe of the far reaching problem of man's proper relations with the Kingdoms of Nature is to share with you a few experiences that have come my way in this connection and have a direct bearing on our subject. Some of them may appear too trivial to be worth recounting, but on occasion seeming trivialities can point the way to truth. For me these experiences, and many others of a similar kind, have strengthened my conviction in the truth of what has just been said, namely that from the the standpoint of Evolution, life *in all its manifestations* in and around

this planet, is indivisible; that is to say, interdependent, whether it is being expressed in human form or otherwise.

Energy infused with intelligence is by no means confined to the human species. Progression towards higher and more spiritual levels of consciousness must surely be an all-embracing process; one that is certainly *not* confined to the human race alone.

For this and many other reasons, as inferred already, surely it is our bounden duty to re-assess our relations with all forms of life in the other Kingdoms, and to begin to heal the grave enmity which has grown up between humanity and our brothers and fellow Intelligences now manifesting around us in realms of fire, air, water as well as within the mineral, vegetable and animal Kingdoms.

We can begin by refusing to tolerate cruelty of any kind that may come to our notice. Meat eaters should see that the laws are strengthened to reduce the pain and fear to which animals are subjected in slaughter houses. How can we expect the friendship and co-operation of Life in the other Kingdoms if we do not even begin to show friendship to them?

Sunset in the Desert

I begin with an experience in the African Sahara, now a vast expanse of seeming emptiness; but once forest clad and full of life.

I was sitting on a sand dune alone, watching the sun go down after a day of blinding heat and shimmering mirage. As is often the case in desert regions, a small breeze arose as the sun was setting, stirring the sand into gentle eddies. It was then that I became aware of a change of consciousness within myself, accompanied by an alteration in the range of vision. The sand itself gave out a life of its own which seemed to rise up into the breeze and become at one with it. Then it was that I ceased to be a solitary individual, shut away in my bodily form as if in prison.

I found myself communing and on equal terms with the spirit of the breeze and with the life of the sand, and I entered into friendly contact with them. All barriers had disappeared and for the time being I was united with the Energies of Nature that surrounded me.

Such an experience as this sounds trivial in the telling, but it embraces a reality beyond the power of words to bring to the understanding of other people. Alas that this should be true of most of the experiences I am now trying to share with you!

The Life Waters of an Oasis

Later, during the same expedition, I arrived at a small oasis, familiar to me from previous visits. I was met by the headman of the tiny community who lived there, and his bearing told me at once that something very serious was amiss. The oasis, surrounded by a low wall constructed from briar and primitive bricks of sand,

contained a grove of date palms, fig and orange trees and a carefully tended cereal and vegetable garden. The homes of its forty inhabitants men, women and children, were single-storied and built mainly of similar bricks to those used in the oasis wall which kept at bay the ever encroaching desert sands.

The life of this oasis and its people, together with a few camels, sheep, goats and poultry, depended for its very being upon a supply of water from a deep well, which at ground level had been extended into a kind of enclosed cistern.

The water from the spring beneath this well was the only source available for irrigating the trees and the garden, and for the animals and all household needs. Yearly rainfall here rarely exceeded 2 or 3 inches.

Never before had the well been known to become dry. Now, however, I was told that the volume of water was diminishing day by day, with the result that the oasis and all it contained might have to be abandoned altogether. This tragic situation was explained whilst I was being escorted to the headman's guest room.

Over the evening meal I asked my host to call everyone together to join in prayer that a happy and fruitful solution might be found in time to avert the need for a general exodus "into the wilderness".

Being good Moslems, they received this request with fervour and we knelt together, facing Mecca, and said a simple prayer to Allah and his Prophet, asking for their grace and succour.

Later I went to my room, sad at the prospect of not being lulled to sleep, as on my previous visits, by the sound of the splash of water in the miniature fountain in the courtyard outside my window.

When finally asleep, a change in the rhythm of my consciousness took place, similar to the one already described. My thinking and feeling processes gradually became keyed or attuned to those of the elemental intelligences in charge of the spring and its surroundings.

I was then able to perceive that at a point about one hundred metres below ground level, a cleavage had opened in the bed of the stream, caused by a "fault" in the rock strata. As a result the stream, instead of following its customary upward course, was leaking away into the bowels of the earth.

I remember asking the Nature guardians with whom I was then in communion to use our united prayer to help them to mend the leak and so restore the stream to its rightful course. This request was received with every sign of friendliness.

Very early next morning I was joyfully awakened by the sound of water bubbling up once more within the little fountain outside my open window.

We then found that the central well was full again and amidst general rejoicing I went on my way. Before doing so, however, I was

able to perceive that the leak in the bed of the stream, too far below the surface to be reached by human hands, had been repaired carefully and effectively during the night.

The Affinity of Water with its Parent Source

Whilst on the subject of water, may I tell you of a somewhat similar happening to the one just described? Throughout the immense and desolate Saudi Arabian desert, springs are virtually unknown. At rare intervals along the main camel routes, water holes are to be found, little more in substance than shallow, muddy, stagnant pools. From time to time when a caravan arrives at one of these rare drinking places, it is found that the feet of camels or goats who had passed that way previously had trampled down the water in the pool to virtual disappearance.

As the next water hole may be over a hundred miles away such an occurrence can prove very serious.

I am not familiar with this desert save around its outskirts, and therefore what follows is based on hearsay. My informant, however, was a man of truth and integrity. He is of Syrian origin and in his time has led many trading caravans across the Arabian deserts on journeys often lasting for several months. He assured me that the procedure I will now describe is one that he and other caravan leaders are in the habit of employing on finding that a particular water hole en route has become unusable. I translate his words: "On such occasions we scoop down into the bed of the pool until we come to a trickle of moisture. This we collect carefully in a goat skin, even if it may only consist of a few drops. We carry it with us until we meet a hermit or holy man, to whom we give the water, telling him the circumstances of the case. He then calls down the blessing of Allah upon what little remains of the water we have brought with us, and subsequently sprinkles it upon the ground before him. I have evidence which, for me, is beyond dispute that from that moment onwards, the water hole in question becomes fully restored and fit for use again, no matter how distant it may be."

One of the strange characteristics of water is that however far a sample of it is removed from its source, a strong but invisible link continues to exist between the water in question and the spring or well from which it was drawn. Wine also is linked in a similar way with the vineyard from which it originated.

In recent times, and as a result of Radiesthesia experiments, the same living affinity has been found to exist between a spot of blood and its parent stream, irrespective of the distance between the two.

My aim in relating such incidents is to try to make clear the fact that "Man does not live unto himself alone". Under normal and harmonious conditions, close and friendly relations can and should

be maintained between us as human beings and the life energies and intelligences in charge of the six Kingdoms of Nature known to us.

A Chat with a Copper Beech

Not long ago, having crossed the Alpine frontier between Austria and Bavaria, I found myself crouching on a narrow plateau just below the snow line.

I had just passed through an exhausting and tragic time, and as a result was seeking some suitable spot where I could rest awhile. Not far below me, on the brink of a precipice, a fine specimen of a copper beech was growing in splendid solitude. Knowing from previous experience the revitalising power these trees possess, I made my way down the mountain side to a point where I was able to wedge myself into a comfortable position beneath the aura and shelter of this lovely tree.

After a while I was able to become "keyed" in consciousness to the language of the trees, and I will now try to convert into words the sense of the ideas which passed between me and the spirit of this copper beech.

W.T.P. "What a splendid tree you are, standing here alone! How do you manage to find earth deep enough for your roots to hold you in so tall and upright a position?"

C.B. "Thank you, but I am all right because my roots go through concealed crevices in the rock and there is plenty of good earth below. You are very kind to ask."

W.T.P. "Wouldn't you like a companion, living as you do so solitary an existence?"

C.B. "Yes, sometimes I *am* lonely. We like to grow up in pairs, but this fact does not seem to be made known to those who plant or seed us."

W.T.P. "Is this desire to live in twos common to all trees, and have trees their own sex?"

C.B. "I don't know about other kinds of trees, but *we* much prefer to grow up with a companion, not too close, but within 'wind whistling distance'. Some of us feel complete in ourselves, but others need a complementary mate to make us really happy."

W.T.P. "Thank you very much for telling me this, and now I hope to plant two Copper Beeches in our Chalice Well Orchard, in England's Glastonbury; but how is one to find out which trees are complementary to one another?"

C.B. "You can do this by comparing our young leaves *very* carefully, and then obeying your instinct about them. I have enjoyed our meeting, and wish more of your kind could understand us and become our help mates. Be kind to

us all, *and come again.*"

As I went on my way, stimulated and refreshed, I could not help feeling how wrong and sad it is that we humans have allowed ourselves to become so entirely out of communion with life in the natural worlds around us.

Subsequently, when discussing this experience with an advanced student of Metaphysics, he told me that oriental tradition associates the copper beech with the planet Mars. According to this tradition Mars is its native habitat, and that since Beech seeds found their way on to our earth, this particular tree acts as a friendly link between the two planets! To me this is a fascinating idea, however fantastic it may seem to those who think that no relations of any kind exist between the various planets that make up our Solar System.

(To be concluded)

Materialisation Puzzles—including Helen Duncan

FRANK MILLS

SCIENTISTS are still sceptical about phenomena which cannot be explained in physical terms, and psychologists usually attempt to relate all mental phenomena to a physical instrument, the brain, though there is ample evidence that the range of what is called "the mind" is far greater than they generally admit: science's own assertions that all physical structures are centres of vibrant energy ought to discourage dogmatism as to what is possible for the human mind and what is not.

Most mental phenomena of psychism now receive tentative acceptance from those who have studied them, but in the physical phenomena of materialisation we are confronted with something so astonishing, so incredible, that those who have not witnessed a genuine materialisation are inclined to ridicule any such possibility. This was the attitude of a number of well-known investigators until they were faced with the facts. Prof. Richet, after prolonged study of this phenomena, enlarged upon the impossibility of a materialised form being produced with the full physiological characteristics of a human being. "Nevertheless", he admitted, "it is a fact"! In this country the experiences of Prof. Crookes with Florence Cook have received much publicity and, although Crookes never retracted from his conviction that "Katie King" was a genuine materialisation, his reputation as a scientist has suffered—not least at the hands of those who enjoy heaping scurrility on victims no longer able to reply. There are also Harry Price's alleged experiences with "Rosalie". Harry's friend, Paul Tabori, said that Price was "deeply disturbed, almost

distraught; that he was shaken to the core by his experiences." Yet nothing more was heard of "Rosalie"—possibly because those concerned deliberately avoided publicity.

