

MIRACLES  
AND  
MODERN SPIRITUALISM

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REVISED EDITION, WITH CHAPTERS ON  
APPARITIONS AND PHANTASMS

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

ANOTHER edition of this little work being called for, I have carefully revised the text, inserted dates, and given a few additional facts either in the body of the work or in footnotes.

I have also added two chapters on Apparitions and Phantasms, which appeared in the Boston *Arena* in 1891, and which constitute my latest contribution to the philosophy of Spiritualism.

Having been more or less acquainted with psychical phenomena for half a century, it appears to my publisher that a few notes on the changes of opinion I have witnessed during that period may not be uninteresting to readers of my book.

It was about the year 1843 that I first became interested in psychical phenomena, owing to the violent discussion then going on as to the reality of the painless surgical operations performed on patients in the mesmeric trance by Dr. Elliotson and other English surgeons. The greatest surgical and physiological authorities of the day declared that the patients were either impostors or persons naturally insensible to pain; the operating surgeons were accused of bribing their patients; and Dr. Elliotson was described as "polluting the temple of science." The

Medico-Chirurgical Society opposed the reading of a paper describing an amputation during the magnetic trance, while Dr. Elliotson himself was ejected from his professorship in the University of London. It was at this time generally believed that all the now well-known phenomena of hypnotism were the result of imposture.

It so happened that in the year 1844 I heard an able lecture on mesmerism by Mr. Spencer Hall, and the lecturer assured his audience that most healthy persons could mesmerise some of their friends and reproduce many of the phenomena he had shown on the platform. This led me to try for myself, and I soon found that I could mesmerise with varying degrees of success, and before long I succeeded in producing in my own room, either alone with my patient or in the presence of friends, most of the usual phenomena. Partial or complete catalepsy, paralysis of the motor nerves in certain directions, or of any special sense, every kind of delusion produced by suggestion, insensibility to pain, and community of sensation with myself when at a considerable distance from the patient, were all demonstrated, in such a number of patients and under such varied conditions, as to satisfy me of the genuineness of the phenomena. I thus learnt my first great lesson in the inquiry into these obscure fields of knowledge, never to accept the disbelief of great men, or their accusations of imposture or of imbecility, as of any weight when opposed to the repeated observation of facts by other men admittedly sane and honest. The whole history of science shows us that, whenever the educated and scientific men of any age have denied the

facts of other investigators on *a priori* grounds of absurdity or impossibility, the deniers have always been wrong.

A few years later, and all the more familiar facts of mesmerism were accepted by medical men, and explained, more or less satisfactorily to themselves, as not being essentially different from known diseases of the nervous system; and of late years the more remarkable phenomena, including clairvoyance both as to facts known and those unknown to the mesmeriser, have been established as absolute realities.

Next we come to the researches of Baron von Reichenbach on the action of magnets and crystals upon sensitives. I well remember how these were scouted by the late Dr. W. B. Carpenter and Professor Tyndall, and how I was pitied for my credulity in accepting them. But many of his results have now been tested by French and English observers and have been found to be correct.

Then we all remember how the phenomena of the stigmata, which have occurred at many epochs in the Catholic Church, were always looked upon by sceptics as gross imposture, and the believers in its reality as too far gone in credulity to be seriously reasoned with. Yet when the case of Louise Lateau was thoroughly investigated by sceptical physicians, and could be no longer doubted, the facts were admitted; and when, later on, somewhat similar appearances were produced in hypnotic patients by suggestion, the whole matter was held to be explained.

Second-sight, crystal-seeing, automatic writing, and allied phenomena have been usually treated either as

self-delusion or as imposture, but now that they have been carefully studied by Mr. Myers, Mr. Stead, and other inquirers, they have been found to be genuine facts; and it has been further proved that they often give information not known to any one present at the time, and even sometimes predict future events with accuracy.

Trance mediums who give similar information to that obtained through crystal-seeing or automatic writing, have long been held up to scorn as impostors of the grossest kind. They have been the butt of newspaper writers, and have been punished for obtaining money under false pretences; yet when one of these trance mediums, the well-known Mrs. Piper, was subjected to a stringent examination by some of the acutest members of the Society for Psychical Research, the unanimous testimony was that there was no imposture in the case, and that, however the knowledge exhibited was acquired, Mrs. Piper herself could never have acquired it through the medium of her ordinary senses.

Nothing has been more constantly disbelieved and ridiculed than the alleged appearance of phantasms of the living or of the recently dead, whether seen by one person alone or by several together. Imagination, disease, imposture, or erroneous observation have been again and again put forth as sufficient explanation of these appearances. But when carefully examined they do not prove to be impostures, but stand out with greater distinctness as veridical and sometimes objective phenomena, as is sufficiently proved by the mass of well-attested and well-

sifted evidence published by the Society for Psychical Research. Still more subject to ridicule and contempt are ghosts and haunted houses. It has been said that these disappeared with the advent of gas; but so far from this being the case, there is ample testimony at the present day to phenomena which come under these categories.

In this connection also we have not merely appearances which may be explained away as collective hallucinations, but actual physical phenomena of such a material character as stone-throwing, bell-ringing, movements of furniture, independent writing and drawing, and many other manifestations of force guided by intelligence which is yet not the force or the intelligence of those present. Records of such phenomena pervade history, and during the last century, and especially during the last half-century, they have been increasingly prevalent, and have been supported by the same kind and the same amount of cumulative testimony as all the preceding classes of phenomena. Some of these cases are now being investigated, and there is no sign of their being traced to imposture. From personal knowledge and careful experiments I can testify that some of these physical phenomena are realities, and I cannot doubt that the fullest investigation will result, as in all the other cases, in their recognition as facts which any comprehensive theory must recognise and explain.

What are termed spirit-photographs—the appearance on a photographic plate of other figures besides those of the sitters, often those of deceased friends of the sitters—have



now been known for more than twenty years. Many competent observers have tried experiments successfully ; but the facts seemed too extraordinary to carry conviction to any but the experimenters themselves, and any allusion to the matter has usually been met with a smile of incredulity or a confident assertion of imposture. It mattered not that most of the witnesses were experienced photographers who took precautions which rendered it absolutely impossible that they were imposed upon. The most incredible suppositions were put forth by those who had only ignorance and incredulity to qualify them as judges, in order to show that deception was possible. And now we have another competent witness, Mr. Traill Taylor, for many years editor of the *British Journal of Photography*, who, taking every precaution that his life-long experience could suggest, yet obtained on his plates figures which, so far as normal photography is concerned, ought not to have been there.

Lastly, we come to consider the claim of the intelligences who are connected with most of these varied phenomena to be the spirits of deceased men and women ; such claim being supported by tests of various kinds, especially by giving accurate information regarding themselves as to facts totally unknown to the medium or to any person present. Records of such tests are numerous in spiritual literature as well as in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, but at present they are regarded as inconclusive, and various theories of a double or multiple personality, of a subconscious or second self, or of a lower stratum of consciousness, are called in to

explain them or to attempt to explain them. The stupendous difficulty that, if these phenomena and these tests are to be all attributed to the "second self" of living persons, then that second self is almost always a deceiving and a lying self, however moral and truthful the visible and tangible first self may be, has, so far as I know, never been rationally explained; yet this cumbersome and unintelligible hypothesis finds great favour with those who have always been accustomed to regard the belief in a spirit-world, and more particularly a belief that the spirits of our dead friends can and do sometimes communicate with us, as unscientific, unphilosophical, and superstitious. Why it should be unscientific, more than any other hypothesis which alone serves to explain intelligibly a great body of facts, has never been explained. The antagonism which it excites seems to be mainly due to the fact that it is, and has long been in some form or other, the belief of the religious world and of the ignorant and superstitious of all ages, while a total disbelief in spiritual existence has been the distinctive badge of modern scientific scepticism. The belief of the uneducated and unscientific multitude, however, rested on a broad basis of alleged facts which the scientific world scouted and scoffed at as absurd and impossible. But they are now discovering, as this brief sketch has shown, that the alleged facts, one after another, prove to be real facts, and strange to say, with little or no exaggeration, since almost every one of them, though implying abnormal powers in human beings or the agency of a spirit-world around us, has been strictly paralleled in the present day, and has been sub-



jected to the close scrutiny of the scientific and sceptical with little or no modification of their essential nature. Since, then, the scientific world has been proved to have been totally wrong in its denial of the facts, as being contrary to laws of nature and therefore incredible, it seems highly probable, *a priori*, it may have been equally wrong as to the spirit hypothesis, the dislike of which mainly led to their disbelief in the facts. For myself, I have never been able to see why any one hypothesis should be less scientific than another, except so far as one explains the whole of the facts and the other explains only a part of them. It was this alone that rendered the theory of gravitation more scientific than that of cycles and epicycles, the undulatory theory of light more scientific than the emission theory, and the theory of Darwin more scientific than that of Lamarck. It is often said that we must exhaust known causes before we call in unknown causes to explain phenomena. This may be admitted, but I cannot see how it applies to the present question. The "second" or "subconscious self," with its wide stores of knowledge, how gained no one knows, its distinct character, its low morality, its constant lies, is as purely a theoretical cause as is the spirit of a deceased person or any other spirit. It can in no sense be termed "a known cause." To call this hypothesis "scientific," and that of spirit agency "unscientific," is to beg the question at issue. That theory is most scientific which best explains the whole series of phenomena; and I therefore claim that the spirit-hypothesis is the most scientific, since even those who oppose it most strenuously often admit that it does

explain all the facts, which cannot be said of any other hypothesis.

This very brief and very imperfect sketch of the progress of opinion on the questions dealt with in the following pages leads us, I think, to some valuable and reassuring conclusions. We are taught first that human nature is not so wholly and utterly the slave of delusion as has sometimes been alleged, since almost every alleged superstition is now shown to have had a basis of fact. Secondly, those who believe, as I do, that spiritual beings can and do, subject to general laws and for certain purposes, communicate with us, and even produce material effects in the world around us, must see in the steady advance of inquiry and of interest in these questions the assurance that, so far as their beliefs are logical deductions from the phenomena they have witnessed, those beliefs will at no distant date be accepted by all truth-seeking inquirers.

*October 30th, 1895.*

## ARE THERE OBJECTIVE APPARITIONS?

(Reprinted from "The Arena," January 1891.)

EVERY one who feels an interest in whatever knowledge can be obtained bearing upon the nature and destiny of man—and what intelligent person does not?—should be deeply grateful to those active members of the Society for Psychical Research in England and in America who have devoted themselves for many years to the collection of authentic cases of the various kinds of apparitions. These cases have been all personally investigated so far as was possible; the evidence has been obtained either from the actual witnesses, or, where this was not possible, from those who received their personal testimony; corroborative evidence, in contemporary records of whatever kind, has been sought for, often at great cost of time and labour; and, finally, the whole body of facts thus accumulated has been systematically arranged, carefully discussed, and published for the information of all who may be interested in the inquiry.<sup>1</sup> If we add to this the evidence collected and recorded with equal care by the late Robert Dale Owen, by Dr. Eugene Crowell, and many other writers, we shall find ourselves in possession of a body of facts which ought to be sufficient to enable us to arrive at

<sup>1</sup> In *Phantasms of the Living*, 2 vols. 8vo, and the *Proceedings* of the Society from 1862 to 1890.

some definite conclusions as to the nature, origin, and purport of those puzzling phenomena usually known as ghosts or apparitions, these terms being held to include auditory and tactile as well as visual impressions, the appearances termed "doubles" or phantasms of the living, as well as those purporting to represent or to emanate from the dead.

