

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

#### CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

BOUTLEROW, Professor, The University, St. Petersburg.

#### MEMBERS.

ELWYN, Rev. Canon, Master's Lodge, Charterhouse, London, E.C.  
 HADDINGTON, The Countess of, Tynninghame, Prestonkirk, N.B.  
 MATTHEWS, Frank Herbert, B.A., King's School, Canterbury.  
 MUIRHEAD, Henry, M.D., M.A., Bushy Hill, Cambuslang, Glasgow, N.B.

#### ASSOCIATES.

CAMPBELL, Miss E., South Hall, Colintrave, Argyllshire, N.B.  
 GLYN, The Hon. and Rev. E. Carr, The Vicarage, Kensington, S.W.  
 HILL, Miss E. D., Somerton, Sidmouth.  
 MARSHALL, William Cecil, M.A., 1, Torrington Street, London, W.C.  
 MINOT, Dr. Charles Sedgwick, 25, Mount Vernon Street, Boston, U.S.A.  
 THURTELL, William Ellis, M.A., 13, Monmouth Road, Westbourne Grove, London, W.

#### MEETINGS OF COUNCIL.

At a Council Meeting held on the 9th of October, the following Members were present: Messrs. Alexander Calder, Edward R. Pease, Frank Podmore, and Mr. J. Herbert Stack, who was voted to the chair.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and signed as correct.

On the proposition of Mr. Edmund Gurney, Professor Boutlerow, of St. Petersburg, was elected a Corresponding Member.

One new Member and three new Associates, whose names appear above, were elected.

In connection with the occurrence of the General Meeting on the 29th of October, a Meeting of the Council, held in accordance with the resolution passed in February last, was summoned for the afternoon of the same day. The Members present were: Professor Barrett, Messrs. Alexander Calder, Walter H. Coffin, Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, F. W. H. Myers, Frank Podmore, and Hensleigh Wedgwood. The chair was taken by Mr. H. Wedgwood.

After the Minutes of the previous Meeting had been read and signed as correct, three new Members and three new Associates were elected, whose names and addresses are included in the list given above.

The Treasurer reported that Mr. Frederick Elder, who was elected on the 2nd of October, had qualified as a Life Member of the Society. The Council directed the amount thus received, £21, to be invested in Consols.

Some presents to the Library were on the table, which are otherwise acknowledged.

A cash account made up to date was presented, and one account passed for payment.

The very few complete sets of Volume I. of the *Journal* which remain having been bound, it was resolved that four copies be presented to the following Libraries: The British Museum, the Bodleian, the Cambridge University, and the American Academy at Boston, the remaining copies to be retained by the Society.

It was resolved that 25 copies of the first Report issued by the American Society for Psychological Research be ordered. The price at which these can be offered to Members will be announced as soon as they are in hand.

The next Meeting of the Council was fixed for Friday, the 27th of November.

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## REPORT OF THE GENERAL MEETING.

The first General Meeting of the Society for the season was held on the evening of Thursday, the 29th of October, at the Garden Mansion, Queen Anne's Mansions, S.W.

In the absence of the President, the chair was taken by Professor Barrett.

Mr. Myers began by explaining the general position he was about to take up in the controversy now going on as to the true nature of

man. The old view, he said, held both by ordinary common-sense and by most metaphysicians, maintains that each of us possesses a distinct and permanent personality—a self which is a unity and not a mere aggregation. This view is usually based on *introspection*. The new physiological view, on the other hand, is to the effect that the only unity in us is the unity of our organism, and that our sense of personality depends merely on the temporary harmony of a sufficient number of the physical elements which compose us. This view is supported by the physiological analysis, which tends to show how our higher physical processes may be mere developments of the lower processes which we share with the brute. Mr. Myers explained that he advocated the *methods* of this newer school, but that he was led by them to something more like the *conclusions* of the older. But he held that the old empirical conception of human personality must be analysed into its constituent elements before the basis of a scientific doctrine of human personality could safely be laid.

In pursuance of this analysis, he proceeded to give an account of various experiments on hypnotised subjects, partly made by the Society for Psychical Research, but mainly made by certain French *savants*, Professors Bernheim, Beaunis, &c. From these it appears that if a favourable subject was hypnotised, and a suggestion made to him in the hypnotic trance, this suggestion will work itself out afterwards in his waking life, and he will do what he has been told to do, yet will all the while suppose that he is acting on his own impulse. It was thus shown that our sense of free-will may often be illusory.

Mr. Myers then touched on the phenomena of *alternating memory*, which hypnotism evokes. The subject acquires, it seems, a second memory, distinct from the first, and including the things said and done in the trance condition, which are entirely forgotten in ordinary waking life. It was thus indicated that we can hardly appeal to the continuity of our memory as a proof of a persistent personality.

After pointing out the dangers involved in hypnotism, and the safeguards against those dangers, Mr. Myers gave some remarkable examples of improvement of character effected by hypnotic suggestion. It appears that habits of over-indulgence in beer, spirits, coffee, and smoking have been effectually checked by throwing the subject into the hypnotic trance, and suggesting to him that on his awaking he would find that he disliked beer, &c. This kind of suggestion needs occasional renewal, and an anecdote was told of an idle boy, to whom it was suggested in the hypnotic trance that he would henceforth be diligent. He became so, and rose to the top of his class, but he did not like his new character, and when the effect of the suggestion wore off he obstinately refused to be hypnotised again. Mr. Myers was of opinion that this power of suggestion might be turned to great practical advantage.