Two alternatives suggest themselves as explanations for the *modus operandi* of materialisation:

(1) that the matrix, or framework, of an invisible entity is built up into visibility by being clothed with psychoplastic material drawn from the medium;

(2) that the medium is entirely responsible for the building-up of a psychoplastic form which she endows with a pseudo-personality drawn from contact with the mind of a sitter or from her own subconscious imagination.

Prof. Richet was inclined towards the second hypothesis, which to my mind is vastly more incredible than the first.

Helen Duncan

Now to consider the controversial matter of the mediumship of Helen Duncan, praised for the excellence of her demonstrations, and also decried as an impostor and condemned to imprisonment by those hardly likely to be qualified to arrive at the truth of the matter.

Helen, when I met her, was a grossly fat woman of about middle height, with very dark hair and eyes. Her facial expression was rather blank, conveying no idea of exceptional personality or intelligence. In her early days, I have been told, she was a barmaid in one of the lower quarters of Glasgow. Those who knew her personally tell me that she was friendly and generous, but her success as a medium led to deterioration of character; the constant demand for demonstration may have led her to employ artifice at times—particularly when her faculty was not up to normal.

When living in Gloucestershire, my wife and I chanced to hear that Helen Duncan was giving a demonstration at a Gloucestershire Spiritualist church, so we applied for places. On the due date we found that the séance was to be held in a large carpetless room, entirely devoid of furniture except simple wooden chairs for sitters and medium, and a small table in the 'cabinet', which was merely a curtain drawn across one corner of the room furthest from the door.

There were twenty-four sitters, sexes alternating so far as possible. All lights were extinguished during the sitting except one red electric bulb, the brilliance of which could be regulated. The entrance door was, of course, locked during the demonstration.

Before the medium entered the séance room she was stripped to the skin in the presence of three ladies who volunteered for this duty. She was then attired in a one-piece black garment which had previously been passed round to all the sitters for close scrutiny. Hence, when the medium entered the cabinet, there was no possible means for

deception except by material concealed within her own body. She was not tied up or restricted in any way. The red light was strong enough for easy vision across the circle, which began and ended on either side of the cabinet, so that no intruder from without could have penetrated the circle undetected.

Those who sat with Mrs. Duncan will be familiar with the routine—the short introduction by "Albert", the control; the appearance of materialised forms to selected sitters; the amusing interlude by "Peggy", the medium's "familiar spirit"; and finally, the appearance of the medium outside the cabinet supporting a tiny fairy figure on the palm of her hand. At the sitting I am now describing some of the materialised forms came well away from the cabinet and, after exchanging a few words with those for whom they had appeared, slowly dissolved downwards towards the floor—like the condensation of a cloud of vapour. My wife and I were sitting about 90° in angular measurement from the left-hand side of the cabinet, so that we could plainly see the distinctive features of the forms as they appeared. To give a general idea of the proceedings, I select two examples which appeared significant:

(1) "Albert": "There is a young wife coming through and she has not long passed over. She has come for a man sitting near the door." To help identification the cause of death was given, so one of the sitters, suspecting that the call was for him, approached the figure. When he came face to face with it he gave a start and exclaimed; "Why, it's D—! It's D—! You said you would come, my dear!"

(2) "Albert" : "A woman passed over recently and, oh! she was in a bad way. One side of her face was crushed and there was a hole in her chest. She comes for a lady on the left side of the circle and was not a relative but a neighbour. She used to look after the cat when the lady was away from home. The place where she passed over was Coventry." One of the sitters immediately recognized the details as significant to her. My wife told me that the figure was sobbing bitterly and I distinctly heard it say: "I couldn't go through it again."

From the sitters concerned I confirmed the accuracy of the facts given. Those sitting near the man whose wife had recently passed over said that he was so emotionally disturbed that there were tears in his eyes. The Coventry incident referred, of course, to an air raid.

When the "Peggy" manifestation occurred, I was quite out of my depth. She materialised right in front of my wife and myself so that we could plainly see the refinement of her features in profile. In this respect, and in the slimness of her figure, she was quite unlike the medium. She conversed with the sitters in the gay, care-free,

manner of a normal child.Finally she sang to us in a very sweet girlish voice. I am of the opinion that it would have been utterly impossible for the medium to produce a manifestation of this kind from material concealed within her own person. But, allowing my critical faculties full rein, I would say that the fairy which Mrs. Duncan afterwards supported on her outstretched hand was small enough to be so concealed.

Nearly a year later we attended another demonstration by Helen Duncan. The preliminaries were the same as previously, except that "Albert" asked for the red light to be reduced. Space does not allow more than a brief description of the materialisations. A clergyman appeared in clerical vestments and was recognised by a sitter as the late vicar of her parish; a boy killed in a road accident gave a message on behalf of another boy killed in an air raid; the form of a woman appeared saying: "I can't understand this." The sitter who recognised her said she had died only a few days previously. At this sitting we actually saw the form of a mother come forward to be kissed by her son before dissolving. This time we were sitting close up to the cabinet, so when my wife was called upon to meet a form alleged to be her father we hoped for some good evidence: but our expectations were in vain, for the form's stay was so brief that we only had time to notice that it had a beard and whiskers resembling those of my father-in-law...In this case there could easily have been deception if materials had been at hand.

I now briefly refer to a Helen Duncan séance attended by my son and two lady friends in Scotland. It was held in a private house; all present were known to each other but unknown to Mrs. Duncan. A typed report was made immediately after the sitting and a copy handed to me by my son, whom I have reasons for regarding as a credible witness. The preliminary inspection followed the routine already described and the sitting was under good lighting conditions, as the "control" asked for the red lamp to be less shaded.

The demonstration began with the appearance of Mrs. Duncan in front of the cabinet, immediately followed by "Albert". According to the report, the difference in height was "most pronounced". For the elder of my son's friends there appeared an elderly man, with a broad moustached face, who bent down to show that his head was bald. There was some conversation between the two but, with Scottish caution, the sitter's comment went no further than to say that the figure had some resemblance to her husband when he was alive. For the same lady's daughter there materialised the form of her brother who had died in boyhood. Most evidentially, he whistled when he appeared, as was his usual custom when approaching his home in physical life. This form was quite conversational and

revealed uncanny knowledge of a plan my son and the two ladies had made between them for an excursion to Glasgow. Strange too was a reference, during this sitting, to a lady who had died a day or two previously—well-known to my son's friends. She was said to be still rigid and unable to speak. When the child "Peggy" made her usual appearance she showed intimate knowledge of the sitters' affairs and was about to select a sweet from a box offered to her when she was stopped by "Albert".

At this period my son was alleged to have a clergyman guide named "Peter" who had made himself known through automatic script. This fact was not, of course, given to Mrs. Duncan by normal means, yet Peter was mentioned by name at this sitting and an attempt was made to build up his features on the face of the medium; "Albert" said that he had not enough material left for a full materialisation. Quoting from the report: "... a man's face in profile could be plainly seen, like a mask on her face. The ear was very noticeable."

My final item relating to Helen Duncan comes from a Yorkshire friend. At a sitting with Mrs. Duncan she obtained convincing evidence, both visible and vocal, relating to her husband. A second experience with the same medium cancelled out, as it were, her first impressions: there appeared to be crude attempts at deception.

I think a reasonable conclusion to arrive at is that Helen Duncan, despite occasional lapses from rectitude, was a medium gifted with remarkable powers. I defy anyone, be they professional conjurers, 'magicians', or amateur fakers, to produce similar phenomena *under exactly the same conditions* unless they also happen to be physical mediums, even if allowed a length of cheesecloth to regurgitate and messily mould into some semblance of human features.

Recent weakening of interest in physical mediumship, and exposures of fraudulent practitioners of "materialisation", have made this type of phenomena suspect in many quarters. Nevertheless there are still genuine demonstrations, often in the privacy of the "home circle". A friend has told me of an incident that occurred in his presence, the sitting being held in darkness, and the forms identified by means of luminous plaques. One form built up in front of a woman sitter, claiming to be her sister. When the sitter expressed doubt, the form opened its mouth and pointed to a gap in her top dentures, exclaiming: "Don't you know me?" The sitter did know her, for she had the same dental malformation. When the two were children they used to amuse each other by holding small coins in the gap.

Here is another home circle case. A man belonging to a rather strict non-conformist religious sect "dabbled" with physical phenomena in the privacy of his own family circle. His success was beyond expectations, for his own recently passed little daughter

appeared, sobbing bitterly. She missed the comfort of her mother's presence. This so upset the experimenter's conventional ideas of after-life bliss that he attributed the manifestation to devilish machination and closed down his psychic dabbling forthwith.

A man with whom I am well acquainted, and whom I will call Mr. X, is a level-headed business man whose word I do not presume to doubt. He once took a party for a sitting with the medium Alec Harris, a Ministry of Works official by profession. The sitting was held at the medium's house near Cardiff under good red lighting, with about twenty sitters. One incident made a never-to-be-forgotten impression upon Mr. X. His Red Indian "guide" materialised, complete with feathered head-dress. In three gradations of height the guide, Mr. X and the medium stood side by side. Furthermore the guide removed his head-dress and draped it over Mr. X: I should very much like to witness a demonstration of this calibre. I am told this circle sat regularly for *ten years* before getting any results! Harris has since emigrated to South Africa and, from a different source, I have heard of remarkable evidence of identity being given through one of his materialisations.

What have these materialisations to say for themselves? Usually they recall memories of past incidents, often of trivial importance. Therefore the intelligentsia scoff and say that "spirits" are apparently without erudition. Yet, in a normal gathering of a hundred people in this world, how many have erudition?