Before proceeding further I wish to point out the inestimable obligation we are under to the Psychical Research Society for having presented the evidence in such a way that the *facts* to be interpreted are now generally accepted as facts by all who have taken any trouble to inquire into the amount and character of the testimony for them—the opinion of those who have not taken that trouble being altogether worthless. The change in educated public opinion appears to be due to a combination of causes. The careful preliminary investigation into the phenomena of telepathy has seemed to furnish a scientific basis for an interpretation of many phantasms, and has thus removed one of the chief difficulties in the way of accepting them as facts—the supposed impossibility of correlating them with any other phenomena. The number of men eminent in literature, art, or science who have joined the Society and have contributed to its *Proceedings*, has given the objects of its inquiry a position and status they did not previously possess; while the earnestness, the thoroughness, the literary skill, and philosophic acumen with which the evidence has been presented to the world, has compelled assent to the proposition that the several classes of apparitions known as doubles, phantasms of the living or the dead, spectral lights, voices, musical sounds, and the varied physical effects which occur in haunted houses, are real and not very uncommon phenomena, well worthy of earnest study,

and only doubtful as regards the interpretation to be put upon them.

Some of the best workers in the Society, it is true, still urge that the evidence is very deficient, both in amount and in quality, and that much more must be obtained before it can be treated as really conclusive. This view, however, appears to me to be an altogether erroneous one. On looking through the evidence already published, I find that every one of the chief groups of phenomena already referred to is established by a considerable number of cases in which the testimony is first-hand, the witnesses irreproachable, and in which the evidence of several independent witnesses agrees in all important particulars. And, in addition to these unexceptionable cases, there is a whole host of others in which the evidence is not quite so complete individually, but which are so completely corroborative in their general character, and which fall so little short of the very best kind of evidence, that the cumulative weight of the whole is exceedingly great. I shall, therefore, waste no time in discussing the value of the evidence itself, but shall devote my attention entirely to a consideration of what the facts teach as to the real nature of the phenomena.

This is the more necessary because, up to the present time, the only explanation of the various classes of apparitions suggested by the more prominent working members of the Society is, that they are hallucinations due to the telepathic action of one mind upon another. These writers have, as they state that they felt bound to do, strained the theory of telepathy to its utmost limits in order to account for the more important of the phenomena which they have themselves set forth; and the chief difference of opinion now seems to be, whether all the facts can be explained as primarily due to telepathic impressions from a living



agent—a view maintained by Mr. Podmore—or whether the spirits of the dead are in some cases the agents, as Mr. Myers thinks may be the case? But in order to give this telepathic theory even a show of probability, it is necessary to exclude or to explain away a number of the most interesting and suggestive facts collected by the Society, and also to leave out of consideration whole classes of phenomena which are altogether at variance with the hypothesis adopted.<sup>1</sup> It is to these latter cases that I now wish to call attention, because they lead us to quite different conclusions from the writers above referred to, both as to the nature of apparitions and as to the agents concerned in their production.

The evidence which either distinctly suggests or affords direct proof of the objectivity of apparitions is of five different kinds: (1) Collective hallucinations, or the perception of the same phantasmal sights or sounds by two or more persons at once. (2) Phantasms seen to occupy different points in space, by different persons, corresponding to their apparent motion, or the persistence of the phantasm in one spot, notwithstanding the observer changes his position. (3) The effects of phantasms upon domestic animals. (4) The physical effects apparently produced by phantasms, or connected with their appearance. (5) The fact that phantasms, whether visible or invisible to persons present, can be and have been photographed. Examples of each of these groups of cases will

<sup>1</sup> *Phantasms of the Dead from Another Point of View*, by F. Podmore, and *A Defence of Phantasms of the Dead*, by F. W. H. Myers, in *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, part xvi., 1890. In these papers the extreme telepathic theory is set forth by Mr. Podmore with admirable boldness and with full illustrations, and is forcibly combated by Mr. Myers, whose views as here expressed are, however, only a very little in advance of those of his fellow-worker.

now be given and their bearing on the question at issue briefly discussed.

1. *Collective hallucinations (so called)*.—Cases of this kind are very numerous, and some of them perfectly attested. Let us first take that of the figure of a man seen repeatedly by Mrs. W——, her son, a boy of nine, and her step-daughter. It was seen distinctly at the most unexpected times, as when playing the piano, when playing at cricket in the garden, and by two at once when playing at battledore and shuttlecock. A voice was also distinctly heard by both the ladies. The description of the figure by the two ladies agreed completely, and the appearance occurred in a house reported to be haunted.<sup>1</sup>

Such an appearance as this, occurring to two ladies not at all nervous, and who have never before or since had any similar experiences, and also to a boy when at play, seems almost necessarily to imply some real object of vision; yet they both, as well as Surgeon-Major W——, are positive that the form could not have been that of any living person.

An equally remarkable case is that of the young woman, draped in white, which, at intervals during ten years, was seen by Mr. John D. Harry, his three daughters, their servant, and partially by the husband of one of the daughters. Mr. Harry saw it on seven or eight occasions in his bedroom and library. On one occasion it lifted the mosquito curtains of his bed (this all occurred in a house in the South of Europe), and looked closely into his face. It appeared to all three of the young ladies and their maid at one time, but apparently in a more shadowy form. Here again it seems impossible that so many persons

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, part viii. (May 1885), pp. 102–106.

could have a similar or identical vision without any corresponding reality.<sup>1</sup>

Of another type is the female figure in white which was seen on a summer afternoon floating over a hedge some ten feet above the ground by two girls of thirteen and a boy. They watched it for a couple of minutes passing over a field till they lost sight of it in a plantation. All were in good health, and had seen no apparition before or since. They were driving in a tax-cart at the time, and when the figure appeared, the horse stopped and shook with fright, so much so that they could not get it on. This last fact, which will be referred to under another head, renders it almost certain that the figure seen was visually objective.<sup>2</sup>

As a type of the auditory phenomena, we may take the disturbances in the house of a clergyman, which continued almost nightly for twenty years. The sounds were loud knockings or hammerings, often heard all over the house and by every inmate, and occurring usually from twelve to two in the morning. Sometimes a sound was heard like that produced by a cart heavily laden with iron bars passing close beneath the windows, yet on immediate search nothing was seen. Lady and gentlemen visitors heard these varied sounds as well as the residents in the house, and, notwithstanding long-continued search and watching, no natural cause for them was ever discovered. In such a case as this it is impossible to doubt that the sounds were real sounds.<sup>3</sup>

Equally remarkable is the case where a whole family and a visitor, in an isolated country-house, heard a loud

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, part viii. (May 1885), pp. 111-113.

<sup>2</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii. p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> R. D. Owen's *Debatable Land*, pp. 251-255.

and continuous noise at the front door, which seemed to shake in its frame, and to vibrate under some tremendous blows. The servants, who were asleep in the back part of the house sixty feet away, were awoke by the disturbance, and came running, half-dressed, to see what the terrific noise meant. Yet the house was enclosed within high railings and locked gates, and on an immediate search nothing could be found to account for the noise. The visitor, however, Mr. Garling, of Folkestone, who gives the account, had that afternoon seen a phantasm of a friend he had left four days previously with his family all in perfect health; and at the time of the knocking, this friend's wife and two servants had died of cholera, and he himself was dying, and had been all day repeatedly begging that his friend Garling should be sent for.<sup>1</sup> Here we may well suppose that the (perhaps subjective) phantasm, having failed to bring the percipient to his dying friend, a violent objective sound was resorted to, which should compel attention by its being audible to a whole household.

2. *Phantasms whose objectivity is indicated by definite space-relations.*—We now pass to a group of phenomena which still more clearly point to the actual objectivity of phantasms, namely, their definite space-relations, as witnessed either by one or many percipients. Of this kind is the case, given in outline only, of a weeping lady which appeared to five persons, and on many occasions to two of them together. The interesting point is, however, that indicated in the following passage:—"They went after it (the figure) together into the drawing-room; it then came out and went down a passage leading to the kitchen, but was the next minute seen by another Miss D—— to come up the outside steps from the kitchen. On this

<sup>1</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii. pp. 149-151.

particular day, Captain D——'s married daughter happened to be at an upstairs window, and independently saw the figure continue its course across the lawn and into the orchard."<sup>1</sup> Here it is almost impossible to conceive that the several hallucinations of four persons should so exactly correspond and fit into each other. A something objective, even if unsubstantial, seems absolutely necessary to produce the observed effects.

In the next case, a well-known English clergyman and author of Boston, Mass.—the late Rev. W. Mountford—was visiting some friends in the Norfolk fens, when a carriage containing his host's brother and sister-in-law, who lived near, was seen coming along the straight road between the two houses. The horse and carriage was recognised as well as the occupants, and was seen by the three persons looking on to pass in front of the house. But no knock was heard, and on going to the door nothing was to be seen. Five minutes afterwards a young lady, the daughter of the persons in the carriage, arrived and informed her uncle and aunt that her father and mother, in their chaise, had passed her on the road, and, greatly to her surprise, without speaking to her. Ten minutes afterwards the real persons arrived just as they had been seen a quarter of an hour previously, having come straight from their home. None of the four percipients had any doubt as to the reality of the phantom carriage and its occupants till the real carriage appeared.<sup>2</sup> We are not now concerned with the cause or nature of this extraordinary "double" or phantasm of the living, with their horse and chaise; that will be discussed in another article. It is adduced here only in evidence of the objectivity of the appearance, showing that *something* capable

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part viii. (May 1885), pp. 117, 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii. pp. 97-99.



of being perceived by ordinary vision did pass along the road near the house in which Mr. Mountford was staying when the event occurred.

3. *Effects of phantasms on animals.*—We now come to a group of phenomena which, although frequently recorded in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, have received no special attention as bearing on the theories put forth by members of the Society, but have either been ignored or have been attempted to be explained away by arbitrary assumptions of the most improbable kind. It will, therefore, be necessary to refer to the evidence for these facts somewhat more fully than for those hitherto considered.

I have already mentioned the case of the female figure in white, seen by three persons floating over a hedge ten feet above the ground, when the horse they were driving "suddenly stopped and shook with fright." In the remarks upon this case in *Phantasms of the Living*, no reference is made to this fact, yet it is surely the crucial one, since we can hardly suppose that a wholly subjective apparition, seen by human beings, would also be seen by a horse. During the tremendous knocking recorded by Mr. Garling, and already quoted, it is stated that there was a large dog in a kennel near the front entrance, especially to warn off intruders, and a little terrier inside that barked at everybody; yet, when the noise occurred that wakened the servants sixty feet away, "the dogs gave no tongue whatever; the terrier, contrary to its nature, slunk shivering under the sofa, and would not stop even at the door, and nothing could induce him to go into the darkness."