Returning to his opening statement of opinion, he pointed out that this process of analysing human faculties by direct experiment, though in some directions it led to conclusions at which our self-esteem might revolt, yet was beginning to discover in us the germs of faculties transcending any which we were previously aware of possessing. Such a faculty was *telepathy*, or the transmission of thought and sensation from one mind to another, without the agency of the recognised organs of sense. This discovery in itself placed the whole problem of our being in a different light, and afforded reasonable grounds for hope that we might hereafter establish on a valid scientific basis much that had hitherto been the object only of trust and aspiration.

The Chairman expressed his sense of the importance of Mr. Myers' paper. He considered that these facts mark an era in hypnotic research. He invited M. Richet, one of the Corresponding Members of the Society, to address the Meeting.

M. Richet (who spoke in French) expounded the view of "unconscious intelligence," which he has advocated in connection with his experiments in mental suggestion, and expressed his conviction that a large amount of intelligent process goes on below the level of consciousness.

The meeting then assumed a conversational character.

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## Obituary Notice.

By the death of LORD HOUGHTON our Society has lost a valued Member. Lord Houghton (on whose other attainments and distinctions it is, of course, needless here to touch), had throughout his life paid attention to occult subjects, and possessed a rare and valuable collection of books on mystic lore. He showed, from the first, a strong interest in the researches of our Society.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY LIBRARY CATALOGUE.

*The following additions have been made since last month.*

CLARK (W. W.) A Forecast of the Religion of the Future ...	London, 1879*
EVANS (W. F.) The Primitive Mind-Cure .....	Boston, 1885
PROCEEDINGS of the American Society for Psychical Research. Vol. I., No. 1 .....	Boston, 1885†
PROCEEDINGS of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow. Vols. XV. and XVI. ....	Glasgow, 1884-5‡

\* Presented by the Author.

† Presented by the Society.

‡ Presented by the Society.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR  
PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.(Vol. I., No. 1, *Boston, July, 1885.*)

The most important part of the first number of the Proceedings of our sister Society consists in the interesting report of the Committee on Thought-transference. This Committee issued circulars, asking for assistance in experiments designed on lines similar to those suggested by M. Richet. They received in reply records of 5,500 trials in guessing the colour of a playing-card on which the agent concentrated his attention, and of 11,600 trials in guessing which of the 10 digits was thought of. In the card experiments, where the most probable percentage of success was 50, the actual percentage was 50.51. And in the digit experiments, where the most probable percentage of success was 10, the actual percentage was 10.33. The smallness of these excesses over the most probable number leads to the conclusion that no thought-transference took place.

In the digit experiments, the Committee recommended that the 10 digits should be written down by the agent one below the other in any arbitrary order, and that he should then think of these figures successively, passing alternately up and down the column till 100 guesses have been made. This plan seems to give the percipient too much information about the order of the digits, and so to introduce a possible source of serious error. In the first place, he knows that each digit will occur once, and once only, in each decade. If, therefore, he has already guessed a 3, say, in the course of a decade, there is a danger of his overriding an impulse, which may be due to thought-transference, to guess a 3 again. In the second place, he knows that, given the order of the digits in the first decade, that in the other nine decades would follow, so that if he remembers his first ten guesses the impulse produced by this recollection to guess the digits of subsequent decades in the order given by the first may be stronger than any impulse from thought-transference. The consequence would be that if all his first ten guesses were wrong he would make no right guesses at all, though by thought-transference he might have been led to guess right ninety times; while if his first ten guesses happened to be right he would be right all through the hundred, though there might have been no thought-transference whatever in the last ninety. In short, bias from this second cause, if completely operative, would, as Professors Peirce and Pickering point out, reduce a set of a hundred guesses to equivalence with ten. It will be interesting to learn from Dr. Minot's promised analysis of the guesses whether bias from either of these causes has operated, except in the case described as case E.

Experiments were also made in guessing the number on a die thrown.

The probable percentage of correct guesses was 16·7, and the actual percentage 18·9, but the number of trials—318—is insufficient to base any conclusion upon.

The report of the Committee also contains a short appendix on some experiments with diagrams similar to those which have several times been described in our own *Proceedings*. The success is, perhaps, not very brilliant, but it is decided enough to afford distinct corroboration to our own experiments.

An interesting appendix is added by Professor Pickering on the possibility of error, due to thought-transference, in scientific researches in which an assistant is aware of facts a knowledge of which the observer intentionally avoids. The example he brings forward is the revision of the Northern stars, where, after the observer has independently estimated the brightness of a star, his estimate is compared with that of the *Durchmusterung* of Argelander. If thought-transference occurs between the recorder who knows the previous estimate, and the observer who does not, Professor Pickering thinks that the result should be a greater number of cases where the new estimate and the old agree than there would otherwise be. He explains how the calculation is to be made, and what corrections need to be applied, and gives a careful analysis of the observations made at the Harvard College Observatory, where he finds no indication of thought-transference.