A reminder to the orthodox: when Jesus first materialised he gave warning that he was not to be touched, but when materialisation was physiologically complete he allowed Peter to touch him. We can surely accept that it may be harmful to the medium to touch psychoplastic material without permission, and to flash torches in the séance room. Even after a simple trance address I have known a medium to be distressed by the sudden turning up of the lights.

I have mentioned that materialised forms appear to dissolve downwards towards the ground. This is in accordance with the experience of others with whom I have compared notes.

If we liken clairaudience to sound radio, where the inaudible becomes audible by means of electronic devices, so materialisation may be likened to television, where the invisible becomes visible by means of similar devices. Here we say that one form of energy has been changed into another. If by some device our *conciousness* could be changed to take in a different scale of perception, our ideas of "reality" might have to be revised.

In this article I have spoken of phenomena from a spiritist angle. Spiritualism is, or should be, on a higher level, for it proceeds to explore their religious significance.

Table-Tilting for the Millions

FIRST BBC TELEVISION SEANCE

BENSON HERBERT, M.Sc., B.A.

I was invited by Mrs. Sybil Leek to visit the allegedly haunted Merchant's House, 58, French Street, Southampton, on the evening of November 8th 1963. On the way to Southampton, accompanied by my research assistant Miss Barbara Booth, Mrs. Leek informed us that the BBC were expected to attend also, with television cameras.

Merchant's House is a medieval building with two floors and basement cellars, which has been used since the war as a Students' Theatrical Club and rehearsal rooms. Shortly after this use of the building commenced, the club members began to notice certain eerie events, which may be classified as follows:—

1) Sensations of being 'observed' by unseen 'presences'.
2) A sensation as of being touched on the shoulder by someone behind though no one was there.
3) A sound as of footsteps ascending the staircase to the club room on the top floor, followed by the door of the club room opening of its own accord, subsequent search revealing no one in that part of the building who could have occasioned the event.

Some years ago a séance was held in the club room and an entity calling itself Ruth claimed to have inhabited the building some centuries previously, spelling out a message by table-turning to the effect that she was imprisoned in the building and offering them money and jewelry hidden in a well in the house, to set her free. The club members thought that the well referred to was in the cellar; but the table, it is claimed, apparently hurled itself of its own accord 8 feet across the room, hitting the wall, on the other side of which was later found another well, which unfortunately cannot be searched, as it is largely built over. This séance was held in darkness.

We reached the building on Nov. 8th at about 8 p.m. and were introduced to Mr. Anthony Brode (the BBC interviewer), the sound engineer, the cameraman, Mr. Roger Quilter and other club members, the number of whom varied throughout the evening owing to rehearsals in progress in other parts of the building.

Mr. Brode explained that he would not interfere with any investigations I wished to make, and that I was to inform him, if at any stage the TV camaras could be brought into action.

I thereupon suggested that an ordinary table-tilting séance should be attempted, using the table which had "hit the wall" as described

above. This table was circular, diameter about 2ft. 6ins., with a single pillar dividing at the base into legs, and so heavily constructed that it needed appreciable effort to lift it. Mrs. Leek, Miss Booth, two club members, Mr. Brode and myself, sat at the table, with lights out, though street lamps gave illumination through partially-curtained windows.

We sat with hands lightly on the table in the customary manner. Mrs. Leek began breathing heavily and appeared to go into a "trance" state, claiming that she sensed the presence of two women. Afterwards Mrs. Leek stated that she felt a pain in her ears as if something was pulling her ear-rings, which pain persisted for some hours afterwards. This is interesting because it was only after the trance that we were informed that the entity "Ruth" (in the previous séance) stated that she used to steal jewelry.

Thereafter we tried several combinations of sitters, using also a light card table of the folding variety, which spelled out the message "No Dust". More than one meaning could of course be given to this message in the customary telegraphic style of such séances. It *could* be interpreted: "You may call us dead but we are far from being dust."

As this progressed, everyone in the room, including the BBC men, took turns at the tables, and the light was progressively increased, until all lights including the brilliant TV arcs were on, flooding the room with intense illumination. Both tables were by now rocking vigorously, and I signalled for Mr. Brode to turn on the cameras, and the TV recording commenced.

The BBC men stared incredulously as the tables could be frequently seen standing on one leg only, and as they rocked, they moved rapidly round the room, in a walking motion, so that the sitters had to abandon their chairs and chase after the tables. In the process one armchair collapsed. I did not touch the tables at this stage but ran round, frequently peering under the tables, but I never saw any sign that anyone was helping the movement with knees or feet. Several times I arranged for each individual to move away from a table in turn to eliminate the possibility of any one person unconsciously aiding the movements by "pushing". Both tables were rocking simultaneously for several minutes.

Miss Booth reports that the sound engineer endeavoured to hold down one of the tables but he could not prevent it from moving. In the middle of this extraordinary scene of confusion, the cameraman succeeded in taking many shots from both above and below table level.

After three hours we had to cease through physical exhaustion—though the apparent energy of the tables showed no sign of diminish-

ing. Mr. Brode then interviewed me to conclude the programme, which was televised at 6.15 p.m. on Nov. 13th. (BBC South). Unfortunately the BBC for technical reasons were unable to preserve the film, but I am expecting to repeat the séance, to be fully recorded by ciné cameras and tape machines, and further TV broadcasts are likely. The séance was later described on the BBC Home Service.

The value of such visual recording is that it may be possible to calculate, from the angle of tilt and movements of tables, whether or not the movements can be wholly explained by unconscious "pushing".

Extracts from Correspondence

From Mr. Anthony Brode, reporter working for the BBC, Jan. 22, 1964:

. . . a séance held at 58 French Street, Southampton, on November 8th 1963 was filmed for the BBC and televised in our programme 'South Today' on November 13th. A brief extract was shown again on New Year's Eve.

Two tables were used at the séance, one a light collapsible card table and one a heavy round table which requires some effort to move. At different stages I myself, a cameraman and a lighting engineer all took part in the séance. I had an open mind; the other two were highly sceptical. Eventually both tables not only tilted: rocked from side to side, but moved round the room with some vigour. As the lights were increased, it could be seen that the only physical contact maintained with the tables was from the finger-tips.

Whether control was exercised in this way, either consciously or unconsciously, I was unable to decide. But the movement of the tables was only maintained when either Mrs. Sybil Leek or Mrs. Gladys Berry was at a table. Without one or the other, the tables were motionless.

From Mr. Brode Jan. 24, 1964:

My two colleagues remain sceptical. . . though (like me) they had their fingers on the heavy table while it was moving. I can't remember whether Mrs. Leek and Mrs. Berry were ever at the same table. Towards the end of the séance, both tables were moving simultaneously.

From Mr. B. Herbert, Jan, 25, 1964:

. . . If Mr. Brode has the opinion that rocking only took place if Mrs. Leek or Mrs Berry were touching the table(s), I would not wish to contradict him; I did persuade each person to leave the tables in turn (which did not affect the rocking) but I cannot be certain that both ladies mentioned were away from the tables at the same time; combinations of sitters were continuously changing, from table to table, and often many left the tables and looked on, but they continued to rock.

From Mr. Roger Quilter (member of club using the Merchant's House), Jan. 22, 1964:

. . . I was present for part of the time. I did watch the movements of both tables. When five or six people are resting fingers on a moving table it is not easy to judge if one or two people are "assisting it". If they were it certainly was not obvious to me.

Although I think once a movement has been imparted to a table it would be possible to assist it, keeping the pot boiling, unintentionally.

Two tables were used, one a light card table, the other a heavy round table standing on a central column with four large feet. Both tables rocked and moved around the room, and in the brilliant light of two BBC cine lights. This was during the height of the séance. Earlier when dim lights had been used to start the séance the results were not very good. With dim lights, "atmosphere" record playing, only a slight move was felt, so the light card table was tried. This moved very well (after a slow start). I was out of the room during the change over, but on my return I found the full lighting on and the small table rocking and moving around. They then tried the heavy round table again and this time with better results, for this table moved with as much force as the smaller one had. At times all but one leg was off the floor and in full light. . . .

I did look under table and am sure that if any movement was imparted it did not come from beneath.

At all times the fingers of those taking part were on the flat surface.

From Mr. Roger Quilter, "Sat" (Jan. 25 or Feb. 1, 1964):

. . . as far as I recall, either Mrs. Leek or Mrs. Berry were on the tables all the time. At one time whilst the others were using the larger table, I partnered Mrs. Berry at the card table, and this table moved around quite fast. I am sure Mrs. Berry was not intentionally pushing it and I know I was not.

Editor of LIGHT to BBC cameraman, Feb. 1, 1964:

. . . one witness says that at one point a BBC man tried to hold one of the moving tables still, but failed. Did you see this? Did you happen to be the man who tried to prevent the movement? Were you able to look under either of the tables while it was on the move, to see whether it was being "assisted" by normal physical means?

I gather that, like most people, you did not believe that tables moved by any but normal means, Did this remain your view after the session? If so, what is your evidence for believing that the tables rocked, and moved round the room, by the efforts of the people touching them?

From Mr. M. J. Smith, BBC TV Cameraman, Feb. 13, 1964:

. . . I was in the second sitting during which nothing happened, while in the first circle Sybil Leek went into a 'trance'. I returned to

filming in the cellar area (of the Merchants House).

After a while I was informed that the 'table tilting' was under way in the lounge and returned there. . . Soon it was suggested that I try filming the table in action. It continued moving when the extra bright filming lights were switched on so I picked up the camera —it was at this moment that Tony Brode's chair broke—and I started filming the table. It was not 'deterred' by this photography and the movement continued seemingly indefinitely, so having filmed enough all took turns at handling the table. I was one of the people who tried to hold the table still and failed—there were others touching the table at this time — but when all hands were removed from the table it stopped, so this seems to prove nothing either way! I was now still doubtful—but impressed!

Soon after this I left the room and completed filming in the cellar, and some time later went back to the lounge before leaving. The atmosphere. . . was by now hot and seemed somewhat out of hand—table still being rocked, as it appeared to me—I was now a disbeliever convinced that I was correct in disbelief, but slightly disappointed. This was and is merely my personal opinion.