In the remarkable account of a haunted house during an occupation of twelve months by a well-known English Church dignitary, the very different behaviour of dogs in

the presence of real and of phantasmal disturbances is pointed out. When an attempt was made to rob the vicarage, the dogs gave prompt alarm and the clergyman was aroused by their fierce barking. During the mysterious noises, however, though these were much louder and more disturbing, they never barked at all, but were always "found cowering in a state of pitiable terror." They are said to have been more perturbed than any other members of the establishment, and "if not shut up below, would make their way to our bedroom door and lie there, crouching and whining, as long as we would allow them."<sup>1</sup>

In the account of haunting in a house at Hammersmith near London, which went on for five years, where steps and noises were heard and a phantom woman seen, "the dog whined incessantly" during the disturbances, and "the dog was evidently still afraid of the room when the morning came. I called to him to go into it with me, and he crouched down with his tail between his legs, and seemed to fear entering it."<sup>2</sup>

On the occasion of a "wailing cry" heard before a death in a rectory in Staffordshire, a house standing quite alone in open country, "we found a favourite bulldog, a very courageous animal, trembling with terror, with his nose thrust into some billets of firewood which were kept under the stairs." On another occasion, "an awful howling followed by shriek upon shriek," with a sound like that caused by a strong wind was heard, although everything out of doors was quite still, and it is stated, "We had three dogs sleeping in my sisters' and my bedrooms, and they were all cowering down with affright, their bristles standing straight up; one—a bulldog—was under

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part vi. p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, part viii. p. 116.

the bed, and refused to come out, and when removed was found to be trembling all over.<sup>1</sup> The remark of Mrs. Sidgwick on these and other cases of warning sounds is, that "if not real natural sounds, they must have been collective hallucinations." But it has not been shown that "real natural sounds" ever produce such effects upon dogs, and there is no suggestion that "collective hallucination" can be telepathetically transferred to these animals. In one case, however, it is suggested that the dog might have "been suddenly taken ill!"

In the remarkable account by General Barter, C.B., of a phantasmal pony and rider with two native grooms seen in India, two dogs which immediately before were hunting about in the brushwood jungle which covered the hill, came and crouched by the General's side, giving low, frightened whimpers; and when he pursued the phantasm the dogs returned home, though on all other occasions they were his most faithful companions.<sup>2</sup>

These cases, given on the best authority by the Society for Psychical Research, can be supplemented by a reference to older writers. During the disturbances at Mr. Mompesson's house at Tedworth, recorded by the Rev. Joseph Glanvil, from personal observation and inquiry, in his work *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, "it was noted that when the noise was loudest, and came with the most sudden surprising violence, no dog about the house would move, though the knocking was oft so boisterous and rude that it hath been heard to a considerable distance in the fields, and awakened the neighbours in the village, none of which live very near this."

So in the disturbances at Epworth Parsonage, an account of which is given by the eminent John Wesley,

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part xiii. pp. 307-308.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, part xiv. pp. 469, 470.

after describing strange noises as of iron and glass thrown down, he continues:—"Soon after our large mastiff dog came, and ran to shelter himself between them (Mr. and Mrs. Wesley). While the disturbances continued, he used to bark and leap, and snap on one side and the other, and that frequently before any person in the room heard any noise at all. But after two or three days he used to tremble, and creep away before the noise began. And by this the family knew it was at hand; nor did the observation ever fail."<sup>1</sup>

During the disturbances at the Cemetery of Ahrensburg, in the island of Oesel, where coffins were overturned in locked vaults, and the case was investigated by an official commission, the horses of country people visiting the cemetery were often so alarmed and excited that they became covered with sweat and foam. Sometimes they threw themselves on the ground, where they struggled in apparent agony, and notwithstanding the immediate resort to remedial measures, several died within a day or two. In this case, as in so many others, although the commission made a most rigid investigation, and applied the strictest tests, no natural cause for the disturbances was ever discovered.<sup>2</sup>

In Dr. Justinus Kerner's account of *The Seeress of Prevorst*, it is stated of an apparition that appeared to her during an entire year, that as often as a spirit appeared a black terrier that was kept in the house seemed to be sensible of its presence; for no sooner was the figure perceptible to the Seeress than the dog ran, as if for protec-

<sup>1</sup> The account of these disturbances is given in Dr. Adam Clarke's *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*; in Southey's *Life of Wesley*; and in many other works.

<sup>2</sup> R. D. Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, pp. 186-192.

tion, to some one present, often howling loudly ; and after his first sight of it he would never remain alone of nights. In this case no one saw the figure but the Seeress, showing that this circumstance is not proof of the subjectivity of an apparition.

In the terrible case of haunting given to Mr. R. Dale Owen by Mrs. S. C. Hall, who was personally cognisant of the main facts, the haunted man had not been able to keep a dog for years. One which he brought home when Mrs. Hall became acquainted with him (he being the brother of her bosom friend) could not be induced to stay in his room day or night after the haunting began, and soon afterwards ran away and was lost.<sup>1</sup>

In the wonderful case of haunting in Pennsylvania given by Mr. Hodgson in *The Arena* of September 1890 (p. 419), when the apparition of the white lady appeared to the informant's brother, we find it stated:—"The third night he saw the dog crouch and stare, and then act as if driven round the room. Brother saw nothing, but heard a sort of rustle, and the poor dog howled and tried to hide, and never again would that dog go to that room."

Now this series of cases of the effect of phantasms on animals is certainly remarkable, and worthy of deep consideration. The facts are such as, on the theories of telepathy and hallucination, ought not to happen, and they are especially trustworthy facts because they are almost invariably introduced into the narratives as if unexpected ; while that they were noticed and recorded shows that the observers were in no degree panicstruck with terror. They show us unmistakably that large numbers of phantasms, whether visual or auditory, and even when only perceptible to one of the persons present,

<sup>1</sup> *Footfalls from the Boundary of Another World*, pp. 326-329.



are objective realities ; while the terror displayed by the animals that perceive them, and their behaviour, so unlike that in the presence of natural sights and sounds, no less clearly proves that, though objective, the phenomena are not normal, and are not to be explained as in any way due to trick or to misinterpreted natural sounds. Yet these crucial facts, which a true theory must take account of, have hitherto been treated as unimportant, and, except for a few casual remarks by Mr. Myers and Mrs. Sidgwick, have been left out of consideration in all the serious attempts hitherto made to account for the phenomena of phantasms.

4. *Physical effects produced by phantasms or occurring in connection with them.*—There can be no more convincing proof of the objective reality of a phantasm than the production of real motion or displacement of material objects. There is abundant evidence of such effects ; but, owing to the method hitherto adopted by the chief members of the Psychological Research Society of breaking up the phenomena into groups, and discussing each group separately as if it stood alone and had no relation with the rest of the phenomena, they have as yet received no attention. The curious circumstance that visual phantoms are often *seen* to open doors in order to enter a room, which doors are afterwards found to be locked and bolted, is supposed to throw doubt upon other cases in which doors really open ; but every one who pays close attention to these questions must be convinced that phantasms are of many kinds, ranging from mere images on the brain of a single person up to forms which are not only visible to all present, but are sometimes tangible also, and capable of acting with considerable effect on ordinary matter. Let us consider a few of these cases, taking first those recorded in the publications of the Society for Psychological Research.

The phantasm described by Dr. and Mrs. Gwynne was seen by them both to put its hand toward or over the nightlight on the mantelpiece, which was at once extinguished. On being relighted it burned for the rest of the night. Of course it is *possible* to explain this as due to a sudden gust of wind down the chimney, but why the only gust during the night occurred at the moment the phantom was seen by two persons to place its hand toward or over the light is not explained.<sup>1</sup>

In the house at Hammersmith where a figure was seen and noises heard during five years, Mrs. R——, who describes them, says, that on one occasion the curtains of her bed were pulled back, and, she continues, "Frequently I had doors opened for me before entering a room, as if a hand had hastily turned the handle and thrown it open."<sup>2</sup>

In another case of a haunted house, Mr. K. Z., said to be a man of reputation, stated that "doors opened and shut in the house without apparent cause," and "bells were rung in the middle of the night, causing all the household to turn out and search for burglars."<sup>3</sup> Again, in a house where apparitions were seen by four persons, three persons sitting together in a room were attracted by the door creaking, "and we watched it slowly open about one-third, and it remained so." No such opening has been seen at any other time.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Eugene Crowell relates that in a house in Brooklyn a relation of his own several times had his hat struck from his head while descending the stairs or passing through the hall, and under circumstances which rendered the agency of any living person impossible.<sup>5</sup> In the case

<sup>1</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii. p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part viii. p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, part i. p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, part xiv. p. 443.

<sup>5</sup> *Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i. p. 191.

already referred to, given by Mr. Hodgson in the September *Arena*, doors frequently opened and shut, and pictures, clocks, and other articles were thrown down with a great crash in a room where there was no one at the time, while another picture fell in front of the lady as she was entering the room.

But all these cases are insignificant as compared with the evidence afforded by the bell-ringing at Great Bealings, Suffolk, and at other places, an account of which was published in 1841 by Major Moor, a Fellow of the Royal Society, in whose house they occurred. The ringing, in a violent, clattering manner, went on almost daily for nearly two months, during which time every effort was made to discover any natural cause for the phenomenon, but in vain. Major Moor states:—"The bells rang scores of times when no one was in the passage, or back-building, or house, or grounds unseen. Neither I, nor the servants, nor any one, could or can work the wonderment that I and more than half a score of others saw." And he declares finally: "I am thoroughly convinced that the ringing is by no human agency."

The publication of his statement in the *Ipswich Journal* brought him accounts of no less than fourteen similar disturbances in various parts of England, every one of them equally unexplained. One of these was in Greenwich Hospital, and the account of this was given to Major Moor by Lieutenant Rivers, R.N., a comrade of Nelson. The bells in Lieutenant Rivers' apartments in the hospital rang for four days. The clerk of the works, his assistant, a bellhanger, and several scientific men tried to discover the cause, but all in vain. They made every one leave the house; they watched the bells, the cranks, and the wires, but, just as in Major Moor's case, without

becoming any the wiser. In another case, in a house near Chesterfield, long and repeated bell-rings continued for eighteen months. Bellhangers and other persons watched and experimented in vain. The wires were cut, but still the bells rang. Neither the owner, Mr. Ashwell, nor his friend, Mr. Felkins of Nottingham, afterwards mayor of that town, nor any other person was ever able to discover, or even to conjecture, any adequate cause for the phenomena. In many of these cases the ringing occurred in the daytime, and was repeated so often that ample opportunity was given for discovering the agency, if a human one. And the thing itself is so comparatively simple that there is no opportunity for a trick to be played without almost immediate discovery. Yet in none of these cases, nor, so far as I am aware, in any other at all similar to them, has any trick been discovered. They must, therefore, be classed as a form of haunting, comparable with the knockings and other disturbances so often connected with phantasmal appearances, and thus affording very strong evidence of the powers of phantasms to act upon matter.<sup>1</sup>

5. *Phantasms can be photographed, and are, therefore, objective realities.*—It is common to sneer at what are called “spirit photographs,” because imitations of some of them can be so easily produced; but a little consideration will show that this very facility of imitation renders it equally easy to guard against imposture, since the modes by which the imitation is effected are so well known. At all events, it will be admitted that an experi-

<sup>1</sup> An account of all these fourteen cases of bell-ringing and of other disturbances, with names and dates, is given in a small volume, now rare, entitled *Bealings Bells*. A brief summary of them is given in R. Dale Owen's *Debatable Land*, and in William Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*, vol. ii. p. 446.



enced photographer who supplies the plates and sees the whole of the operations performed, or even performs them himself, cannot be so deceived. This test has been applied over and over again, and there is no possible escape from the conclusion that phantasms, whether visible or invisible to those present, can be and have been photographed. A brief statement of the evidence in support of this assertion will now be given.