I am inclined to doubt whether the knowledge of previous estimates always tends to produce argument; with over-scrupulous observers it may, I think, tend the other way. But, however this may be, for any effect at all to be produced, there must surely be some degree of certainty as to what the previous estimate was; and from what even the most successful percipients tell us of their experiments, the impression they believe themselves to derive from thought-transference would seem to be generally faint in comparison to the slightest impression allowed to enter the mind from other sources. For this reason I should be surprised to find thought-transference operative in cases such as that discussed by Professor Pickering.

In conclusion, the Committee say that they have under consideration some forms of experiment founded on the hypothesis that conceptions of geometric form or arrangement may be more easily transferred than conceptions of colour or number, and capable of bringing the question to exact numerical tests. We may, therefore, look forward with interest to the next number of the *Proceedings*.

E. M. S.

## MESMERIC EXPERIMENTS AT LYON.

*Le Magnétisme Animal*; par le Dr. CLAUDE PERRONNET (de Lyon).  
Lons-le-Saunier, 1884.

This book consists of papers first printed about 18 months ago, in the *Liberté du Jura*, and afterwards collected and republished in the chief town of the Jura department. Many of the personal observations are very interesting, and as they have not hitherto received much attention, either in France or England, we may be excused, we hope, for giving a brief summary of their principal points.

Interest at Lyon in hypnotic phenomena was excited by Verbeck, the well-known conjurer, who showed in public what could be done with many persons when in the condition of hypnotic catalepsy. M. Perronnet was impressed with the inference that suggestion was very powerful with such persons. In May, 1883, he availed himself of an opportunity for experiment; he was called to a girl of 18, who was a nervous, wayward subject, and whom he found in a state of muscular rigidity. He put his fingers on her eyeballs with a slight tremulous movement; for a time the muscles completely relaxed, but afterwards they grew rigid again; when he touched the left side of her head, she moved the right side of the body and also spoke, as he thought she probably would do, since he imagined that the speech-centre in the left side of the brain would be stimulated; if the right side of the head was touched there was, as a rule, movement of the left side of the body without speech. In one experiment, however, he was meaning to touch the left side and was anticipating speech; the speech came, but he found he was really touching the *right* side, and he inferred that the speech followed his will or anticipation rather than the position of his fingers. He, thereupon, retreated several yards, so that contact was impossible, and gave her mental orders without speaking. He was surprised to find that she obeyed them at once; and still more surprised when he found that if one of the spectators took his hand at a distance and gave similar silent mental orders, she obeyed him also.

Two months later he was treating Mdlle. X., æt. 21, a hysterical and anæmic woman. She was easily hypnotised by gentle pressure on the eyeballs; if the left eye only was touched the right side of the body grew cataleptic, and the left was rigid. She could not play the piano; but he took her up to it, put his left hand on the left side of her head, and played a tune with his right hand, telling her, when he had finished, to repeat it; this she did accurately with her right hand, and even repeated it in another key when she was asked to do so, after the first note only had been struck for her guidance. He retreated to some little distance behind her, and asked her to play another well-known tune, which he named, and to play it with some spirit. She played it

in a most excited fashion, but he found he could silently stop her by his will when he was standing behind her and looking at her.

One day the idea struck him that he would make a person he had himself mesmerised mesmerise another subject; and he found no difficulty after he had mesmerised X to make X mesmerise Y. But when Y was thus mesmerised he could not wake her, or influence her movements, except by means of inducing X to act upon her. This could be carried a step further, and, by action on X, he could induce X to mesmerise Y so that Y should go on to mesmerise Z. In such a case he found himself powerless over Y and Z, and that they had an inert expressionless look, which he attributed to want of will in the persons who had mesmerised them.

He found it easy to make his mesmerised subjects believe that a glass of water which was in their hands contained any drugs he thought of; and that without a word spoken, and, indeed, often without there being in reality any glass or any water. He turned his thoughts to morphia; the mesmerised person sang Marguerite's song in "Faust" with all the emotions of that scene plainly shown in her face, then imagined that she drank the poison, and fell gradually under the influence of morphia; more water was given, whilst the doctor fixed his thoughts on atropine, and she slowly recovered from the narcotic effects of the imaginary morphia by the antidote of the imaginary atropine. After other delusive suggestions that the mesmerised subjects had taken colocynth, aloes, Glauber's salts, &c., the usual physiological results followed unsparingly. This was a repetition of the experiments which had been suggested by M. Dumontpallier. M. Perronnet found, also, that with patience he could, from a distance, influence the vaso-motor system and the distribution of the blood supply of the subject according to his unspoken intentions, so that, from a distance, he was able thus to make one limb colder than the other, and in one case he thought he diminished the temperature and inflammation in cellulitis of one arm.

When he mesmerised people and others asked them questions without contact, the answers were tinged more or less by the knowledge and wishes of the questioner, and there were four classes of conditions so produced. (i.) The questioner asked a question, of which he knew the answer; this knowledge and the real fact conspired to make the subject give the true answer, which generally happened.

(ii.) The questioner asked a question to which he did not know the answer, but hoped it might be one particular thing. The desired answer was generally given whether it was true or not. If the questioner desired nothing in particular he might get the true answer.

(iii.) If both M. Perronnet and the questioner knew the correct answer it was generally easily obtained.

(iv.) If the questioner did not know the answer but M. Perronnet

did, the answer given was generally a mixture of what the questioner wanted with what M. Perronnet knew.