I could not prove that the table was being rocked and have no evidence to prove anything either way. Others who were in the lounge all the time may now hold different views. . . .

Ed. LIGHT *to Mr. Smith Feb. 15, 1964:*

1. When you tried to prevent the table moving, did you take hold of it firmly? Did any of the others around it take hold, or did all the others continue to keep only their finger tips on the top surface?
2. Did you at any time see any parts other than finger tips touching the tables as they moved?
3. Did either table at any time go right down to the floor and stay there?
4. I take it that you think finger pressure on the tables caused the rocking. What do you think prevented them falling on the floor when past the point of balance, as appears in some photographs? If the downward movement on one side was caused by ordinary pressure (even unconscious) of fingers on that side, would not recovery have required well-timed connivance and pressure from someone the other side?

Undoubtedly human agency was at work! The question seems to be whether it was entirely ordinary muscles and physical laws.

From Mr. M. J. Smith, Feb. 23, 1964:

1. As I remember it, when I tried to stop the table movement I kept my hands on the top of it and pushed harder downwards—this action lessened the rocking but did not entirely stop it. I was not the only one pushing against the movements, so whatever force was

behind the rocking was quite appreciable.
2. I thought the people round the table had their hands flat on the table all or most of the time—not just their finger *tips*.
3. I did not see the table touch the floor, but as I pointed out in my last letter I was out of the room for a considerable time and did not see quite a lot of what went on.
4. As opposed to just finger pressure on the table causing it to move I thought it was *hand* pressure. I do not have an explanation or proof for the movement or (for) table not falling if it was past the point of balance—but on the other side the experts (including the psychic science enthusiast in charge) could not explain it! So I'll remain unconvinced, although not disputing the fact that the table did move!





Both photographs copyright by Roger Quilter, 1964.

Mr. Roger Quilter kindly supplied these photographs taken by himself during the "TV Séance" on Nov. 8th 1963.

In the left-hand picture, no visible means of moving or supporting can be seen under the table. It appears to be well past the point of easy recovery, yet no witness reports that a table fell completely down.

In the right-hand picture, only finger-tips appear to be touching the table. One witness, Mr. Smith, says (in Feb 1964) that he thought that the sitters had their hands flat on the table.

Sequel to a Murder

SNAEBJÖRN JÓNSSON

IN the small hours of the morning of March 14 1828, a terrible crime took place at Illugatadir farmhouse, on the north coast of Iceland. The farmer, an unmarried man named Nathan Ketilsson, and a guest sleeping in the same room, were savagely murdered by a lad, Fridrik Sigurdsson (b. 1810) from a neighbouring farm, aided and abetted by Nathan's maidservant, Agnes Magnúsdottir (b. 1795). Having killed the two men, they set fire to the farmhouse, hoping to destroy the corpses and every vestige of their crime. However, they did not succeed. The corpses were only partially burnt and the mutilated remains showed unmistakably how the men had met with their death.

Behind this brutal crime was a double love-story. Nathan was a man of ability, fair education, and excellent points. But he had led a loose life and had several reckless love affairs. Apparently he fascinated almost any woman. Agnes had been his housekeeper and was firmly under the impression that he was going to marry her. But he had now thrown her over, reduced her to the position of an ordinary servant, and to her former post elevated a young girl with whom he was having an affair. With this girl Fridrik, too, was in love. Thus both murderers were inflamed with jealousy.

Agnes had always had a blameless character; indeed she was of excellent repute, highly intelligent and had poetic talent of no mean order. Fridrik also came of a very good stock, though his mother was considered harsh-tempered, and he himself had the reputation of being an unruly lad.

The couple were convicted of the double murder and condemned to death by the local Sheriff. The sentence was upheld by the High Court of Iceland, and again by the Supreme Court of Denmark, who directed that they should be beheaded and the heads set on stakes. It was the last time capital punishment was inflicted in Iceland.

The sentence was carried out on January 12, 1830, in a relatively deserted place within the parish of the Sheriff who had pronounced it, and under his supervision. In conformity with the savage ideas of that day, the entire adult population of the district were ordered to attend the exceution—of course with the idea of being frightened into good behaviour. In the locality are three hills, or hillocks, fairly close together, called Three Hills; on the summit of the middle one a platform of stones and turf was made, and remains practically intact today. On this was placed the executioner's block (which, with the axe, may still be seen at the National Museum, Reykjavik).

After the execution the heads were put on stakes on the platform, while the bodies were placed in rough deal coffins and forthwith buried in unhallowed ground near the foot of the hill. Nothing was done to mark the spot, and the whereabouts of the grave were gradually forgotten, until no one could say where it had been.

During the night following the execution the heads disappeared. People claimed to know that a certain highly distinguished and universally respected lady in the neighbouring parish had sent a manservant to take them down and secretly bury them in Thingeyrar churchyard, adjoining her residence. From the point of view of the law this was a serious thing, but nothing was done about it. Probably the Sheriff, though a bold man, had little taste for facing this proud lady with such a charge, and so preferred to ignore the matter.

Up to this point the story will be found briefly related by the Hon. Arthur Dillon (later Lord Dillon) in his book, *A Winter in Iceland* (London, 1840), as told to him during his sojourn in Reykjavik in 1834-35. He gives no names.

Of course obloquy was heaped on the memory of these two unfortunates. People are generally ready with harsh judgment on those convicted of evil deeds. Few stop to think what harm they may be doing by their cruel thinking. But the story was not forgotten. The number of highly gifted and remarkable persons that each generation brought forth in two of the families involved in the tragedy helped to focus popular attention upon it. Even abroad (in Denmark) it became a subject for treatment in verse.

We move now to the present. About 1931 Mrs Sesselja Gudmundsdóttir, the very reserved and orthodox wife of a Reykjavik Corporation employee, felt pains in her hand and, much against her will, began writing automatically messages purporting to be dictated by the two murderers. Their object was to say how unhappy they—particularly Agnes—were made by the harsh thoughts always surrounding them. They pleaded for something to be done to mitigate their unhappiness. One means towards this was to exhume their bones and re-inter them in the churchyard at Tjörn, their own parish church, before the summer solstice (June 21). It was desired that the reburial should be conducted with the customary rites by the local minister, whose name they correctly stated.

For a while all this was regarded as nonsense, and so ignored. But they persisted in their pleadings and grew more and more insistent. They continued to support their petition by fresh proofs of identity, many of them individually trifling; but in their growing accumulation these proofs became overwhelming. The communicators named specific persons, who they desired should be approached as they would prove sympathetic and helpful. One of these was Judge

Páll Einarsson, of the Supreme Court. These assertions proved to be right. They further gave remarkably exact instructions for locating the grave, named "an old man", Magnus, living at a certain farm in the neighbourhood, and said that he would prove the right man for finding the grave. It was suggested to the communicators that instead of transporting the bones, if found, the long distance to their old parish church, it would be more convenient to take them to the church nearest to Three Hills where, moreover, the heads were "known" to have been buried. But no, came the answer this must on no account be done; besides, it was quite wrong to say that the heads had been buried there. The man who took them down had failed in his trust and buried them at a short distance from the bodies. Further, Agnes's head had not been removed from the stake; the latter had been broken, leaving a piece of wood in the head; the piece was still in the bones. One thing more they desired should be done, namely that when the bones had been re-interrred in the cemetery, a prayer for remittance of their sin should be said on the ruins of the burnt-down farmhouse that had been the scene of their crime.

The matter was now taken in hand and their instructions acted upon. A sturdy and energetic man, Gudmund Hofdal, came forward and volunteered to go to the northern district, search for the bones and take them to the desired church for burial, if he found them.

On June 14th, 1934, a bright sunny morning, he left Reykjavik for the North, arriving that night at the farm. The name of the farmer proved to be Magnus, as Agnes had said, but as to his age she was quite a bit out, for he was not much over forty. Locally he was a prominent man, holding a public office, the nearest English approach to which is that of justice of the peace. Hofdal told him the whole story. Though polite, the farmer did not conceal his amused incredulity, but said he was quite willing to go with him to Three Hills in the morning and do as instructed. Magnus took with him his son, a young man, as well as tools for digging. Among these was a slender iron rod (about $\frac{3}{4}$in.). They selected a spot that seemed to tally best with Agnes's description, and after Magnus had been prodding for about a quarter of an hour he struck wood. They now dug a wide grave, so as to be sure of damaging nothing, and found the coffins which lay side by side. They were quite intact, except that the lids had sunk in under the weight of the earth. But the bones were much more rotten. These the men gathered up as well as they could, after Magnus had gone back to the farm for a wooden box. The heads they found without the least trouble, so exact were the instructions. And there was the end of the stake in the woman's head; so also on this point she had told the truth—a truth that flew in the face of all that had been said and believed about the matter.

The excavators' report on their job, including all conceivable measurements, is so detailed and minute that it reads as if written by a trained archaeologist. In the same fashion they put everything in order after they had removed the bones. As to what remained of the communicators' instructions, these were complied with to the utmost detail.

Most of the persons concerned in this matter are still (1964) alive. The minister who officiated at the re-burial is now nearly 79, a man distinguished for his comprehensive scholarship. Mr. Hofdal is about the same age. The Bishop who, very gladly, gave permission for the exhumation, is dead; so is Judge Einarsson (incidentally a constant reader of LIGHT). Mrs. Gudmundsdóttir, the reluctant automatist in the case, is also dead; she made little use of her gift after Agnes's "break-through".

Let us concede that all the above facts admit of rational explanation. But there was a small, indirect sequel, now probably known to no living person but myself. Of this I know no satisfactory explanation, though a number of more or less parallel experiences are on record.

About four years after the exhumation at Three Hills, or to be exact, in the night between June 23 and 24 1938 (at that time of the year the sun never sets in the north of Iceland), a distinguished public official, highly respected throughout Iceland, on an inspection tour through the East and the North of the country, happened to ride past Three Hills, and as he did so, he saw the scene of the execution enacted down to the minutest detail, and every face in the large concourse of people gathered to watch the ghastly spectacle. "But the experience was such a strain upon me that there was not a dry spot upon my body by the time it was over; I was drenched with perspiration", he said when telling me of the incident. For some three hours he was held spellbound on the spot. Except for his wife I am convinced that I was the only person he told of this remarkable experience. He was by far the most powerful clairvoyant I ever knew. But, with the exception of his wife I have met no one who knew that he was endowed with this faculty; and yet I have been acquainted with many of his personal friends. He was a gifted man and came of a distinguished family in which psychic gifts have long been prominent, and he was an exceptionally strong character, but his innermost thoughts he did not disclose to many. He died suddenly from heart-failure on January 5, 1939, a little more than six months after having this vision.