The first person through whom spirit photographs were obtained was a New York photographer named Mumler, who in 1869 was arrested and tried for obtaining money by trickery and imposture, but who, after a long trial, was acquitted because no proof of imposture or attempt at imposture was given; but, on the other hand, evidence of extraordinary tests having been applied was given. A professional photographer, Mr. W. H. Slee, of Poughkeepsie, watched the whole process of taking the pictures, and though there was nothing unusual in Mumler's procedure, shadowy forms appeared on the plates. Mumler afterwards visited this witness's gallery, bringing with him no materials whatever, yet the same results were produced. Mr. J. Gurney, a New York photographer of twenty-eight years' experience, gave evidence that, after close examination, no trickery whatever could be detected in Mumler's process. Yet a third photographer, Mr. W. W. Silver, of Brooklyn, gave evidence to the same effect. He frequently went through the whole process himself, using his own camera and materials, yet when Mumler was present, and simply placed his hand on the camera during the exposure, additional forms besides that of the sitter appeared upon the plates. Here we have the sworn testimony in a court of law of three experts, who had every possible means of detecting imposture if imposture there were;



yet they all declared that there was and could be no imposture.<sup>1</sup>

It would be easy to give a score or more of cases in which persons of reputation have stated in print that they have obtained recognisable photographs of deceased friends when they themselves were quite unknown to the photographer, and even when no photograph or picture of the deceased person existed. In all such cases, however, the objection is made that the figures are more or less shadowy, and that the supposed likeness may be imaginary. I therefore prefer to give only the evidence of experts as to the appearance on photographic plates of other figures besides those of the visible sitters. Perhaps the most remarkable series of experiments ever made on this subject were those carried on during three years by the late Mr. John Beattie of Clifton, a retired photographer of twenty years' experience, and Doctor Thomson, M.D. (Edin.), a retired physician, who had practised photography as an amateur for twenty-five years. These two gentlemen performed all the photographic work themselves, sitting with a medium who was not a photographer. They took hundreds of pictures, in series of three, taken consecutively at intervals of a few seconds; and the results are the more remarkable and the less open to any possible suspicion, because there is not in the whole series what is commonly termed a spirit photograph, that is, the shadowy likeness of any deceased person, but all are more or less rudimental, exhibiting various patches of light undergoing definite changes of shape, sometimes culminating in undefined human forms, or medallion-like heads, or star-like

<sup>1</sup> A report of the trial appeared in the *New York Times* of April 22, 1869, and in many other papers. An abstract of the evidence is given by Dr. Crowell in his *Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i. pp. 478-482.

luminosities. In no case was there any known cause for the production of these figures. I possess a set of these remarkable photographs, thirty-two in number, given me by Mr. Beattie, and I was personally acquainted with Doctor Thomson, who confirmed Mr. Beattie's statements as to the conditions and circumstances under which they were taken. Here we have a thorough scientific investigation undertaken by two well-trained experts, with no possibility of their being imposed upon; and they demonstrate the fact that phantasmal figures and luminosities quite invisible to ordinary observers, can yet reflect or emit actinic rays so as to impress their forms and changes of form upon an ordinary photographic plate. An additional proof of this extraordinary phenomenon is, that frequently, and in the later experiments always, the medium spontaneously described what he saw, and the picture taken at that moment always exhibited the same kind of figure. In one of the pictures the medium is shown among the sitters gazing intently and pointing with his hand. While doing so, he exclaimed, "What a bright light up there! Can you not see it?" And the picture shows the bright light in the place to which his gaze and pointing hand are directed.<sup>1</sup>

Very important, as confirming these results, are the experiments of the late Mr. Thomas Slater, the optician (of Euston Road, London), who obtained second figures on his plates when only his own family were present, and in one case when he was perfectly alone; of Mr. R. Williams, M.A., of Haywards Heath; of Mr. Traill Taylor,

<sup>1</sup> A brief account of these experiments from notes furnished by Mr. Beattie and confirmed by Dr. Thomson, is given in the present volume, at page 200. Mr. Beattie published his own account in the *Spiritual Magazine*, September 1872, January 1873, and in the *British Journal of Photography* of the same period.

the editor of the *British Journal of Photography* ; and of many other professional or amateur photographers, who all agree that, with everything under their own control, phantasmal figures, besides those of the sitter, appeared on the plates without any apparent or conceivable mechanical or chemical cause.

In the cases hitherto given, the phantasms or figures photographed have been invisible to all present except the mediums, and sometimes even to them ; but we have also examples of the photographing of a visible form or apparition occurring in the presence of a medium. A very successful photograph of a spirit form which appeared under strict test conditions, with Miss Cook as the medium, was taken by Mr. Harrison, then editor of the *Spiritualist* newspaper. An engraving from this photograph appears as a frontispiece to Epes Sargent's *Proof Palpable of Immortality*, with an account of the conditions under which it was taken signed by the five persons present. Later on, Mr. Crookes obtained numerous photographs (more than forty in all) in his own laboratory, with the same medium ; and had every opportunity of ascertaining that the phantom which appeared and disappeared, under conditions which rendered doubt impossible, was no human being, and was very different in all physical characteristics from the medium.<sup>1</sup>

This long series of photographic experiments and tests, of which the briefest abstract only has been given, has been hitherto not even alluded to by the investigators of the Society for Psychical Research. But they cannot

<sup>1</sup> An account of these experiments, and of those which preceded them, is given in a small volume entitled *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, by William Crookes, F.R.S., London, 1874 ; and they are summarised in Epes Sargent's *Proof Palpable of Immortality*, pp. 100-110.

much longer continue to ignore it, because they have entered on the task of collecting the *whole* of the evidence for psychical phenomena, and of fairly estimating the weight of each of the groups under which that evidence falls. Now I submit that this photographic evidence is superior in quality to any that they have hitherto collected, for two reasons. In the first place, it is experimental evidence, and experiment is rarely possible in the higher psychical phenomena; in the second place, it is the evidence of experts in an operation the whole details of which are perfectly familiar to them. And, I further submit, this evidence can no longer be ignored, because it is evidence that goes to the very root of the whole inquiry, and affords the most complete and crucial test in the problem of subjectivity or objectivity of apparitions. What is the use of elaborate arguments to show that all the phenomena are to be explained by the various effects of telepathy, and that there is no evidence of the existence of objective apparitions occupying definite positions in space, when the camera and the sensitive plate have again and again proved that such objective phantasms do exist? Such arguments, founded on a small portion only of the facts, remind one of that literary *jeu d'esprit*, *Historic Doubts as to the Existence of Napoleon Bonaparte*; and, to those who are acquainted with the whole range of the phenomena to be explained, are about equally convincing.

I have now very briefly summarised and discussed the various classes of evidence which demonstrate the objectivity of many apparitions. The several groups of facts, while strong in themselves, gain greatly in strength by the support they give to each other. On the theory of objective reality all are harmonious and consistent. On the theory of hallucination some require elaborate and unsupported theories for their explanation, while the

great bulk are totally inexplicable, and have, therefore, to be ignored, or set aside, or explained away. Collective hallucinations (so-called) are admitted to be frequent. That phantasms often behave like objective realities in relation to material objects and to different persons is also admitted. This is as it should be if they *are* objective, but is hardly explicable on the subjective or telepathic theory. The behaviour of animals in the presence of phantasms, the evidence for which is as good as that for their appearance to men and women, is what we might expect if they are abnormal realities, but involve enormous difficulties on any other theory. The physical effects produced by phantasms (visible or invisible) afford a crucial test of objectivity, and are far too numerous and too well attested to be ignored or explained away. And, finally, comes the test of objectivity afforded by the photographic camera in the hands of experts and physicists of the first rank, rendering any escape from this conclusion simply impossible.

I have confined this discussion strictly to the one question of *objectivity*, a term that does not necessarily imply *materiality*. We do not know whether the luminiferous ether is material, or whether electricity is material, but both are certainly objective. Some have used the term "non-molecular matter" for the hypothetical substance of which visible phantoms are composed—a substance that seems to have the property under certain conditions of aggregating to itself molecular matter, so that tangible or force-exerting phantasms are produced. But this is all theoretical, and we do not yet possess sufficient knowledge to enable us to theorise on what may be termed the anatomy and physiology of phantoms. There is, however, a broader question to be discussed, one on which I think we have materials for arriving at some



interesting and useful conclusion. I refer to the general nature and origin of various classes of phantasmal appearances, from the "doubles" of living persons to those apparitions which bring us news of our departed friends, or are in some cases able to warn us of future events which more or less deeply affect us. This inquiry forms the subject of the following essay.

## WHAT ARE PHANTASMS, AND WHY DO THEY APPEAR?

(Reprinted from "The Arena," February 1891.)

THE theories which have been suggested by the more prominent members of the Society for Psychological Research in order to explain the phenomena of phantasms or apparitions of various kinds, are all founded on telepathy or thought-transference, the facts of which have been demonstrated by a long series of experiments. It is found that many persons are more or less sensitive to the thoughts or will-power of others, and are able to reproduce, more or less closely, any definite mental images sought to be conveyed to them. It is urged that those who experience phantasmal sights or sounds are a kind of thought-readers, and are so powerfully affected by the thoughts of friends who are in certain excitable mental states or physical crises—especially at periods of imminent danger or when at the point of death—as to externalise those thoughts in visual or auditory hallucinations either in the waking state or as unusually vivid dreams.

This telepathic theory is held to receive strong support, and in fact to be almost proved, by the curious phenomena of the doubles or phantasms of living persons seen by certain sensitive friends, when those persons strongly *will* that they shall be so seen. Such are the cases of a

friend appearing to Mr. Stainton Moses at a time when this friend had fixed his thoughts upon him before going to bed ; and those of Mr. B——, who several times appeared in the night to two ladies, on occasions when he went to sleep with the express wish and intention of appearing to them.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, difficulties in these cases. The supposed agent does not usually decide exactly how he will appear or what he will do. In one case Mr. B—— appeared, not to the ladies he was thinking of, but to a married sister, hardly known to him, who happened to be occupying their room. This lady saw the phantasm in the passage, going from one room to the other, at a time when the agent wished to be in the house ; and again, the same night, at a time when he wished to be in the front bedroom, and on this occasion the phantasm came to her bedside and took hold of her hair, and then of her hand, gazingly intently into it. Now it is an assumption hardly warranted by the facts, that the mere wish or determination to be in a certain part of a house at a certain time could cause a phantasm to appear to a person who happened unexpectedly to be there, and cause that phantasm to perform, or appear to perform, certain acts which do not appear to have been *willed* by the supposed agent. This is certainly not telepathy in the usually accepted sense ; it is not the transference of a thought to an individual, but the production of what seems to be an objective phantasm in a definite locality. It is altogether inconceivable that a mere wish could produce such a phantasm, unless, indeed, we suppose the spirit of the sleeper to leave the body in order to go to the desired place, and that it possesses the power to render itself visible to any one who happens to be there. Let us then see whether there are any other facts

<sup>1</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i. pp. 103–108.

concerning doubles which may throw some light on this question.