M. Perronnet does not hesitate to accept some cases as instances of clairvoyance (*lucidité objective*) in a somnambulant state, but he only gives the details of one story which could be considered as strictly of this kind. He chose A, a girl easily mesmerised, and put her at his house into a state of deep sleep; her limbs became rigid or flaccid according to his wish, and stayed where he chose to place them; her pupils did not react to light, which he took to be the most conclusive disproof of fraud. They went together to visit a sick child, B; A was left in the corner of the room. The doctor went up to B, and taking up her hand asked A what was the rate of the pulse; A told him quite correctly how many beats there were to the minute, and when the doctor felt a beat missed out she exclaimed quickly, "A beat dropped!" So far, what she had done might be interpreted as the result of the doctor's knowledge communicated to her at a distance, or of an abnormal sensibility on the part of the girl, which enabled her to see the beating of the pulse. He went on, however, to a more important point, and put his clinical *maximum* thermometer under the sick child's arm. After a few minutes he took it out, and put it back in its case without looking at it, and asked A what the temperature was. "Thirty-seven and something more," she said. "Are you sure?" the doctor asked. "No, no," she answered; "I see I mistook a 9 for a 7, it is 39° and three cross-lines." He then looked at the thermometer, and found it 39°·3; the tenths of each degree being marked with cross-lines on the stem.

He goes on to give several stories of another kind, viz., thought-transference, for which we have here room for only one. A girl whom he had mesmerised was in the same room with him when he was writing a letter, but at a considerable distance and out of sight. When he had come to an end of the letter, he read it through silently to himself, and when he reached the place where, in writing the word "three-quarters," he had left out the "three" by accident, the girl suddenly called out, "He has left out the 'three'! He has made a mistake!"

To illustrate the usefulness of mesmerism in medical practice he recounts several of his own experiences, in which he found himself able to exercise great control over hysterical women in tonic rigid spasm, in trance, and in violent convulsions, and on one occasion to strengthen the anæsthetic effects of ether when administering it before a surgical operation to a drunkard who took it very badly.

He at first thought that everyone shares about equally in mesmeric power, but after considerable experience has come to believe that it varies with the individual, and depends on some quality of temperament which he cannot determine beforehand.

Of the method of physical action in these thought-transferences, M. Perronnet attempts to give some explanation. He suggests that all thoughts probably produce some physical movements in the periphery of the body; and that, though these movements may generally be unconscious and always very trifling, yet the undulations started by them may be perceptible by the abnormally acute receptive powers of the hypnotised subject, and may so be able to reproduce the idea from which they originated. "*Mon explication n'est pas parfaite,*" concludes M. Perronnet, "*mais cherchons ensemble avec ce seul espoir : fiat lux.*"

A. T. M.

## CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

(Continued.)

L.—2344.—A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup>

From Mr. G. Fournier, of 21, Rue de Berlin, Paris, a friend of M. Ch. Richet's, who guarantees his absolute *bona fides*.

16 Octobre, 1885.

Le 21 février, 1879, j'étais invité à dîner chez mes amis, M. et Mme. B——. En arrivant dans le salon, je constate l'absence d'un commensal ordinaire de la maison, M. d'E——, que je rencontrais presque toujours à leur table. J'en fais la remarque, et Mme. B—— me répond que d'E——, employé dans une importante maison de banque, était sans doute fort occupé en ce moment, car on ne l'avait pas vu depuis deux jours. A partir de ce moment, *il ne fut plus question de d'E——*. Le repas s'achève fort gaiement, et sans que Mme. B—— donne la moindre marque visible de préoccupation. Pendant le dîner, nous avions formé le projet d'aller achever notre soirée au théâtre. Au dessert Mme. B—— se lève pour aller s'habiller dans sa chambre, dont la porte, restée entr'ouverte, donne dans la salle-à-manger. B—— et moi étions restés à table, fumant notre cigare, quand, après quelques minutes à peine, nous entendons un cri terrible. Croyant à un accident, nous nous précipitons dans la chambre, et nous trouvons Mme. B—— assise, prête à se trouver mal. Nous nous empressons autour d'elle; elle se remet peu à peu, et nous fait alors le récit suivant.

"Après vous avoir quittés, je m'habillais pour sortir, et j'étais en train de nouer les brides de mon chapeau devant ma glace, quand tout-à-coup j'ai vu dans cette glace d'E—— entrer par la porte. Il avait son chapeau sur la tête; il était pâle et triste; sans me retourner je lui adresse la parole, "Tiens, d'E——, vous voilà; asseyez-vous donc"; et comme il ne répondait pas, je me suis alors retourné et je n'ai plus rien vu; prise alors de peur, j'ai poussé le cri que vous avez entendu."

B——, pour rassurer sa femme, se met à la plaisanter, traitant l'apparition d'hallucination nerveuse, et lui disant que d'E—— serait très flatté d'apprendre à quel point il occupait sa pensée; puis, comme Mme. B—— restait toute tremblante, pour couper court à son émotion, nous lui proposons de partir tout de suite, alléguant que nous allions manquer le lever du rideau. "Je n'ai pas pensé un seul instant à d'E——," nous dit Mme. B——, "depuis que M. F—— m'a demandé la cause de son absence.