Though it may have no significance, I will mention that his wife was a grand-niece of Fridrik the murderer. She was a woman of rare excellence. Her great intellectual gifts were matched by her boundless generosity and her compassionate heart. But I am certain that all her life she suffered under the stain upon her family record. She once

told me that when she was a little girl somebody was malicious enough to cast it at her that she was not far removed in kinship from a vile murderer. "And the words went like a red-hot iron through my very soul", she said. What is the explanation of her husband's vision at Three Hills in 1938?

Obituary

Emilie Augusta Louise Lind-af-Hageby

It is with pleasure that I recall a few memories of Miss Lind-af-Hageby whose death occurred on Dec. 26 1963, at the age of 85. Though born a Swede, the greater part of a lifetime spent in this country made her virtually an Englishwoman.

Miss Lind was no waverer in her support of the Spiritualist movement. She was a popular public speaker, generous with her time in addressing large propaganda meetings for all sections of the movement. She was President of the London Spiritualist Alliance from 1935 to 1943, having joined its Council in 1930.

Her complete conviction of individual survival of death was drawn partly from experience with the most successful mediums, but more particularly from her own personal form of mediumship, which was only used privately among her most intimate friends.

Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection called forth her greatest efforts. She was Founder and President of the Animal Defence League, and in logical compliance with her opinion—I think it correct to say, with her knowledge—she was a vegetarian.

The welfare of children was also close to her heart, and for some years she was responsible for the care of needful children at a beautiful property at Carcassonne, in France, in the conduct of which she followed enlightened modern theories.

In all her public work Miss Lind was enthusiastically supported by the late Duchess of Hamilton and two other ladies. The four enjoyed an ideal friendship: each one participating in the work had her own special department. The other three, though younger, predeceased Miss Lind, and one can realise with sympathy a certain loneliness in her closing years.

Now that all have passed on, it may be permissible to mention that Miss Lind's psychic gifts were used in company with those devoted co-workers with the object of receiving inspiration for their combined work. Miss Lind believed herself to be in close association with Anna Kingsford, the famous Victorian anti-vivisectionist who herself spent some years in the study of medicine in order to combat the practice of vivisection. This identity of interest, together with the friends' practice of keeping their circle entirely private, favoured truer communication. Such a claim, which raises eyebrows among unbelievers, must be judged in the light of the intelligence and achievement of those concerned. Probably those who knew Miss Lind and understood the significance of psychic activity as a ydnamic experience supporting faith in survival, will be ready to accept this claim from a courageous woman who faced much obloquy throughout her life because of her chosen work. MERCY PHILLIMORE

Stainton Moses and contemporary Physical Mediums

5. CHARLES EDWARD WILLIAMS

Presented by R. G. MEDHURST, B.Sc.

OF all the mediumistic phenonema described by Stainton Moses, those of Charles Williams seem to have caused him the most perplexity and heart-searching. He records some thirty sittings with this medium in the period 1872-1876. During this time, his opinion swung between conviction of the authenticity of the phenomena and the strongest suspicion of deception. As we shall see, the guidance given him by his own controls on this matter was not without ambiguity. Williams' career epitomises the tangled and difficult problem of nineteenth century physical mediumship, and the testimony of Moses is of very great interest.

The mediumistic activities of Charles Edward Williams extended over more than thirty years. According to an autobiographical account in *The Spiritualist*, May 15, 1871, he first sat in a Spiritualist circle in May 1870 at the age of twenty, and shortly after became a professional medium. Thereafter, he appears to have pursued this career without a break up to the turn of the century. The latest recorded Williams séance of which I am aware took place in about 1902 (SPR *Proceedings*, vol. 54, part 195) and shows features characteristic of the earliest sittings.

There is quite a close parallel between the careers of Charles Williams and Florence Cook. Williams's principal "control", calling himself "John King", purported to be the father of Florence's "Katie King" ("Katie" in fact, appeared in Herne and Williams sittings before she came to be associated with Florence). Both mediums were from time to time exposed in what had the appearance of clumsy fraud. Both repeatedly took part in joint sittings with very suspect mediums (in the case of Williams these included Frank Herne, also one of Florence Cook's associates, James Clark, A. Rita and Husk). On the other hand, we have to face the very perplexing situation that both gave many sittings, often to sitters of excellent repute and apparently of good critical judgment, in the course of which remarkable phenomena are reported as taking place under apparently good conditions of control.

This discrepancy between the crudity of fraud alleged on some occasions by "exposers", and the high degree of skill which would apparently be required to produce by fraud phenomena described as occurring in the presence of the same mediums on other occasions, is one that has caused concern to many psychical research workers. The problem is by no means confined to nineteenth century mediumship. To take a relatively recent case, that of Mrs. Helen Duncan, Dr. D. J. West (who would scarcely be described as credulous in these matters) remarked (SPR *Proceedings*, vol. 48, June 1946, p.49): "It is difficult to reconcile this obvious skill in the art of deception with some of the very crude methods of fraud sometimes used. One finds it impossible to understand why she should have

foisted specimens of fake ectoplasm upon investigators who were sure to expose it, while at the same time she was producing absolutely baffling phenomena, which, if fraudulent, must have required infinitely more subtle methods of deception."

Of the large body of favourable testimony for the phenomena of Williams, that of Dr. A. Butlerof, Professor of Chemistry in the University of St. Petersburg, is particularly noteworthy. He published his report in *Psychische Studien*, Leipzig, vol. 3, March 1876: an English translation of the portion concerning Williams is to be found in *Psychic Facts*, edited by W. H. Harrison, London, 1880. The sittings were held during the summer of 1875, in Butlerof's hotel room in London: besides the medium there were present only Butlerof and A. N. Aksakoff, the eminent Russian psychical investigator. The two of them controlled Williams, and the phenomena occurring are claimed by Butlerof to have been beyond the possibility of faking "even if [Williams] had had his hands free".

On the other hand, we have the exposures and the accusations of clumsy fraud. The most publicised exposure of Williams was undoubtedly that of September 10th 1878, in Amsterdam, with his then partner A. Rita. During the course of the séance, the Dutch sitters seized the mediums and, as they alleged, found on them such articles as false beards and bottles of phosphor oil and scent. Accounts of those present differed as to precisely which article was found on which medium. Following the exposure there was much acrimonious dispute, charges and countercharges. Williams himself wrote, in a letter to *The Spiritualist* (October 18, 1878): "I have only one reply to make to both public and private critics—that I know nothing of the things, or how they came there, and solemnly declare, before God and man, that I am innocent; but there are twelve against me."

Many Spiritualists (for example, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten: see her *Nineteenth Century Miracles*, 1883, p. 334) were convinced of the mediums' guilt. Others, however, leapt to their defence. James Burns, the editor of *The Medium and Daybreak*, asked why the mediums were not searched *before* the sitting, and suggested that perhaps they had been, as we say nowadays, "framed". He even hinted at a discreditable motive. Writing of A. J. Riko, one of the leading Dutch Spiritualists, he remarks: "Mr. Riko is making himself very busy in this matter. On former occasions he is said to have made a margin of profit in managing arrangements for Mr. Williams, and now that medium having somewhat altered his method of finding engagements, Mr. Riko seems to pursue him with some little warmth of manner." It is probably impossible now to decide whether there was substance in this allegation. Burns was primarily a journalist, and this must be taken into account in estimating his reliability.

Leading Spiritualists hastened to arrange sittings with Williams under test conditions in order to vindicate his mediumship. Outstanding among these test sittings is one organised by Hensleigh Wedgwood and C. C. Massey, the former a man of some scientific attainments, and cousin and brother-in-law of Charles Darwin, the latter a barrister. Both were subsequently Council Members of the Society for Psychical Research at its inception, and Wedgwood was a Vice-President. Before the sitting,

held on October 30, 1878, Williams was stripped and dressed in dark clothing provided by the experimenters. After describing the ensuing phenomena, Wedgwood and Massey comment: "It was impossible to have clearer evidence than we had of the independent existence of Mr. Williams and the stranger who thus appeared mysteriously among us" (*The Spiritualist*, November 8, 1878, p.218). However—this seems so extraordinary as to verge on the unbelievable—they held this crucial séance not in one of their own homes but in the house of Mr. Volckman, in the presence both of himself and his wife, the former Mrs. Guppy whom we have already encountered (LIGHT Autumn 1963, pp. 130, 138 and 139). Some may consider this satisfactory: even quite recently, for example, Mr. Trevor Hall in *The Spiritualists* has quoted with apparent approval some contemporary evidence supposed to show that Volckman was a man of unimpeachable integrity. However, I cannot myself share such a degree of trust; the location and the company must surely lessen one's confidence in what Wedgwood and Massey present as a "decisive test".

It is impossible in a brief space to do justice to the many published accounts of sittings with Williams (interesting examples, pro and con, are to be found in F. W. H. Myers's paper on *Resolute Credulity*, SPR *Proceedings*, vol. 11, 1895, p.231, and in ensuing corespondence, SPR *Journal*, vol. 7, 1895, p. 142), but I cannot resist quoting an entry from the diary of Mary Gladstone (daughter of the Prime Minister) for July 5 or 6, 1876: "At 12 with Harry, Herbert [two of her brothers], and Stirling to a séance at the house of one Williams; saw and heard and felt various things wh. wd. be unearthly if 'twere certain they weren't conjuring . . ." (Mary Gladstone, *Diaries and Letters*, Methuen, 1930, p.106).

At the earliest recorded sittings of the series described by Moses, Williams officiated jointly with his partner Frank Herne. Herne was later caught in palpable fraud (see *The Spiritualist*, December 31, 1875, p.323), and it is alleged that at the break-up of the Herne-Williams partnership Herne attempted to incriminate Williams by "planting" false evidence on him.