Mr. Fryer, of Bath, heard his name distinctly called in the voice of a brother who had been some days absent from home. At the same moment, as near as could be ascertained, the brother missed his footing and fell on a railway platform, calling out his brother's name as he fell.<sup>1</sup> Similar in character is the case of Mrs. Severn, who, while in bed one morning, felt a violent blow on her lip, so real that she put her handkerchief to it, expecting to find it bleeding. At the same time Mr. Severn, caught by a squall in a boat, received a violent blow on the same part of his mouth from the tiller. In the first case, Mr. Fryer's brother had no conscious wish to be heard by him; and in the other case, Mr. Severn certainly did not wish his wife to feel the blow, but, on the contrary, was extremely anxious to conceal from her that he had had a blow at all.<sup>2</sup> In both these cases, if the supposed agents had anything to do with the actual production of the phantasmal voice and sensation, it was by some unconscious or automatic process. But the experimental evidence for telepathy shows it to be produced by the conscious and active will-power of the agent or agents, and would therefore prove, if anything, that in both these cases there was some third party who was really the agent in willing and producing the telepathic effect. This is rendered still more probable by other cases of "doubles" and of warnings, of which the following is one of the most remarkable.

Mr. Algernon Joy, an engineer employed on the Penarth Docks, at Cardiff, South Wales, was walking in a country lane near the town, absorbed in a calculation connected

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, vol. i. p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. vi. p. 128.

with the Docks, when he was attacked and knocked down by two young colliers. His thoughts were then immediately directed to the possible cause of the attack, to the possibility of identifying the men and to informing the police. He is positive that for about half an hour previous to the attack and for an hour or two after it, there was no connection whatever, direct or indirect, between his thoughts and a friend in London. Yet at almost the precise moment of the assault this friend recognised Mr. Joy's footstep in the street behind him, then turned and saw Mr. Joy "as distinctly as ever he saw him in his life," saw he looked distressed, asked what was the matter, and received the answer, "Go home, old fellow; I've been hurt." All this was communicated in a letter from the friend which crossed one from Mr. Joy giving an account of the accident.<sup>1</sup> In this case, whether the "double" was an audible and visual veridical hallucination or an objective phantasm, it could not have been produced without some adequate cause. To assert that Mr. Joy was himself the unconscious cause cannot be looked upon as an explanation, or as in any way helping us to a comprehension of how such things can happen. We imperatively need a producing agent, some intellectual being having both the will and the power to produce such a veridical phantasm.

The next case still more clearly demands an agent other than that of any of the parties immediately concerned. Mr. F. Morgan, of Bristol, a young man who lived with his mother, was attending a lecture in which he was much interested. On entering the lecture-room he saw a friend, with whom he determined to walk home after the lecture. About the middle of the lecture he noticed a door at the side of the platform farthest from

<sup>1</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii. p. 524.



the entrance to the hall, and he suddenly, without knowing why, got up and walked half the length of the hall to see if the door would open. He turned the handle, entered, and closed the door behind him, finding himself in the dark under the platform. Noticing a glimmer of light, he went towards it, got into a passage which led again into the hall, the end of which he crossed to the entrance door, without any thought of the lecture, which was still going on, or of the friend with whom he had meant to return, and then walked home quietly, without any excitement or impression of any kind, and quite unconscious till long after that he had done anything unusual. When he got home, however, he found that the house next to his was on fire and his mother in great alarm. He instantly removed his mother to a place of safety, and then had two or three hours' struggle with the flames. The adjoining house was burnt down, and his own was in great danger, and was slightly damaged.

Mr. Morgan states that his character is such that had he felt any impression that there was a fire, or that his mother was in danger, he should probably have shaken it off as mere fancy and refused to obey it. His mother simply wished for his presence, but exerted no will-power towards him. What agency, then, was it that acted upon his mental organisation, at first apparently through simple curiosity, in such a strange yet effectual way, bringing him home so promptly, and yet without his feeling that he was in any way being influenced or guided in his actions, which seemed to himself to be perfectly voluntary and normal? We cannot avoid seeing in this case the continuous exercise of some mental influence, guided by accurate knowledge of the character of the individual and of his special surroundings at the moment, and directed with such care and judgment as to avoid exciting in him

that antagonism which would have been fatal to the object aimed at. We see then that, even confining ourselves to undoubted phantasms of the living, or to impressions not connected with death, the facts are totally inexplicable on any theory of telepathy between living persons, but clearly point to the agency of preter-human intelligences—in other words, of spirits. The prejudice against such a conception is enormous, but the work of the Psychical Research Society has, it is to be hoped, somewhat undermined it. They have established, beyond further dispute for all who study the evidence, that veridical phantasms of the dead do exist; and the evidence itself—not ignorant or even scientific prejudice—must decide whether these phantasms which, as we have seen in my last article, are often objective, are the work of men or of spirits.

Before adducing further evidence on this point, it will be well to consider briefly the extraordinary theory of the “second self” or “unconscious *ego*,” which is appealed to by many modern writers as a substitute for spirit agency when that of the normal human being is plainly inadequate. This theory is founded on the phenomena of dreams, of clairvoyance, and of duplex personality, and has been elaborately expounded by Du Prel in two volumes 8vo, translated by Mr. C. C. Massey. As an example of the kind of facts this theory is held to explain, we may refer to the experiments of the Rev. P. H. Newnham and Mrs. Newnham with planchette. The experiments were conducted by Mrs. N. sitting at a low table with her hand on the planchette, while Mr. N. sat with his back towards her at another table eight feet distant. Mr. N. wrote questions on paper, and instantly, sometimes simultaneously, the planchette under Mrs. N.’s hand wrote the answers. Experiments

were carried on for eight months, during which time three hundred and nine questions and answers were recorded. All kinds of questions were asked, and the answers were always pertinent to the questions, though often evasions rather than direct answers. Great numbers of the answers did not correspond with the opinions or expectations of either Mr. or Mrs. N., and were sometimes beyond their knowledge. To convince an incredulous visitor, Mr. N. went with him into the hall, where he, the visitor, wrote down the question, "What is the Christian name of my eldest sister?" Mr. N. saw the question but did not know the name, yet on returning to the study they found the planchette had already written "Mina," the family abbreviation of Wilhelmina, which was the correct name. Mr. N. is a Freemason, and asked many questions as to the Masonic ritual, of which Mrs. N. knew nothing. The answers were partly correct and partly incorrect, sometimes quite original, as when a prayer used at the advancement of a Mark Master Mason was asked for, and a very admirable prayer instantly written out, using Masonic terms, but, Mr. N. says, quite unlike the actual prayer he was thinking of, and also unlike any prayer used by Masons or known to Mr. N. It was, in fact, as Mr. N. says, "a formula composed by some intelligence totally distinct from the conscious intelligence of either of the persons engaged in the experiment."

Now all this, and a great deal more equally remarkable, is imputed to the agency of Mrs. Newnham's "unconscious self," a second independent, intelligent personality of which Mrs. Newnham knows nothing except when it "emerges" under special conditions, such as those here described. In the same way Du Prel explains all the phenomena of clairvoyance, of premonitions, of apparent

possession, and of the innumerable cases in which sensitives exhibit knowledge of facts which in their normal state they do not possess, and have had no possible means of acquiring.

But is this so-called explanation any real explanation, or anything more than a juggle of words which creates more difficulties than it solves? The conception of such a double personality in each of us, a second-self, which in most cases remains unknown to us all our lives, which is said to live an independent mental life, to have means of acquiring knowledge our normal self does not possess, to exhibit all the characteristics of a distinct individuality with a different character from our own, is surely a conception more ponderously difficult, more truly supernatural than that of a spirit-world, composed of beings who have lived, and learned, and suffered on earth, and whose mental nature still subsists after its separation from the earthly body. We shall find, too, that this latter theory explains *all* the facts simply and directly, that it is in accordance with *all* the evidence, and that in an overwhelming majority of cases it is the explanation given by the communicating intelligences themselves. On the "second self" theory, we have to suppose that this recondite but worser half of ourselves, while possessing some knowledge we have not, does not know that it is part of us, or, if it knows, is a persistent liar, for in most cases it adopts a distinct name, and persists in speaking of us, its better half, in the third person.

But there is yet another, and I think a more fundamental objection to this view, in the impossibility of conceiving how or why this second-self was developed in us under the law of survival of the fittest. The theory is upheld to avoid recourse to any "spiritual" explanation of phenomena, "spirit" being the last thing our modern



men of science "will give in to."<sup>1</sup> But if so—if there is no spiritual nature in man that survives the earthly body, if man is but a highly intellectual animal developed from a lower animal form under the law of the survival of the fittest, how did this "second-self," this "unconscious *ego*," come into existence? Have the mollusk and the reptile, the dog and the ape "unconscious *egos*"? And if so, why? And what use are they to these creatures, so that they might have been developed by means of the struggle for existence? Darwin detected no sign of such "second-selves" either in animals or men; and if they do not pertain to animals but do pertain to men, then we are involved in the same difficulty that is so often urged against spiritualists, that we require some break in the law of continuous development, and some exertion of a higher power to create and bring into the human organism this strange and useless "unconscious *ego*"—useless except to puzzle us with insoluble problems, and make our whole nature and existence seem more mysterious than ever. Of course, this unconscious *ego* is supposed to die with the conscious man, for if not, we are introduced to a new and gratuitous difficulty, of the relation of these two intelligences and characters, distinct, yet bound indissolubly together, in the after life.

Finding, therefore, that the theory of duplex personality creates more difficulties than it solves, while the facts it proposes to explain can be dealt with far more thoroughly on the spiritual hypothesis, let us pass on to consider the further evidence we possess for the agency of the spirits of the dead, or of some other preter-human intelligences.