Je ne suis pas nerveuse, et je n'ai jamais eu d'hallucination ; je vous assure qu'il y a là quelque chose d'extraordinaire, et quant à moi je ne sortirai pas avant d'avoir des nouvelles de d'E—. Je vous supplie d'aller chez lui, c'est le seul moyen de me rassurer." Je conseille à B— de céder au désir de sa femme, et nous partons tous les deux chez d'E—, qui demeurait à très peu de distance. Tout en marchant nous plaisantions beaucoup sur les frayeurs de Mme. B—.

En arrivant chez d'E—, nous demandons au concierge, "D'E—, est-il chez lui ?" "Oui, messieurs, il n'est pas descendu de la journée." D'E— habitait un petit appartement de garçon ; il n'avait pas de domestiques. Nous montons chez lui, et nous sonnons à plusieurs reprises sans avoir de réponse. Nous sonnons plus fort, puis nous frappons à tour de bras, sans plus de succès. B—, émotionné malgré lui, me dit, "C'est absurde, le concierge se sera trompé ; il est sorti ; descendons." Mais le concierge nous affirme que d'E— n'est pas sorti, qu'il en est absolument sûr. Véritablement effrayés, nous remontons avec lui, et nous tentons de nouveau de nous faire ouvrir ; puis n'entendant rien bouger dans l'appartement, nous envoyons chercher un serrurier. On force la porte, et nous trouvons le corps de d'E—, *encore chaud*, couché sur son lit, et troué de deux coups de revolver.

Le médecin, que nous faisons venir aussitôt, constate que d'E— avait d'abord tenté de se suicider en avalant un flacon de laudanum, et qu'ensuite, trouvant sans doute que le poison n'agissait pas assez vite, il s'était tiré deux coups de revolver à la place du cœur. D'après la constatation médicale, la mort remontait à une heure environ. Sans que je puisse préciser l'heure exacte, c'était cependant une coïncidence presque absolue avec la soi-disant hallucination de Mme. B—. Sur la cheminée il y avait une lettre de d'E—, annonçant à M. et Mme. B— sa résolution, lettre particulièrement affectueuse pour Mme. B—.

GASTON FOURNIER.

L.—2345.—A<sup>e</sup> P<sup>a</sup>

From Mrs. S., who is willing that her name should be given to any one genuinely interested in this case. She is known to E.G., and is an extremely sensible and clear-headed witness, as far from sentimentality or superstition as can well be conceived.

October 27th, 1885.

In 1874, I was staying at Düsseldorf with my daughter, who had just been to an eminent doctor in Bonn to have an operation performed on the throat. My mother-in-law was also in Bonn, and, after the operation, had run after the cab containing my daughter and myself, and had given the former (who was a child at the time) a ten-thaler note, as a reward for the brave manner in which she had submitted to the operation. She was in excellent spirits, and laughed and joked with us before parting. A day or two afterwards I awoke, and said to my daughter, who slept in the same room, "O M—, I have had such a dreadful dream. I dreamt your grandmother was dead." The terror caused by the dream was so great that I felt compelled to wake my daughter, though I knew that in her condition this was most unwise, as she was still suffering from the effects of the operation. I felt I

must tell someone. My daughter said it was "only a dream," and told me to go to sleep. I asked how her throat was, and she said it was better. I pulled out my watch from under the pillow, and found it was between 3 and 4 a.m. The following morning, at 10 o'clock, I received a telegram, telling me to meet my mother-in-law's sister at Cologne Station. I did so, and they broke to me the news of my mother-in-law's death, which had taken place the previous night. I had been in no sort of anxiety about her, and I was only told afterwards that she had been suffering for many years from some internal complaint, for which she had been operated on the day following that on which I last saw her. I was totally ignorant that this was going to be done. This was the only occasion on which I remember having had a vivid and distressing dream of death.

M. S.

L.—2346.—A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>s</sup>

From the same lady as No. 2345.

*October 27th, 1885.*

On the Saturday before Easter, 1881, my husband left London for Paris. On the Saturday or Sunday evening he was taken ill, at the hotel, and wandered about the place delirious. Subsequently he was put in a room, and although a man was in attendance, he was, in regard to medical advice, &c., quite neglected. He remained there some days, and by looking in his papers his name was discovered, and his family were communicated with.

On the afternoon of Easter Monday, my sons and my daughter had gone out, leaving me at home. I fell into an altogether extraordinary state of depression and restlessness. I tried in vain to distract myself with work and books. I went upstairs and felt beside myself with distress, for what reason I could not tell; I argued with myself, but the feeling increased. I even had a violent fit of weeping—a thing absolutely alien to my character. I then put on my things, and, in the hope of ridding myself of the uncomfortable feeling, took a hansom cab, and drove about Hyde Park for about three hours—a thing which I should have considered myself stark mad for doing at any other time. I should have been the last person to spend eight shillings on cab fare for nothing. On receiving the news I went over to Paris, where I arrived on the Thursday, and my husband just knew me. The nurse engaged to nurse him told me that she was asked by the waiter if my Christian name was M— [Mrs. S.'s name, a not very common one], as that was the name that my husband was constantly calling out during his delirium. He died some days afterwards.