The initial sittings attended by Moses were presumably recorded by him in the notebook covering the period April-September 1872, which, according to Myers, was lost after Moses's death. However, in the year of his death (which occurred in September 1892) he commenced publication in LIGHT of a series of "Records of Private Séances from Notes Taken at the Time of Each Sitting". In the course of this he describes seven sittings with Herne and Williams, or with Williams alone. Since these, together with the unpublished accounts of the later sittings, form a continuous record, we reproduce them here from LIGHT, Jan. 23 and Feb. 6, 1892:

The first of the sittings held by Dr. S. and myself with Herne and Williams took place on **May 30th, 1872,** at their rooms, 61, Lamb's Conduit-street. We sat at a very heavy oaken table, first in the light, then in darkness, without result; and adjourned to June 5th. Herne did not enter an appearance, and we left, feeling very suspicious, to meet once more on **June 8th.** Herne again failed to appear, and we

commenced a sitting with Williams. Presently Herne came in, but no results were obtained. I had gathered from my reading that some persons stopped manifestations by absorbing the force, especially if they were undeveloped mediums. I proposed, therefore, that I should leave the room. I did so, and manifestations soon occurred. The table moved, some chairs tilted and were brought up nearer to the circle. The movements were very palpable when I returned after ten minutes' absence. I took my place at the table and all was quiet. I went away again and they recommenced. Herne's chair was lifted, and he was thrown to the floor with a loud clatter. I returned, and we determined to sit in the dark. Still no results, and at last we stood up. A clear, distinct tapping was heard over the mantel on the wall. I asked if my presence stopped manifestations. Three clear raps, louder than any we had had, eager, it seemed, to make the cause of failure plain. "Must I go?" Yes. "Can you not try to do something in my presence?" Yes. We sat down and faint taps came. I put the question through Williams—the previous ones had been put through Herne, for the Spirits apparently could not hear me— "Have I any mediumistic power?" Yes. (Very decided raps.) "Has Dr. S.?" No. More raps, and I tried to question for myself, this time successfully. Was there a friend of mine present? Yes. Any message? Yes. Through alphabet was spelt out "Do not be so sad. She will soon be b— —" There it ceased, and though I asked often I could get no more. I was in anxiety as to the serious illness of a close friend, who did soon after recover.

But it was after the raps had ceased that the most extraordinary manifestations of force took place. Herne had been twitching and jerking as was usual with him when any phenomena were about to occur. As we sat with joined hands round the table these mysterious twitchings were communicated to me. I felt them first in my face, then I quivered all over, and finally my right arm was seized about the middle of the forearm—I distinctly felt the grasp, soft but very firm, of a hand—and my hand was dashed violently up and down, beating on the table with a loud noise. My jerking was communicated to Herne and Williams; Dr. S. alone was unaffected. It was the most tremendous exhibition of "unconscious muscular action" I have ever witnessed. It left the ball of the thumb and the hand generally so sore and bruised that I could hardly hold a pen or use my hand for some days. I felt as if power was taken from me, and the mediums remarked that power was being taken for some manifestation. So it was. Herne was raised in the air and lifted bodily on to the middle of the table, his chair leaning from the mantel-shelf on to the table where he had been sitting. At the same time a chair, or chairs, fell in the room near, or at my left side: one was placed on my knees,

quite gently, with a soft gliding motion and a gentle touch or pressure as though to draw my attention. My hand was painful and we closed the séance. I threw open the folding doors and went into the next room. Whilst there Dr. S.'s hat was thrown from the far end of the room where no one was; it hit Williams on the head and fell heavily to the floor. As we left the room (on the first floor—Williams first, Dr. S. next, then myself and Herne close to me) I turned about half way down the stairs to speak to Herne. The door of the room in which we had been sitting was open; no one was there, we had all left. The door was clear in my line of vision, and I saw a chair sailing out of the open door, about two feet or two and a half feet from the floor, and coming towards us. It floated on, with the same gliding movement that I have before remarked on, and fell close to my feet. I returned to the room we had left, and made an examination, but discovered nothing suspicious. I was young then as an investigator, and could hardly believe that some trick was not being played. I discovered none, and know now that my suspicions were unfounded. The occurrence, coupled with the treatment of my hand, made a great impression on me. In my notes, made immediately on reaching home, I find this passage: "So ended a séance which must be held to establish beyond doubt to those present the existence of an unseen power capable of achieving great results. Psychic Force may have shaken my arm. Then Psychic Force is beyond my power to resist. But what about the Intelligence? Psychic Force will not answer questions, will not account for what I have heard (other sittings were in my mind as well as this) any more than it will for what I have seen. 'Unconscious cerebration,' 'unconscious muscular action,' &c., are all alike clumsy, insufficient methods of explaining what we cannot understand."

July 3rd. Dr. S. and myself. Williams medium. I faced Williams. Dr. S. between us, a chair in the corner at Dr. S.'s right; another at his left by the door: on the table a small hand-bell, guitar, and speaking-tube. After sitting in darkness holding hands for about half an hour, Dr. S. announced three distinct pressures on his forehead with the guitar: the same immediately on my head. I observed now, and subsequently, that the pressure was greater than would be caused by the normal weight of the guitar. The guitar floated about, rested on my arms, and finally settled on the table: simultaneously Dr. S. cried out that a chair was resting on his hand: at the same moment I felt the pressure of a leg of the chair on my left arm. The chair had evidently been raised above the table and had descended upon it, not glided on to it as is the case sometimes. We discovered afterwards that it was the chair in the corner between Dr. S. and Williams. It now commenced some remarkable antics. It careered round the

table, touching us in turn, and resting upon our hands and arms. Once it struck Dr. S. rather sharply, and caused a small abrasion on the side of the nose, from which a drop of blood was trickling when we struck a light. I omit divers manifestations with guitar and chair, which latter was finally raised gently from the table and placed in an upright position on the table between Dr. S. and myself, the cane bottom on a level with my forehead. The little bell was then taken from a position close to my left hand, was floated up my arm, ringing loudly the while, and was finally placed on the seat of the chair on a level with my face. The guitar was then floated about outside the circle, and was placed on Dr. S.'s knees with a soft gliding motion, the strings being gently plucked. The speaking tube was placed on his head, and finally on his lap. When we struck a light he was discovered with a guitar in his arms, the tube upon it, a chair close to him with a bell upon it, while, to complete the picture, a blood-red streak adorned the left side of his nose. During the whole time—an hour and a-half —strict test conditions were observed: and it may be noted that, at my request, distinct and loud raps were heard on the guitar as it rested on Dr. S.'s lap, quite out of the reach of either myself or Williams. We closed the sitting at the request of Katie King, who spoke to me in her hoarse whisper, while Williams was speaking to Dr. S. During the sitting I noticed bright spots of light on walls and ceiling, and the atmosphere seemed to be filled with floating masses of luminous vapour, which on one occasion took the form of a shadowy hand playing the guitar: on another, hovered over the corner from which the chair was taken: and was clearly seen moving about the table when physical phenomena were being produced. This is my first record of an appearance which subsequently became very familiar to me. Perhaps it was the incipient development of the clairvoyant faculty which was afterwards so strong with me that I could predict a coming manifestation by observing clairvoyantly these luminous clouds grouping themselves at a particular spot. My sight never deceived me: a rap would follow on the part of the table I indicated, or some small *apport* would fall there, or scent would be cast down: the indication was always fulfilled. On this occasion, too, I first became aware of a luminious figure of indistinct outline that took up a position at my right hand, remaining there on guard till the time came for good-night, before breaking up. I had the consciousness of proximity to a person that one has in the neighbourhood of anyone during darkness. I found that this was the figure of my guardian, and it was always present with me from this time. In my record written at the time I say, "I am as sure as I am of anything that this was no delusion." After the sitting I was sleepy, heavy, and full of yawning. On the occasions when I was the object of violent manifestations,

my own power being drawn out, I was usually light and free from heaviness. On the morning following, after heavy sleep, I woke with a headache which haunted me all day long.

July 13th. I went alone (Dr. S. not being well) to the weekly séance at Lamb's Conduit-street and found two sitters only beside the mediums. We sat in the dark with hands joined. The guitar and a chair were floated about, the guitar dipping and just touching our heads as swallows dip on the surface of water as they fly along. The movement was rapid, but very steady. I need not record a long conversation with John King. He talked freely through the tube which he sometimes placed so close to my ear that I could feel the warm breath as he spoke. He asked what he could do for me. I asked him to go into the passage and fetch my hat: scarcely a minute elapsed before it was placed in front of me, and then lifted and put quite straight on my head. After the sitting closed I went to the place where I had left my hat and umbrella. Both were gone, the umbrella being dropped on the mat by the door. I suppose the light on the staircase was too strong, and the umbrella was dropped while the hat was brought to me. How did it get through door or wall without an opening? If the door had been opened the light on the staircase would have shone into the room. How did it come? And what about matter?

July 17th. Séance with Williams at Dr. S.'s. Six present. The usual phenomena of floating chairs. A ring at the front door caused me to go out to see that we were not disturbed. On returning to the darkened room I ran my head against (apparently) another head above the circle. It certainly was no part of the body of any sitter: equally certainly there ought to have been no object where it was. It was said to be John King's head. As soon as I had resumed my place and joined hands, a face came and touched mine: a face with a beard and moustache by the feel. In the corner of the study was a large pedal harmonium. We could plainly hear the bellows working, and I opened it. We heard somebody getting on the music stool, and the keys were pressed down, but, there being no wind in the instrument, the notes were dumb. The study was furnished with bookcases, the lower part of which, to the height of an ordinary chair back, was closed with doors and formed cupboards. These were used to hold bound folio volumes of music. One of these had been in the hands of Dr. S. just before the room was arranged for the sitting, and he was able to fix its place, as he himself restored it to the cupboard. Before this closed cupboard was placed the chair of one of the sitters, Mrs. C. It was close up to the cupboard door, so that it was a physical impossibility to open that cupboard without moving the table, the chairs, and nearly every object in the small room except the harmonium. Yet that particular volume was removed out of the cup-

board during the sitting, and was placed on the table in front of Dr. S. He knew its position in the cupboard, and after the sitting, showed us the vacant place whence it had been removed. During this séance I twitched and quivered greatly, and afterwards felt so languid and weak that I could hardly stand or keep my eyes open. I slept heavily and rose tired and unrefreshed.