We will first consider the case of Mrs. Menneer, who dreamed twice the same night that she saw her headless

<sup>1</sup> This was Sir David Brewster's expression after witnessing Home's phenomena. See Home's *Incidents of my Life*, Appendix, p. 245.



brother standing at the foot of the bed with his head lying on a coffin by his side. She did not at the time know where her brother, Mr. Wellington, was, except that he was abroad. He was, however, at Sarawak, with Sir James Brooke, and was killed during the Chinese insurrection there, in a brave attempt to defend Mrs. Middleton and her children. Being taken for the Rajah's son, his head was cut off and carried away in triumph, his body being burned with the Rajah's house. The date of the dream coincided approximately with that of the death.<sup>1</sup> Now in this case it is almost certain that the head was cut off *after* death, since these Chinese were not trained soldiers, but gold-miners, who would strike, and stab, and cut with any weapons they possessed, but could certainly not kill a European on his defence by cutting off his head at a blow. The impression on the sister's brain must, therefore, have been made either by the dead brother, or by some other intelligence, probably the latter, as it was clearly a symbolic picture, the head resting on the coffin showing that the head alone was recovered and buried. In a published letter of Sir James Brooke's he says—"Poor Wellington's remains were likewise consumed, his head borne off in triumph *alone attesting* his previous murder."

Another case, recorded in the same volume, is still more clear against the theory of telepathy between living persons. Mrs. Storie, of Edinburgh, living at the time in Hobart Town, Tasmania, one night dreamed a strange confused dream, like a series of dissolving views. She saw her twin brother sitting in the open air, in the moonlight, sideways, on a raised place. Then he lifted his arm saying, "*The train, the train!*" Something struck him; he fell down fainting; a large dark object came by with a

<sup>1</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i. p. 365.

*swish*. Then she saw a railway compartment, in which sat a gentleman she knew, the Rev. Mr. Johnstone. Then she saw her brother again. He put his right hand over his face as if in grief. Then a voice, not his voice, telling her he was going away. The same night her brother was killed by a train, having sat down to rest on the side of the track and fallen asleep. The details in the dream, of which the above is a bare abstract, were almost exactly as in the event, and the Mr. Johnstone of the dream was in the train that killed her brother. Now, this last-mentioned fact could not have been known to the dead man during life, and the dream-picture of the event must, therefore, have been due to the telepathic power of the dead man, or of some spirit-friend acquainted with the facts, and wishing to give a proof of spirit-life.

Take next the case of the Glasgow manufacturer settled in London, who dreams that one of his workmen in Glasgow, whom he had befriended as a lad, but with whom he had not had any direct relations for many years, comes to speak to him, begging him not to believe what he is accused of doing. On being asked what it is, he repeats three times emphatically, "Ye'll sune ken." The dreamer also notices the man has a remarkable appearance, bluish pale with great drops of sweat on his face. On awaking, his wife brings him a letter from his manager in Glasgow, telling him that this man, Robert Mackenzie, has committed suicide by drinking *aqua fortis*. The symptoms of poisoning by *aqua fortis* are those observed in the dream figure.<sup>1</sup> Here the man had died two days before the dream, which was just in time to correct the false impression of suicide that would have been produced by the letter. The whole of the features and details of the dream are such as could hardly have been due to any

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part viii. pp. 95-98.

other agent than the dead workman himself, who was anxious that a master who had been kind to him when a lad should not be led to credit the false accusation against him.

Dreams giving the details of funerals at a distance are not uncommon. As an example we have one in which Mr. Stainton Moses was invited to the funeral of a friend in Lincolnshire, but could not go. About the time of the funeral, however, he fell into a trance, and appeared to be at the ceremony, and on again becoming conscious, wrote down all the details, describing the clergyman, who was not the one who had been expected to officiate, the churchyard, which was at a distance in Northamptonshire, with a particular tree near the grave. He then sent this description to a friend who had been present, and who wrote back in astonishment as to how he could have obtained the details.<sup>1</sup> This may be said to be mere clairvoyance; but clairvoyance is a term that explains nothing, and is quite as mysterious and unintelligible if supposed to occur without the intervention of disembodied intelligences as if with their help. These cases also merge into others which are of a symbolical nature, and which clairvoyance of actual scenes at a distance cannot explain. A well-attested case of this kind is the following:—

Philip Weld, a student at a Catholic College, was drowned in the river at Ware, Hertfordshire, in the year 1846. About the same hour as the accident, the young man's father and sister, while walking on the turnpike road near Southampton, saw him standing on the causeway with another young man in a black robe. The sister said, "Look, papa, there is Philip." Mr. Weld replied, "It is Philip indeed, but he has the look of an angel." They went on to embrace him, but before reaching him a

<sup>1</sup> Harrison's *Spirits before our Eyes*, p. 148.

labouring man seemed to walk through the figures, and then with a smile both figures vanished. The President of the College, Dr. Cox, went immediately to Southampton, to break the sad news to the father, but before he could speak, Mr. Weld told him what he had seen, and said he knew his son was dead. A few weeks afterwards, Mr. Weld visited the Jesuit College of Stonyhurst in Lancashire, and in the guest-room saw a picture of the very same young man he had seen with his son, similarly dressed, and in the same attitude, and beneath the picture was inscribed "St. Stanislaus Kotska," a saint of the Jesuit Order, who had been chosen by Philip for his patron saint at his confirmation.<sup>1</sup>

Now, here is a case in which phantasms of the son and of another person appear to two relatives, and the presence of the unknown person was eminently calculated, when his identity was discovered, to relieve the father's mind of all fear for his son's future happiness. It is hardly possible to have a clearer case of a true phantasm of the dead, not necessarily produced either *by* the dead son or the Jesuit saint, but most probably by them, or by some other spirit friend who had the power to produce such phantasms, and so relieve the anxiety of both father and sister. It is not conceivable that any living person's telepathic action could have produced such phantasms in two percipients, the only possible agent being the President of the College, who did not recognise by Mr. Weld's description the dark-robed young man who appeared with his son.

This introduces a feature rather common in phantasms of the dead—some indication of happiness, something to take away any feeling of gloom or sorrow. Thus, a young

<sup>1</sup> Harrison's *Spirits before our Eyes*, p. 116, extracted from *Glimpses of the Supernatural*, by the Rev. F. G. Lee.



man is drowned by the foundering of the *La Plata* telegraphic ship in December 1874; and just before the news arrived, his brother in London dreamed that he was at a magnificent fête in a spacious garden, with illuminated fountains and groups of gentlemen and ladies, when he met his brother in evening dress, and "the very image of buoyant health." He was surprised, and said, "Hallo! D——, how are you here?" His brother shook hands with him, and said, "Did you not know I have been wrecked again?" The next morning the news of the loss of the ship was in the papers.<sup>1</sup> Here, whether the phantasm was caused by the dead man himself, or by some other being, it was apparently intended to show that the deceased was as cheerful and well off after death as during life.

So when the voice of Miss Gambier Parry was heard twelve hours after her death by her former governess, Sister Bertha, at the House of Mercy, Bovey Tracey, Devonshire, it said, "in the brightest and most cheerful tone, 'I am here with you.' And on being asked, 'Who are you?' the voice replied, 'You mustn't know yet.'"<sup>2</sup>

And again, when a gentleman, going to the dining-room for an evening smoke, sees his sister-in-law, he says: "Maggie suddenly appeared dressed in white, with a most heavenly expression on her face. She fixed her eyes on me, walked round the room, and disappeared through the door that leads into the garden."<sup>3</sup> This was the day after her death. Yet one more instance: Mr. J. G. Keulemans, when in Paris, was awoke one morning by the voice of his favourite little son of five years old, whom he had left quite well in London. He

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part xiv. p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i. p. 522.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 702.



also saw his face in the centre of a bright opaque white mass, his eyes bright, his mouth smiling. The voice heard was that of extreme delight, such as only a happy child can utter. Yet the child had then just died.<sup>1</sup> Whose telepathic influence caused this phantasm of a happy, smiling child to appear to the father? Surely no living person, but rather some spirit friend or guardian wishing to show that the joyousness of life still remained with the child, though its earthly body was cold and still.

Another characteristic feature of many of these dreams or waking phantasms is that they often occur, not at the moment of death, but just before the news of the death reaches the percipient; or there is some other characteristic feature that seems especially calculated to cause a deep impression, and give a lasting conviction of spiritual existence. Several cases of this kind are given or referred to in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (Pt. xv. pp. 30, 31). A most extraordinary example is that of Mr. F. G. of Boston, then of St. Louis, Mo., who, when in St. Joseph, Mo., fully occupied with business, saw a phantasm of his only sister, who had been dead nine years. It was at noonday while he was writing, and she appeared close to him and perfectly life-like, so that for a moment he thought it was really herself, and called her by her name. He saw every detail of her dress and appearance, and particularly noticed a bright red line or scratch on the right hand side of her face. The vision so impressed him that he took the next train home, and told what he had seen to his father and mother. His father was inclined to ridicule him for his belief in its being anything supernatural; but when he mentioned the scratch on the face his mother nearly fainted, and told them with

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, vol. i. p. 126.

tears in her eyes, that she had herself made that scratch accidentally after her daughter's death, but had carefully hidden it with powder, and that no living person but herself knew of it. A few weeks after the mother died, happy in her belief that she would rejoin her daughter in a better world.<sup>1</sup> Here we can clearly see an important purpose in the appearance of the phantasm—to give comfort to a mother about to die, in the assurance that her beloved daughter, though mourned as dead, was still alive.

A case which illustrates both of the characteristics just alluded to is that of the Rev. C. C. Wambey of Salisbury, England, who one Sunday evening was walking on the downs, engaged in composing a congratulatory letter to a very dear friend, so that he might have it on his birthday, when he heard a voice saying, "What! write to a dead man!" No one was near him, and he tried to think it was an illusion, and went on with his composition, when again he heard the voice saying more loudly than before, "What! write to a dead man; write to a *dead* man!" He now understood the meaning of the voice, but, nevertheless, sent the letter, and in reply received the expected intelligence that his friend was dead. Surely in this case no living agent could have produced this auditory phantasm, which was strikingly calculated to impress the recipient with the idea that his friend was, though dead as regards the earthly life, in reality very much alive, while the spice of banter in the words would tend to show that death was by no means a melancholy event to the subject of it.

In view of the examples now given of phantasms appearing for a very definite purpose, and being in most cases perfectly adapted to produce the desired effect—

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part xv. pp. 17, 18.

examples which could be very largely increased from the rich storehouse of the publications of the Society for Psychical Research—the theory put forth by Mr. Myers that phantasms of the dead are so vague and purposeless as to suggest mere “dead men’s dreams” telepathically communicated to the living, seems to me a most extraordinary one. No doubt the range of these phenomena is very great, and in some cases there may be no purpose in the appearance so far as the percipient is concerned. But these are certainly not typical or by any means the best attested or the most numerous; and it seems to me to be a proof of the weakness of the telepathic theory that almost all the cases I have adduced, and many more of like import, have been passed by almost or quite unnoticed by those who support that view.

We have one more class of evidence to notice—that of premonitions. These are of all kinds, from those announcing very trivial events, to such as foretell accidents or death. They are not so frequent as other phantasms, but some of them are thoroughly well attested, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they are realities, and that they are due, generally speaking, to the same agencies as objective veridical phantasms. One or two examples may be given.

A striking case is that of Mrs. Morrison, who was living in the Province of Wellesley, Malay Peninsula, in 1878, and one morning, when awake, heard a voice distinctly say, “If there is darkness at the eleventh hour there will be death.” On starting up in bed, the same words were slowly and deliberately repeated. A week afterwards her little girl was taken seriously ill, and some days later, after a week of cloudless weather, a storm came on a few minutes before eleven in the morning, and the sky became black with clouds. At one o’clock the same day the child

died.<sup>1</sup> The unusual character of the warning renders this case a remarkable one.