M. S.

I learn from both Mrs. S. and her son that she mentioned her remarkable experience to her family on the Monday evening. Her son writes:—

I beg to corroborate my mother's account of the circumstances mentioned. Her distress and the circumstances of the cab-drive are entirely foreign to her character. My father always was in delicate health, although seldom actually ill.

E. S.

In answer to some questions addressed to Mrs. S., Mr. E. S. replies :—

My mother had no particular anxiety about my father's health. He left on the Saturday for Paris, and was then in his usual health; and she did not particularly connect her feelings with him."

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L.—2347.—A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup>

From Dr. Frank Comer, 79, Queen's Gate, South Kensington, S.W.

October 5th, 1885.

In the year 1820 or 1821, my grandfather, Geo. Miller, M.D., who was a physician practising in Newry, Ireland, emigrated with his family to Canada and settled in the town of Niagara, Upper Canada. On their way to Niagara from Quebec, having reached the town of Prescott, which is above all the rapids of the St. Lawrence River, they then embarked on a sailing vessel commanded by a Captain Patterson. As the voyage from Prescott to Niagara in those days would probably occupy about a week, the passengers would undoubtedly become pretty well acquainted with the captain of the little vessel. About six or eight weeks after the arrival of my grandfather and his family in Niagara, my grandmother (who, by the way, was a lady of more than ordinary sound practical common-sense, and not at all visionary) was walking in an orchard at the back of her house, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when Captain Patterson passed close by her and looked straight in her face. At first she was dumbfounded, not having heard his foot-steps, but recovering from her surprise she extended her hand to shake hands with him, but he merely smiled and passed out of sight behind a small out-building.

Upon grandfather's return home, my grandmother told him of the occurrence, but he smiled and said she must have been dreaming as Captain Patterson and his vessel were then at the other end of the Lake (Ontario); but she insisted that she was wide awake, that it was a clear bright afternoon, and that she certainly had seen him or his apparition. A few days later the vessel arrived in Niagara, and the mate who was in charge reported that the Captain (Patterson) had been washed overboard during a gale at the lower end of the Lake. Upon inquiry it turned out that it was the same day, and (as nearly as could be judged) the very same hour that grandmother Miller had seen his apparition in the garden. My mother, Mrs. J. F. R. Comer, was a girl of 10 or 11 years at the time, and remembers her mother and others talking about the occurrence at the time and afterwards, and she herself still remembers Captain Patterson. She is now in her 76th year, and is again living in Niagara, Ontario, Canada.

FRANK COMER.

Dr. Comer sent us the following extract from a letter written by his mother :—

In one of my letters I gave Frank an account of the drowning of Captain Patterson, on his second voyage up from Prescott, in a storm, and of my mother seeing him pass near the black cherry-tree. It was written on a separate sheet of paper. Did you not get it? I mean the second voyage after he brought my father's family from Prescott to Niagara.

L.—2348.—A° Pn (Clairvoyance).

From Dr. Frank Comer, 79, Queen's Gate, S.W.

*October 5th, 1885.*

In November or December, 1865, at Kingston, Ontario, Canada, where my father and family were then living, upon my return from lectures in the Medical Department of Queen's University, a little after 6 one evening, I found my poor father suffering intense agony from a very violent attack of neuralgia in his head. I immediately brought out a case containing a little hypodermic syringe and bottle of solution of morphia, intending to use it upon him at once, but I found there was little or none of the solution in the bottle, so I ran off as fast as possible to the nearest chemist's (about a mile away) to get the bottle refilled. Returning about 15 minutes later, I at once injected the morphia, and in a few minutes he had fallen asleep. Shortly after this (certainly before half-past 7), I received a telegram from my brother Alec, who was a physician living and practising at Tidioute, Pennsylvania, U.S. (some 400 miles distant from Kingston, Ontario), asking me if father was ill and to wire reply at once, which I did, stating that he had had a very severe attack of neuralgia, but was then sleeping quietly from a dose of morphia. In a letter from my brother a few days later, he explained that on the evening on which he wired me he was returning home from the oil wells shortly after six, and when passing the house of a Mrs. —, a clairvoyante, she was just leaving her door, and said to him: "Good evening, Doctor; your father is very ill," and then went on to describe what was taking place, *my* finding him writhing in pain—taking down the little case and finding the bottle empty—rushing off to have it filled—returning and giving him the hypodermic injection of morphia; and finally telling him, "now he is quiet and asleep." He went at once to the telegraph office, and wired me as I have stated.

FRANK COMER.

L.—2349.

From Miss W., who desires that her name may not be published.

— Rectory.

*August, 24th, 1885.*

Being away from home for a day or two has prevented my replying at once to your letter. The occurrence to which my brother referred happened as long ago as 12 years back, but was so impressed upon my memory that I am not likely to forget it. We were then living in an adjoining parish to this, of which my father was vicar, and at that time there was no one else in the house but my father and myself and two servants. We had all gone to our respective rooms at our usual time, and according to my custom I had locked my door, and gone to sleep. I was suddenly awaked with a distinct impression that there was somebody present in the room standing by the side of my bed, close by. Such an indescribable horror came over me that I remember shutting my eyes and covering up my face lest I might see what I felt was in the room. While I was lying like this in the darkness, too much frightened to light a candle, I heard the clock strike 3. I don't know how long I remained in this state of terror, but I never moved, and at

last fell asleep. As soon as I went down stairs I immediately told my father what a fright I had had at 3 o'clock. He said, "This is very strange for I have just been hearing the very same story from Mr. K." (the churchwarden living close by)—how he had been alarmed in the same way by thinking some one was standing by his bed, and how he had waked his wife, and told her to look at the clock, for he knew they should hear of something in the morning. He brought the news to my father that Mr. H., the other churchwarden, also a farmer in the parish, had died unexpectedly at 3 a.m.