July 20th. Séance at Lamb's Conduit-street. Dr. S., myself, Mr. Clifford Smith, and another: mediums Herne and Williams. After phenomena similar to those previously detailed, I heard a noise opposite to me and a rustling as of curtains. After some time Katie King asked for a light, and it was discovered that the curtains had been taken down—no easy task—and Dr. S. was thoroughly enveloped in them, whilst over his head a chair was placed cage-fashion with the guitar on the top of all. This had been noiselessly done, except for the rustling which I heard, and Dr. S. had kept his counsel to enjoy our surprise. After this, there was a great hubbub behind Herne's chair, where the material for a large cabinet, not yet set up, was lying against the wall. When light was called for, we found the heavy woodwork piled up against Herne's chair: he was wrapped in the curtains and crowned with chair and guitar as Dr. S. had been. I was conscious of the form of my own spirit-guide at my right, and John King took up a position on my left, like a stalwart life-guardsman. He laid a half-materialised hand on my shoulder, putting his arm round my neck and playing with my beard. There came also a tiny warm hand playing through my hair. It was soft and delicate, and very gentle in all its movements. When it was time to say goodnight, this little hand came, stroked my right hand, slid into it, and gave it a firm, pleased shake. As I grasped it, it melted in my hand and then was re-formed. At my mental request it went over to Dr. S., who was seated opposite, and stroked his hand. We learned afterwards, at our own séances, that it was the hand of his little child-sister, of whom we shall hear more. Many other phenomena are recorded in my notes, but I pass to

July 27th. Usual séance at Herne and Williams'. Dr. S. unable to go: seven present. John King greeted us soon, and requested me to take charge of the circle. I did so, and was told to isolate the mediums and tie them up. I got some window-cord and lashed them hand and foot to their chairs and to each other. I did this so firmly that after the séance was concluded it was found that the cord had cut deeply into the hands and feet of both mediums, who were sitting exactly as I placed them, far from the spot where Katie's manifestation occurred. They were in a corner of the room, tied as I have described, and I pushed the heavy table in front of them, so that they were completely shut in. On the opposite side of the table the circle was

seated. I closed and locked the door, keeping the key. Katie soon showed herself over the table, to which we all went close, summoned one by one, so as to see her. We were told to place our hands over our mouths, so that the breath might not dissipate the apparition, which was much more ethereal than those to which we have since been accustomed. I looked twice into the face from a distance of some six inches. On the first occasion I saw an indistinct luminous haze surrounding a small female face of great beauty. On the second occasion I saw the face even more plainly, every feature clearly defined, and the colour of the eyes quite distinctly visible. The face was illumined by a pair of phosphorescent hands moved backwards and forwards in front of it, as one passes a candle before a picture in order to see it in a dark room. From the fingers streamed long phosphorescent streaks, smoky and leaving a quite perceptible odour, which was even more marked when phosphorescent stars, accompanied by sounds such as might be made by the snapping of fingers, were thrown about the room. I have a very vivid remembrance —which is quickened by reading my notes made at the time—of the extreme beauty of the face of Katie King the elder. I have seldom, perhaps never, seen its equal. Though her daughter, Katie the younger, was very beautiful, I unhesitatingly give the palm to her mother. It was a face that once seen would not be forgotten. The eyes sparkled with all the vivacity of healthful life. The features were perfectly formed. The lips moved as the conversation went on. I could see the white teeth, and once (though not at this séance) I put my finger between them, and they closed on me with a firm pressure, while my finger rested on the tongue. It was a head in all respects perfectly made: yet it was resting with only a partly materialised bust on a table where it was physically impossible to find a place for the rest of the body. I passed my hand between the bust and table and can testify that there was no body there in the place where the body ought to be. In all my subsequent experience I have not had anything that made on me a more permanent impression.

This concludes the material published by the Rev. Moses in LIGHT. We shall continue in our next issue the unpublished accounts of Williams sittings direct from Mr. Moses's notebooks.

Two errors require correction in the account of his Holmes sittings (LIGHT, Autumn 1963): one of them was very kindly pointed out by Professor C. D. Broad. The description of Francis Galton as a friend of Charles Darwin should have read "friend and cousin". Also, the reference to "the Rev. Dale Owen" is a somewhat absurd slip. The allusion was, of course to the American Congressman Robert Dale Owen, son of Robert Owen, the social reformer, and not to be confused with the Rev. Vale Owen, also a prominent Spiritualist.

Book Reviews

J. Hewat McKenzie: Pioneer of Psychical Research, by Muriel Hankey (Aquarian Press, 21s.)

This book is an account of the life of one of the earliest supporters of Spiritualism and Pyschical Research. Once he had accepted the genuineness of the subject and chosen his path, nothing diverted him from following the trail of a truth he considered of surpassing importance, and he followed this path until the end of his life in 1929.

One could wish that a little more had been said of his ideas on how the movement might progress, and what future stage it might reach in the infinite fields of the unknown, and man's mind.

But his was not so much a speculative, as a practical and experimental mind. He was fortunate in his choice of a wife. Both were Scotch: both were courageous people, independent and strong. Hewat McKenzie appears to have been just the right man for this exploration—dominant, resourceful and sincere. Mrs Hankey, who writes this book, was his secretary and helper: she took part in many of the activities of the British College, which he had founded. She was present at the investigations of poltergeists, proxy sittings, and so on, and she is admirably detached in her accounts; rightly critical, but not destructive in her comments.

The book contains many tributes to Mr. MacKenzie from the mediums of his day, and those connected with the movement, particularly in the years following the first World War.

Some words of his quoted struck me as very wise and worth remembering in relation to a subject dogged by prejudice and a sort of enmity difficult to understand. There arose a question of misinterpretation, and an unfair criticism of him. When Mr. McKenzie was told of a plan to defend him against this attack he said : "Don't waste your time running after untruthfulness. I have learnt to take unfair criticism as inevitable It doesn't bother me in the least." CONSTANCE SITWELL

The Art and Practice of Astral Projection, by Ophiel (Peach Publishing Co., San Francisco 17).

"Ophiel", it is said, "operates, and directs, a real Occult mystery school along the lines of the Western tradition—that of the Quballa". He claims to "being assigned . . . before he was born" the "job to bring Occult knowledge thru" and to have "covered this field for 30 years". His book, however, makes such an unfavourable impression with its illiteracy, childish pretensions to authority, and minute instructions how "to assemble and draw and paint your magical tools" or to divine with "sand and various other kinds of sticks" (!), that one is driven to ask, Is it a hoax? Could it perhaps be the work of some hack who has read up some of the literature (Fox, Regardie, Dion Fortune) to provide a booklet of the fashionable "Do it Yourself" kind?

A reviewer must therefore first of all try to sift away most of the theory, endure the repelling style, and find what is genuine. If this is done, I believe the book reveals through all the impedimenta, a naive honesty of purpose

in describing experience of certain kinds of "projection"and how they come about. Viewed in this light, the book holds considerable interest.

Nearly 75 of the 120 pages are devoted to the description of four "methods": the Little System, the Dream Method, the Body of Light Method and the Symbol Method; but substantially these seem to be two only. The Dream Method, taken from Oliver Fox's book, consists in keeping a detailed record of dreams, going back over them to re-live their mood, then trying to return to the dream-state immediately upon waking, and finally attaining to the "lucidity" that is able to say "This is a dream" while the dream is in progress. The author continues as if the state of lucid dream was a full entrance to the "Etheric plane", from which one may go over at once into the "lower Astral". His account suffers from vagueness and unjustified generalisation, but there are also a number of perspicuous remarks which are true (in my experience) though perhaps unorthodox; for instance, that "the cord has no actual substance . . . you have to actually visualise it a bit in imagination in order to 'see' it". Good also is his advice, in recalling dreams, to "follow up the dream-memory as fast as you can" and to "write down key-words".

The other three methods seem to be all for producing what I call quasi-imaginative free separations. In the Little System one imagines stations on a certain route in one's home so persistently that one can eventually transfer consciousness to the imagined double of oneself passing over the route. In the Body of Light Method, after carrying out a 13-stage cabbalistic ritual, one visualises portions and then the whole of a duplicate of one's physical body and again finally transfers consciousness to it. This thoughtform or "Familiar" can then be made to behave in various ways as one desires. "You can cause your Body of Light to assume the form of another and can cause an actual linkage thru which you can influence the other". One can also, he claims, influence in this way "the counterpart of a Firm, Community . . . or any kind of organisation that you wish to control or influence". In passing, one may note that it was in such a way that Anna Kingsford believed she had effected the death of a hated vivisectionist and her own death was caused by the "rebound".

In the Symbol Method there is also a ritual with diagrams of symbols representing the five (Buddhist) elements, after which one imagines a door through which one must step "and feel the door closing behind you". Then you "feel yourself inside the elements of earth". Ophiel asserts the Yram (in his "Practical Astral Projection") does not state what method he used, but in fact it was the Symbol Method. Yram's method, however, is quite clear from his chapter 2, where he speaks of the need to be "free from attachments", of "meditation and prayer" and "withdrawal", of having a "noble ideal" as "central point", of "conscious sacrifice", "gentleness" and the "higher Love-Principle" (he also speaks of the "stupidity of the treatises on magic").

Ophiel's methods, in contrast, seem to be ones of persistent *attachment* and adherence to rituals, leading to a remarkably strong development of imagination and "thought-forms". His true remark that "in many cases when the theory is wrong the thing still works" might be applied to his own

approach. Singlemindedness and long-sustained preparation always effects something. But the quality of the results is controlled by one's background of knowledge and ideals; and here, unfortunately, a barrier to higher levels of intellect and spirituality would seem to have been imposed by an entire ignorance of mysticism, i.e. methods of non-attachment, recollection, destruction of "self" and spiritual transformation through continuity of response to the Source of wisdom and goodness.