In another case Miss R. F. Curtis of London dreams that she sees a lady in black who passes her, and is then seen lying on the road with a crowd of people round her. Some think she is dead, some that she is not dead; and on asking her name, the dreamer is told she is Mrs. C——, a friend living on Clapham Common, who had not been heard of for some time. In the morning Miss Curtis tells her sister of her dream; and about a week afterwards they hear that the day after the dream Mrs. C—— had stumbled over a high curbstone, and had fallen on the road very much hurt.

Still more extraordinary is the case of the Yorkshire vicar, who, when a young man of nineteen, was at Invercargill, in New Zealand, and there met a man he knew as a sailor on the ship he had come out in, and agreed to go with him and several others on an excursion to the island of Ruapuke to stay a day or two for fishing and shooting. They were to start at four the next morning, in order to cross the bar with the high tide, and they agreed to call the vicar in time. He went to bed early with the fullest intention to go with them, and with no doubt or hesitation in his mind. The thing was settled. On his way upstairs to bed he seemed to hear a voice saying, "*Don't go with those men.*" There was no one near, but he asked, "Why not?" The voice, which seemed inside him, said with emphasis, "You are *not* to go;" and on further question these words were repeated. Then he asked, "How can I help it? They will call me up." And, most distinctly and emphatically, the same voice said, "*You must bolt your door.*" When he got to the room he found there was a strong bolt to the door, which he had not

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ps. Res.*, part xiii. p. 305.



remembered. At first he determined he would go, as he was accustomed to take his own way at all hazards. But he felt staggered, and had a feeling of mysterious peril, and after much hesitation finally bolted the door and went to sleep. In the morning about three he was called, the door violently shaken and kicked, but though awake he did not speak, and finally the men went away cursing and shouting. About nine o'clock he went down to breakfast, and was at once asked if he had heard what had happened, and was then told that the boat with the party for Ruapuke had been upset on the bar, and *every one of them drowned*. Some of the bodies were washed up on the beach that day, and the others a day or two later, and, he adds, "If I had been with them, I must have perished beyond a doubt."

Now what are we to say of this determined warning voice that insisted on being heard and attended to? Who and what was the being that foresaw the catastrophe that was to happen, and saved the one that it could save? Du Prel would say that it was the second-self, the unconscious *ego*, that produced this inner voice; but, as we have shown, this purely hypothetical explanation is both unintelligible and inconceivable, and explains nothing, since the suggested cause has not been proved to exist, nor can it be shown how the knowledge exhibited had been acquired. But phantasms of the dead, manifesting themselves in a way to prove their identity, or exhibiting knowledge which neither the percipient nor any conceivable living agent possesses, afford strong proof that the so-called dead still live, and are able in various ways to influence their friends in earth-life. We will, therefore, briefly summarise the evidence now adduced, and see how the spiritualistic theory gives a consistent and intelligible explanation of it.



It is evident that any general theory of phantasms must deal also with the various cases of "doubles," or undoubted phantasms of the living. The few examples of apparent voluntary production of these by a living person have been supposed to prove the actual production by them, or by their unconscious *egos*; but the difficulties in the way of this view have been already pointed out. In many cases there is no exercise of will, sometimes not even a thought directed to the place or person where, or to whom, the phantasm appears; and it is altogether irrational to ascribe the production of so marvellous an effect as, for example, a perfectly life-like phantasm of two persons, a carriage, and a horse, visible to three persons at different points of its progress through space (as described in my first article), to an agent who is totally unconscious of any agency in the matter. What is termed the agent, that is the person whose "double" is produced, may be a *condition* towards the production of the phantasm without being the *cause*. I write a telegram to a friend a thousand miles away, and that friend receives my message in an hour or two. But the possibility of sending the message does not reside in me, but in a whole series of contributory agencies from the earliest inventors of the telegraph down to the clerks who transmit and receive the message.

The clue to a true explanation of these very puzzling "doubles," as of all the other varied phenomena of phantasms and hauntings, is, I believe, afforded by the following passage by one of the most thoughtful and experienced of modern spiritualists, Dr. Eugene Crowell:—

"I have frequently consulted my spirit friends upon this question, and have invariably been told by them that a spirit while in mortal form cannot for an instant leave it; were it to do so, death would at once ensue; and,

that the appearance of one's self at another place from that in which the body at the moment is, is simply a personation by another spirit, who thus often accomplishes a purpose desired by his mortal friend, or some other useful purpose is accomplished by the personation. I am informed and believe, that in cases of trance, where the subjects have supposed that their spirits have left their bodies, and visited the spheres, their minds have been psychologically impressed with views representing spiritual scenes, objects, and sounds, and many times these impressions are so apparently real and truthful that the reality itself barely exceeds these representations of it, but these are all subjective impressions, not actual experiences."<sup>1</sup>

Accepting, then, as proved by the various classes of phantasms and the information conveyed by them, that the spirits of the so-called dead still live, and that some of them can, under special conditions, and in various ways, make their existence known to us, or influence us unconsciously to ourselves, let us see what reasonable explanation we can give of the cause and purpose of these phenomena.

In every case that passes beyond simple transference of a thought from one living person to another, it seems probable that other intelligences co-operate. There is much evidence to show that the continued association of spirits with mortals is in many cases beneficial or pleasurable to the former, and if we remember the number of very commonplace people who are daily and yearly dying around us, we shall have a sufficient explanation of those trivial and commonplace yet veridical dreams and impressions which at first sight seem so unintelligible. The production of these dreams, impressions,

<sup>1</sup> *Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii. p. 109.

and phantasms may be a pleasurable exercise of the lower spiritual faculties, as agreeable to some spirits as billiards, chemical experiments, or practical jokes are to some mortals.

Many hauntings, on the other hand, seem to show one mode of the inevitable punishment of crime in the spirit world. The criminal is drawn by remorse or by some indefinable attraction to haunt the place of his crime, and to continually reproduce or act over some incidents connected with it. It is true that the victim appears in haunted houses as often as the criminal, but it does not at all follow that the victim is always there, unless he or she was a participator in the crime, or continued to indulge feelings of revenge against the actual criminal.

Again, if there be a spiritual world, if those whose existence on earth has come to an end still live, what is more natural than that many spirits should be distressed at the disbelief, or doubt, or misconception that so widely prevail with respect to a future life, and should use whatever power they possess to convince us of our error? What more natural than that they should wish, whenever possible, to give some message to their friends, if only to assure them that death is not the end, that they still live, and are not unhappy? Many facts seem to show us that the beautiful idea of guardian spirits is not a mere dream, but a frequent, perhaps universal reality. Thus will be explained the demon of Socrates, which always warned him against danger, and the various forms of advice, information, or premonition which so many persons receive. The numerous cases in which messages are given from those recently dead, in order to do some trivial act of justice or of kindness, are surely what we should expect; while the fact that, although indications are frequently given of a crime having been committed,

it is but rarely that the criminal is denounced, indicates either that the feeling of revenge does not long persist, or that earthly modes of punishment are not approved of by the denizens of the spirit world.

The powers of communication of spirits with us, and ours of receiving their communications, vary greatly. Some of us can only be influenced by ideas or impressions which we think are altogether the product of our own minds. Others can be so strongly acted on that they feel an inexplicable emotion, leading to action beneficial to themselves or to others. In some cases, warning or information can be given through dreams, in others by waking vision. Some spirits have the power of producing visual, others audible hallucinations to certain persons. More rarely, and needing more special conditions, they can produce phantasms, which are audible or visible to all who may be present—real entities which give off light or sound waves, and thus act upon our senses like living beings or material objects. Still more rarely these phantasms are tangible as well as visual—real though temporary living forms, capable of acting like human beings, and of exerting considerable force on ordinary matter.

If we look upon these phenomena, not as anything supernatural but as the perfectly natural and orderly exercise of the faculties and powers of spiritual beings for the purpose of communicating with those still in the physical body, we shall find every objection answered and every difficulty disappear. Nothing is more common than objections to the triviality or the partiality of the communications alleged to be from spirits. But the most trivial message or act, if such that no living person could have given or performed it, may give proof of the existence of other intelligences around us. And the partiality

often displayed, one person being warned and saved, while others are left to die, is but an indication of the limited power of spirits to act upon us, combined with the limited receptivity of spirit influence on our part. In conclusion, I submit that the brief review now given of the various classes of phantasms of the living and of the dead demonstrates the inadequacy of all the explanations in which telepathy between living persons or the agency of the unconscious *ego* are exclusively concerned, since these explanations are only capable of dealing with a small proportion of the cases that actually occur. Furthermore, I urge that nothing less fundamental and far-reaching than the agency of disembodied intelligences, acting in co-operation with our own powers of thought-transference and spiritual insight, can afford a rational and intelligible explanation of the whole range of the phenomena.



## APPENDIX TO "A DEFENCE OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM"

### I.

SINCE my article appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, I have seen Dr. Carpenter's important work, *The Principles of Mental Physiology*. One or two of the learned Doctor's statements have been noticed in foot-notes to this book, but there are a few others calling for remark, which I will now refer to.

At p. 296 Dr. Carpenter says, that the only answer spiritualists give to Faraday's experiments is, that—"Faraday's performers moved the tables with their hands, whereas we know that we do not;"—and he then continues—"Those who make this assertion are (of course) scientifically bound to demonstrate it, by showing that in *their* case the table *does* go round without any deflection of the index by lateral pressure, but they have uniformly refused to apply this test to their own performance, although repeatedly challenged to do so." But Dr. C. omits to tell us who are the spiritualists whose "only answer" is above given, and who are they who have been "repeatedly challenged" and have "uniformly refused" to accept the challenge. On inquiry, it may be found that it is the men of science who have "uniformly refused" to witness the proof of what they say spiritualists are scientifically bound to demonstrate.

In the spring of 1867, when I had obtained the proofs of force in lifting (not turning) a table (as detailed at p. 141), I invited Dr. Carpenter to attend some sittings with every probability of being able to show the phenomena. He came once. The sitting was not very successful, raps and taps of varying character being alone produced. Although strongly pressed to do so, he *never came again*. With Professor Tyndall exactly the same thing occurred. He came once, and declined to come again; although informed of phenomena which had repeatedly occurred in my own

house, which he could not explain, and which I had every reason to believe would occur in his presence if he would only give three or four short sittings to these investigations. More recently Dr. Sharpey and Professor Stokes, Secretaries of the Royal Society, refused the invitation of one of their own Fellows, Mr. Crookes, to witness experiments which formed the subject of a paper offered to the Society. Where we are vaguely and generally accused of "uniformly refusing" to produce certain proofs, it is only right that the public should know how our scientific opponents receive our offers to exhibit even more conclusive proofs. We must also remember that Dr. Carpenter is acquainted with the evidence of the Dialectical Committee, of Serjeant Cox, of Mr. Crookes, of Mr. Varley, and of myself, as to the movement of heavy objects entirely without contact of the medium or any other person; yet in 1874 he can adduce nothing but the utterly exploded and almost forgotten "table-turning" of the time of Faraday as worthy of notice!