This is all, and perhaps when you have read it you will think the story hardly worth telling, since there was really nothing *seen*, the presence was only felt.

Miss W.'s brother, Mr. T. E. W., writing from the St. Stephen's Club, on September 24th, 1885, says, "I was told of the occurrence a very short time after the time in question." He, however, imagined that the impressions had both been visual.

Miss W. adds:—

*September 30th, 1885.*

My brother is mistaken in supposing that I was conscious of the presence of Mr. H., or indeed of any one in particular. I only felt that there was *some one* standing by my bedside, and only connected Mr. H. with my visitor after I had heard of his death. I had told my story to my father some time before I heard the news. My father *might* confirm this, but being old, and rather nervous now, I do not intend to mention the subject to him at all.

Mr. K.'s widow writes:—

*October 3rd, 1885.*

In answer to Mr. Wedgwood's letter of September 25th Mrs. K. begs to state that she remembers very indistinctly some of the facts related, in regard to Mr. H.'s death, but cannot say positively if it was as Mr. Wedgwood affirms, being so long ago. But a friend says she remembers distinctly Mr. K. saying he saw some one by his bedside on the night in question.

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L.—2350.

From Mrs Malcolm, Wribbenhall, Bewdley.

*August 5th.*

During the commencement of the year 1849 (I being then a young girl) I had a tedious illness. On one occasion, to relieve a congested lung, I had a blister applied, and in consequence was prevented on that night from obtaining sleep. One of my brothers was with the army in the Punjaub at that time, and my thoughts were constantly with him, and doubtless, I followed the events of the war with intense interest. On the night in question, being, as I have said, wide awake, I was astonished by hearing the report of big guns. I raised myself in bed with some difficulty, and then continued to hear the distant firing of cannon sometimes nearer, sometimes remote. At length the guns ceased, but were succeeded by a sharp and rapid discharge of

musketry. The sounds lasted altogether about four hours. My great anxiety was that some one should hear these strange sounds of battle as well as myself, but I was forbidden at the time to leave my room, and hearing my father coughing in his bedroom opposite, I pacified myself with the assurance that he must be awake and would hear what I heard. Great was my mortification in the morning to find that neither he nor my mother were aware of anything unusual having occurred in the night past.

Then my old friend the doctor came in, inquiring laughingly whether I was growing fanciful (having been told my story). I also laughed and replied, "You shall know if my battle is mere fancy when the next news comes from the seat of war in India."

Whether this was my first connecting of the sounds I had listened to with an Indian battle, or whether I had done so during the continuance of those sounds, is a point I am not now clear upon. But although the doctor, when out of my hearing, desired that I might not again be left alone at night, it is observable that neither then nor at any later time was I rendered the least nervous by my strange experience, nor did I apprehend evil to the brother engaged in the campaign. In due time tidings of the severe battle at Goojerat reached us, the day on which it was fought, and hours, allowing for difference of time, exactly coinciding with the date of my prophetic battle. My brother was in the thick of the fight, but escaped unhurt.

GEORGINA MALCOLM.

In a later letter Mrs. Malcolm says :—

I send you a written testimony from one of my sisters, as to my having spoken of hearing the battle at the time of the occurrence. The hours during which the sounds continued were from 1 to 5 o'clock a.m. in the morning as far as my recollection serves.

You must remember that at the time of the occurrence I was living in my father's house in a very remote part of Warwickshire. The nearest soldiers' quarters to us would be at Coventry or Birmingham, at a distance of between 30 and 40 miles.

G. MALCOLM.

The following is from a letter written to Mrs. Malcolm by her sister :—  
*October 9th, 1885.*

I remember the incident about the battle of Goojerat. You were ill at the time, and in the morning you told us you felt as if you had been in a battle, as you had heard continual firing and report of cannon for a long time. I cannot say what time of the night it was when you heard it.

I think you made a note of it, and we heard afterwards from Frank that the battle began on the following morning.

LUCY DICKENS.

*London Gazette*, April 19th, 1849. Commander-in-Chief in India to Governor-General of India. February 21st, 1849 :—" . . . At 7 this morning I moved to the attack, which commenced at half-past 8 o'clock, and by 1 o'clock I was in possession of the whole Sikh position, with all his camp equipage, baggage, magazines, and, I hope, a large proportion of his guns; the exact number I cannot at present state, from the great extent of

his position and length of pursuit, as I followed up the enemy from 4 to 5 miles on the Bimber road, and pushed on Sir Joseph Thackwell with the cavalry."

In a letter from the Governor-General of India to the Secret Committee of the East India Company, a communication from the Commander-in-Chief is quoted: "Their ranks broken, their position carried, their guns, ammunition, camp equipage, and baggage captured; their flying masses driven before the victorious pursuers from mid-day to dusk, receiving most severe punishment in their flight."

From these and other documents it appears that the battle lasted from 8.30 until midday, after which the pursuit of the enemy commenced lasting until dusk.