J. H. M. WHITEMAN, M. A., M. MUS., PH.D.

The Great Secret by Hendrik Willemsz (C. W. Daniel, 9s.)

The subject of this book is one more of that most remarkable series of "great secrets" which are eternally new as they can never be really divulged! When, three centuries ago, the French scientist mystic Pascal discovered his Secret or rather experienced it, his mastery of prose failed—he could but stammer: "Not of the philosophers and the learned. Certitude, certitude. Emotion. Joy. Peace... Forgetfulness of the world and all outside God. The world has not known Thee, but I have known Thee. Joy! Joy! Joy! Tears of Joy..."

Mr. Hendrik Willemsz, nom de plume of a well known technical scientist living in the Netherlands, has endeavoured to bring his version of the Great and heavenly Secret down to earth by linking it up with his world of electronic chemical and nuclear problems. This is not as surprising as it may seem. Science is being shaken in its fundamentals and its scope as never before. Its present development would seem to correspond rather closely to a prophecy made forty years ago by Arnel in Rev. G. Vale Owen's *Life beyond the Veil*, vol. IV:

"There was (in science) an ingredient of heavy substance which weighed down. But it was born of knowledge, true if rudimentary, and much sincerity was mixed up with it. This condition we dealt with by expansion. We plunged into it, so to say it, flung far and wide our influence in aid, helped this knowledge to dilate itself to the utmost, and so fulfil itself. Under our pressure thus applied it expanded until the boundary of the material was reached. But the impetus we had given to this material science could not there be stayed. So the sharp line so arbitrarily drawn between material and spiritual began to sag and to bulge, and here and there a small breach was made. Cramped and limited as it was, science ministered to progress as a whole, and we held it to that degree in reverence. So we transmuted it by expansion, and are so continuing to-day."

Maybe it will be in the realm of physics rather than in philosophy or psychology that the new window will be pierced, the opening into the Heavens for all to look through!

Seen in this light, Mr. Willensz's essay gains in importance. Starting with the age-old question "who am I?" the author analyses the mysteries of light, sound, smell and the very narrow limits (situated in something much vaster) within which the five bodily senses function. Then follow the processes of thought and consciousness, leading to the next step: from physics to metaphysics, and the slow breaking through to that "immense Golden-White World of Light."

Referring to his experience described in his earlier book *What it is all about* (see LIGHT, Winter 1963), now in course of translation, Mr. Willemsz surveys the essential mental and moral qualities required for escaping "from our confinement which is also a prison-house". "Intellectuality alone is not enough, and without morality it is very dangerous." The reader is not given a system, he or she is simply invited to dive into the author's musings and perplexities, to try and share the grandeur and hopefulness of what he saw and infers.

This specimen of the Great Secrets is described in the language of our nuclear age. It is also an example of Eliot's complaint about "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings." Considering the newness of his approach, and the proven and baffling indescribability of the Great Secret itself, we can easily grant the author's plea for forgiveness in this respect. Through all the inverted commas, exclamation marks, capitals and a certain Dutch phrasing one still feels a whiff of that "Potential, Living, Luminous Spiritual Creative Energy" which Mr. Willemsz experienced at first hand. "*This Cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest urge towards scientific research.*" W. H. POSTHUMUS-VAN DER GOOT

The Ghost Club

Lecturers during the present session have included Mr. Tom Corbett, celebrated ghost-hunter and clairvoyant, on *A Clairvoyant's View of Ghosts;* Mr. David Cohen, Investigation Officer of Manchester Psychical Research Society told members about *New Light on the 'Rosalie' Case;* Chairman A. Peter Underwood gave an illustrated talk on *Haunted London;* Mr. Eric Maple, author and broadcaster (who led Club members on a day visit to the Essex witch country in the summer) addressed the Club on *The Strange History of British Witchcraft*, and Rev. T. Wemyss Reid, a long-standing and valued member spoke on *Trance Communication.*

Other activities of the Club this season have included a Film Evening at the British Council Film Theatre when a short film of authentic hauntings, a remarkable film of the Loch Ness Monster, and an excellent and well-produced reconstruction of the curious Eleonore Zugun poltergeist girl case, were shown to members and their guests. Arrangements for visits to haunted houses during the summer months are in active preparation.

Details of the Ghost Club can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary: Miss M. A. Hillier, DSNU, 41, Croham Road, South Croydon.

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Correspondence

Death, Disposal and "Evidence"

SIR, In *Theta*, no. 2 (July 1963) a "Bulletin for Research on thr problem of Survival after Bodily Death", Prof. C. J. Ducasse made a proposal that may well prove of great value: it was "that we should distinguish between apparent reincarnation cases where the person was old at the time of death and those where a young man died; and also compare cases where death was violent with mild or natural deaths." This procedure might be productive since "older persons often have a different perspective on life from young people, and this might affect their desire to communicate after death and perhaps also determine whether or not they would be reincarnated".

As another approach, I suggest also that those who receive "communications" from "the other side" should try to ascertain whether or not the physical body of the "communicator" had been *cremated.* This procedure might be productive since "communicator" may often involve a "semi-physical" component of the total body—that which the Theosophists call the "etheric double" and I have called "the vehicle of vitality".

According to "communicators", this link with the physical body is shed from the immediate after-death "double" on an average three or four days after death, and it seems certain that "communication" of a certain type is most frequent soon after death. Again according to "communicators", the application of fire releases the "etheric double" of a physical object, including the physical body. "Communicators" say that in natural death followed by burial the complete release of the "etheric double" takes an average of three or four days but when a body is cremated the process is very rapid. They also say that cremation renders both subsequent "communication" with mortals and reincarnation more difficult (not, it should be noted, impossible). If these "communications" are followed up, one other point should be noted, namely, that there are different kinds of "communication": purely telepathic impression would not, presumably, be affected by these considerations—it would be methods such as table-tilting, "raps," automatic writing, etc. that might provide some indications.

Dursley, Glos. ROBERT CROOKALL

Shakespeare, Fanatical Sitters and Impersonators

We quote with kind permission from a letter from Mr. Edmund Bentley to Miss Rosamond Lehmann relating to her article in LIGHT, Autumn 1963.

". . . I suppose I know, or knew most of the current personalities you mention in the article, as well as or better than average. . . I should like to support Hester Dowden's change of face, through Miss Cummins's hand, now that the former can view the situation as a celestial shade rather than as one confined in physical shape. Hester's earthly mediumship was, indeed, affected by Allen's honest but mistaken fanaticism. Moreover this was not the sole occasion when the powerful thoughts of a sitter, wedded to an idee fixe, had caused her psychic flow to deviate from its normal channel of communication.

Hester had met a Mr. Alfred Dodd some years prior to the publication of Percy Allen's *Talks with Elizabethans.* Alfred Dodd had been holding a series of sittings with her during which Johannes, Hester's active control, had introduced a spirit personality who claimed to be either Francis Bacon or a spokesman acting for him. The purport of these messages received was that Francis Bacon was the real author of Shakespeare's plays and had written them behind Shakepeare's name. This communicator also claimed that Francis Bacon had writeen *The Sonnets.* As a result of this series of communications, coinciding with his own acceptance of and predilection for the ideas involved, Mr. Alfred Dodd published a book called *The Immortal Master* which ventilated this claim.

It was only when Percy Allen became involved in psychic communication three or four years afterwards that this matter was cleared up, not very satisfactorily, I found, at the time.

I have dealt in detail with the incident, however, in my biography of Hester under the chapter *Elizabethans Return,* so I will not do more than quote a brief dialogue by way of illustration:

December 5th, 1944.

Percy Allen (to Johannes): Francis Bacon has explained to me that, in the matter of *The Immortal Master* by Mr. Alfred Dodd, he was represented by a deputy. May I ask you how it came about that you let through a communicator who did not know the truth of the matter?

Johannes: I must explain that I do not feel it my duty to exclude anyone who desires to communicate a sincere opinion. It would not have been possible to persuade Francis Bacon to talk to Dodd. He did speak on the subject of his portraits to Theobald. That question interested him, and he came personally. In the case of Dodd, an ardent student of the subject spoke; but he was not insincere, and therefore I did not feel that I should exclude him.

P.A. Thank you. I understand, Sincerity was the key that opened the door!

Johannes: Sincerity is the leading requirement, in my opinion. No sincere person should be refused. Here, Francis Bacon came through at this sitting.

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P.A. (to Johannes): Concerning the Alfred Dodd incident, I gather from Lord Verulam that persons inhabiting a lower sphere may, to some extent, impersonate, or pose as, deputies for others who are in a higher sphere, but who are unable to prevent these impersonations? In that case, how can we best protect ourselves against deception, and discern true from false?

Johannes: The reply is this. First, if you have any judgment, you can decide whether or not the messages are genuine. Secondly never accept a mere name, for those who are interested in a theory, such as the Baconian theory, will be ready, in some cases, to assume the mantle of a famous man, so as to catch the ear of the listener. Beyond that, I fear, you cannot be certain. In each case, a sense of style is the decisive factor.

P.A. Thank you. I understand. We must use judgment, sense of style and our common sense generally. EDMUND BENTLEY"

Books Received

Books indicated in this list may, within the limitations of space and time, be reviewed in future issues. All books can be obtained from the CPS Book Sales Service.

The Ascent of Man. by Eleanor C. Merry (New Knowledge Books, 57s. 6d.)
Beyond Relativity, by H. W. Reason (Regency Press, 21s.)
Clairvoyance, ed. by A. E. Abbott (Emerson Press, 5s.)
Honey as Healer, by A. E. Abbott (Emerson Press, 3s. 6d.)
The Making of Man, by Kenneth Walker (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 21s.)
Museum Piece, by James Laver (Andre Deutsch, 25s.)
Objections to Humanism, ed. by H. J. Blackham (Constable, 16s.)
A Simple Faith, by "Swift Hawk," sel. by John Knight (Regency Press, 7s. 6d., $1.50)
Soul Mates, by Arthur S, Mattes (Regency Press 16s. $2.50)
Where Mystery Dwells, by B. J. F. Laubscher (Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, 25s.)
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