The theory of "unconscious cerebration" is Dr. Carpenter's special hobby, yet in his application of it to explaining the phenomena of dreams we find a remarkable amount of contradiction and false reasoning.

At p. 586, for example, he notices the "suspension of our power to form common-sense judgments," the "suspension of our moral sense," and the "entire want of coherence between the ideas that successively present themselves," as characteristics of dreams, and to be explained as the normal result of "unconscious cerebration." But he imputes to the very same cause an exaltation of the imaginative and reasoning powers and their action in strict logical succession, so as to produce results which the whole working powers of the mind were unable to achieve, and in many cases the committal of these results to paper without a single error. And all this is still to be accepted as explained by the magical words "unconscious cerebration."

As an illustration of Dr. Carpenter's mode of reasoning we give the narrative of a student at an Amsterdam University, adduced by him as supporting his views. The Professor having to perform a laborious and difficult mathematical calculation, found that he could not get the correct result, owing to errors occurring in some of numerous figures employed. He therefore gave the problem to ten of his pupils. The narrator worked at it unsuccessfully for three evenings, but always without effect; and after

sitting up to one in the morning on the third trial, went to bed much disappointed at not having been able to do the work correctly, as it was particularly required the next day. On getting up in the morning, he found to his astonishment, on his writing-table, the problem correctly solved in his own handwriting, not a single figure being wrong. But the important fact is, that the work was done by a shorter and better method than the student had attempted during his three evenings' work. The work he had already done, and with which his mind must have been imbued, was not done over again without error, but an altogether new and better class of work was performed; and the Professor himself was astonished at it, and declared that he "had never once thought of a solution so simple and concise."

Now here is evidently a case in which the ordinary rules of unconscious cerebration do not apply. For something is done in a way the doer had never thought of when awake. The student had been trying over and over again to find out the numerical error in his calculation, not to perform the calculation itself by any other method. When asleep, he does not find out this error—which, if done, *might* have been imputed to the repetition of the former cerebral action, uninfluenced by the disturbing causes which had led to error—but he begins *de novo*, in a way he had never attempted when awake, and solves the problem by a process which even his mathematical teacher had not thought of! This is exactly analogous to those cases of trance mediums who do in trance what they *cannot* do when awake—speak languages they have never learnt, for example; and to impute such actions to "unconscious cerebration" is not to explain them, but merely to give a name, and, like a child or a savage, accept the name as a sufficient explanation. It is exactly an analogous case to that of Mr. Lewes (given at page 203), in which preconceived ideas completely shut out the plainest logical consequences of the facts adduced.

## II.

I have been informed by some of my correspondents that, because I have not referred to any cases of new information of practical utility having been derived from spiritual communications, I am supposed to admit that such do not exist. This is an error. There are many such instances, but as bearing on the question whether Spiritualism is a reality or a delusion, I did not think them of much importance, and they could not have

been introduced, with the necessary evidence, without altering the plan and much increasing the length of my article. If Spiritualism is a delusion—that is, if it is a product of known or unknown natural forces *plus* the minds of the assistants—then no new information of the kind referred to can possibly be derived from it. If, on the other hand, it is a reality—that is, if it proves that intelligent beings of another order of existence than our own can and do communicate with us (whether those beings are the spirits of deceased men or no)—this fact alone is of such vast and overwhelming importance, and involves such tremendous issues, scientific, philosophical, and religious, that the question whether these beings can and will improve our telegraphs or our steam-engines is an altogether subordinate one. Since the question of what is called *practical results* implies the truth and reality of the spiritual theory, it appears to me to be out of place to bring up that question while the primary question remains unsettled; for I can no more imagine a rational man being influenced in his acceptance of Spiritualism by the probability of his getting out of it such *practical results*, than I can imagine an earnest inquirer after religious truth being influenced in his acceptance of Christianity by the probability of its ministers being able to affect the weather by their prayers. When once a man is satisfied of the reality of spiritual communications, he will meet with abundant practical results. So long as he is not satisfied, such results, like all the other evidence, will be ignored or explained away.

### III.

The *Spectator*, the *Academy*, and *Pall Mall Gazette* thought my paper in the *Fortnightly Review* worthy of more or less lengthy notice, but they all declined to discuss the nature and bearing of the evidence I have adduced and referred to for the reality of the phenomena, while they made various objections to the moral and historical teachings deduced therefrom. Here I must decline to join issue with them. I hold that spiritualists alone are as yet competent to decide what theory best explains the facts, and what are the teachings which arise out of them, for the sufficient reason that they alone know these facts in their wide range and countless details. I could only sketch generally the *nature* of the phenomena, and was obliged to omit all the infinitude of characteristic mental details which constitute their

chief value. My critics also expressed their views as to the contemptible and unsatisfactory nature of the phenomena and of the communications, even if true; but here again they are evidently too ignorant of what they criticise to be enabled to form an opinion. I felt it my duty to give some idea of the teachings which are satisfying to most spiritualists, whatever may have been their previous opinions. Whether those teachings are agreeable to sceptics is of little importance; the facts of Spiritualism remain, and must be dealt with before the critics are in a position to give any opinion worth listening to as to the truth of the theory.

## IV.

I here give a few extracts strikingly illustrative of our subject. In the following passage from Jamblichus on Divination, quoted in Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, we find mention in a short space of a number of the most startling phenomena of modern Spiritualism:—

“Often at the moment of inspiration, or when the afflatus has subsided, a *fiery appearance* is seen—the entering or departing power. Those who are skilled in this wisdom can tell by the character of this glory the rank of the divinity who has seized for the time the reins of the mystic's soul, and guides it as he will. Sometimes the body of the man is *violently agitated*, sometimes it is *rigid and motionless*. In some instances *sweet music is heard*, in others discordant and fearful sounds. The person of the subject has been known to dilate and *tower to a superhuman height*, in other cases it has been *lifted into the air*. Frequently not merely the ordinary exercise of reason, but sensation and animal life would appear to have been suspended; and the subject of the afflatus has *not felt the application of fire*, has been pierced with spits, cut with knives, and not been sensible to pain.”

The next passage throws much light on what is so often a stumbling-block to sceptics—the action of suspicion, or too rigid inquiry in checking the manifestations. Dr. Frederick L. H. Willis, Professor of Materia Medica in the New York Medical College, thus describes his experience with a musical medium (*Spiritual Magazine*, 1867, p. 209):—

“One evening the medium went into the dark room alone, and took her seat at the piano. I was in the sitting-room adjoining (the door between was open), the light from which made every



object in the circle-room distinctly visible. Scarcely had the medium struck the first note upon the piano, when the tambourine and the bells seemed to leap from the floor and join in unison. Carefully and noiselessly I stole into the room, and for several seconds it was my privilege to witness a rare and wonderful sight. I saw the bells and tambourine in motion. I saw the bells lifted as by invisible hands and chimed, each in its turn, accurately and beautifully with the piano. I saw the tambourine dexterously and scientifically manipulated with no mortal hand near it. But suddenly, by a slight turn of the head, the medium became aware of my presence; instantly, like the severing of the connection between a galvanic battery and its poles, everything ceased. Mark this; so long as my presence in the room was known only to the invisibles, so long the manifestations continued in perfection; the moment the medium became aware of it, everything stopped. A wave of mental emotion passed over her mind, which was in itself sufficient to stop the phenomena at once. The incident proved to my mind most clearly that, in most cases, it is the condition of the medium that renders it so difficult for spirits to perform these wonders in the light rather than any lack of power or disposition on their part."

From the numerous cases referred to at pages 79 and 215, which have been investigated by the police authorities, I adduce the following taken from *La Gazette des Tribunaux* (the official organ of the French Police) of February 2, 1849, because in this case a friend of mine, a literary man, has verified the extract at the British Museum, and assures me that the translation is exact:—

"A fact most extraordinary, and which has been repeated every evening, every night, for the last three weeks, without the most active researches, the most extended and persevering surveillance having been able to discover the cause, has thrown into commotion all the populous quarter of La Montagne-Sainte-Genève, the Sorbonne, and Place Saint-Michel. This is what has taken place, in accordance with the public clamorous demand, and a double inquiry, judicial and administrative, which has been going on many days, without throwing any light on the mystery.

"In the work of demolition going on to open a new street, which shall join the Sorbonne to the Pantheon and L'Ecole de Droit, in traversing the Rue de Grès up to the old church, they came to a wood and coal yard, with an inhabited house connected with it, of only one storey and an attic. This house, at some distance from the street, and separated from the houses in course of destruction by large excavations, has been assailed every evening, and through the whole night, by a hail of projectiles, which, from their bulk, and the violence with which they have been thrown, have done such destruction, that it has been

laid open to the day, and the woodwork of the doors and windows reduced to shivers, as if it had sustained a siege, aided by a catapult or grapeshot.

"Whence came these projectiles, which are paving stones, fragments of the demolished walls near, and ashlar stones entire, which from their weight, and the distance they are hurled, are clearly from no mortal hand? This is just what, up to this moment, it has been impossible to discover. In vain has a surveillance been exercised, day and night, under the personal direction of the Commissary of Police, and able assistants. In vain has the head of the Service of Safety been continually on the spot. In vain have they let loose every night watchdogs in the adjoining enclosures. Nothing has been able to explain the phenomena, which, in its credulity, the people has attributed to mysterious means. The projectiles have continued to rain down with great noise on the house, launched forth at a great height above the heads of those who have placed themselves in observation on the roofs of the small surrounding houses, and, seeming to come from a great distance, reaching their aim with a precision, as it were, mathematical, and without deviating from the parabolic evidently designed for them.

"We shall not enter into the ample details of these facts, which will, without doubt, receive a speedy explanation; thanks to the solicitude which they have awakened. Nevertheless, we will remark that, in circumstances somewhat analogous, and which equally excited a certain sensation in Paris, where, for example, a rain of pieces of small money drew together the loungers of Paris every evening in the Rue de Montesquieu, or when all the bells were rung in a house in the Rue de Malte by an invisible hand, it was found impossible to make any discovery, to find any papable cause for the phenomena. Let us hope that this time we shall arrive at a result more precise."

My friend informs me that he found a later short notice saying that "the phenomena remain inexplicable," and then the matter seems to have been no further noticed; so we may conclude that, as in the other cases referred to, "it was found impossible to make any discovery."

The sneer of the writer at the people's "credulity," in attributing the phenomena to "mysterious means," is quite amusing, in face of the statement just made that they "are clearly from no mortal hand," and the undoubted fact that they were "mysteries," since it was found "impossible" to discover them in a month's close examination by the police force of Paris. If we read the narrative carefully, giving due weight to all the facts that occurred and the completeness of the investigation into them, we shall be driven to the conclusion that had any *human beings* with the

*necessary machinery* been engaged, *they must have been discovered*. It is a case strictly analogous to that of Bealing's Bells (see p. 218) and others there referred to, and it by no means stands alone, for Mr. Howitt has published a remarkable collection of cases of "stone-throwing," most of them strictly investigated at the time, without *any human agents being in any case discovered*.