L.—2351. (Casual Thought-Transference.)

From M. Ch. Richet.

Octobre 30, 1885.

Je n'ai obtenu qu'une seule fois dans de nombreuses recherches sur la lucidité des personnes mesmerisées, un résultat satisfaisant. C'est précisément dans une de mes premières expériences, et elle est remarquable, car je ne l'ai jamais pu répéter, même avec une approximation moindre. Une jeune fille, convalescente, fut mise dans le sommeil magnétique, en Novembre, 1872, par moi, à l'Hôtel-Dieu. Un jour vers 4 heures de l'après-midi j'amena avec moi un jeune étudiant Américain de mes amis, M. Hearn. M. Hearn n'avait jamais vu cette jeune fille. Lorsque elle fut endormie, je dis à mon sujet magnétique: "Connaissez-vous le nom de mon ami?" (J'étais sûr de ne pas avoir prononcé son nom.) Elle se mit à sourire. "Non," me dit-elle. Puis, comme j'insistais, elle ajouta: "Je ne le vois pas." J'insiste encore, et elle me dit: "Il y a cinq lettres." "Eh bien!" dis-je alors, "quelle est la première lettre?" Alors elle, à voix très basse, me dit, "H." "Quelle est la seconde lettre?" dis-je. "E." "Et la troisième?" "Je ne la vois pas." Comme elle cherchait inutilement, je dis, "Passons à la quatrième." "R." "Puis la cinquième." "N."

J'ai essayé le lendemain d'autres expériences analogues avec le même sujet, mais sans succès. De même plus tard, sans succès, avec d'autres personnes.

C'est pour cela que je ne l'avais pas publiée; mais maintenant que le fait de cette *thought-transference* semble bien prouvé, je me crois autorisé à le donner; car il rentre dans un ensemble de faits qui paraissent démontrés, et j'en ai été tellement frappé que je me souviens avec une précision absolue de toutes les circonstances qui l'ont accompagné.

L.—2352 (Borderland).—A<sup>d</sup>

From Mrs. Chermiside, Regia House, Teignmouth.

August, 1884,

E.B. was engaged to be married to H.D.O. He was a surgeon in the Army. Want of means on both sides delayed the marriage and he suddenly came to her one day to say "good-bye" as he was ordered to take troops to

Canada. He sailed, and she heard of his safe arrival. He spoke of his return in the following spring. One night, being the 28th December, she saw him enter her room about midnight; a light seemed to shine about him. But he was clothed completely in grave clothes. She sat up in bed and said, "Oh! H., why are you so strangely dressed?" He said "Do not laugh; this is my new uniform." He then departed as he came. She lay trembling all night and weeping sadly. Next morning she refrained from telling her family as they were opposed to her marriage; she, however, unburdened herself to me. I tried to persuade her it was only a silly dream; however, the idea that her lover was dead was most firmly fixed in her mind. A month after, she received the news of his death on that very night, and that the last word he uttered was her name. The whole thing took such possession of her that she slowly faded away and died about two years afterwards.

The following is from notes taken by Professor Sidgwick during two personal interviews with Mrs. Chermiside in September, 1884:—

"The occurrence was in the winter of 1845. Mrs. Chermiside told me that E.B. told her of the appearance the next morning. She (E.B.) was quite sure that it was not a dream; and had no doubt that her *fiancé* was dead. She heard the details of his death within a month or so—as soon as letters then came from Canada,—from one of his brother officers, and also from his sisters; and then wrote to tell Mrs. Chermiside that he had died the night that she saw the apparition."

L.—2353.—A<sup>d</sup> P<sup>n</sup>

From Mrs. Clerke, of Clifton Lodge, Farquhar Road, Upper Norwood, S. E.

October 30th, 1885.

In the month of August, 1864, about 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I was sitting reading in the verandah of our house, in Barbadoes. My black nurse was driving my little girl, about 18 months or so old, in her perambulator in the garden. I got up after some time to go into the house, not having noticed anything at all—when this black woman said to me, "Missis, who was that gentleman that was talking to you just now?" "There was no one talking to me," I said. "Oh yes, dere was, Missis—a very pale gentleman, very tall, and he talked to you, and you was very rude, for you never answered him." I repeated there was no one, and got rather cross with the woman, and she begged me to write down the day, for she knew she had seen someone. I did, and in a few days I heard of the death of my brother in Tobago. Now, the curious part is this, that I did not see him, but she—a stranger to him—did; and she said that he seemed very anxious for me to notice him.

MAY CLERKE.

In answer to inquiries, Mrs. Clerke says:—

- (1) The day of death was the same, for I wrote it down. I think it was the 3rd August, but I know it was the same.
- (2) The description "very tall and pale" was accurate.
- (3) I had no idea that he was ill. He was only a few days ill.
- (4) The woman had never seen him. She had been with me for about 18 months, and I considered her truthful. She had no object in telling me.

L.—2354.—Ad Pn

The following narrative was obtained through the kindness of Miss C. D. Garnett, of Furze Hill Lodge, Brighton, from a cousin, Mrs. D., who prefers that her own name should not be printed. Miss Garnett says :—

I may safely say she never before or since had such a vision. She is thoroughly practical and unimaginative, not in the least excitable, and I remember well how puzzled she was for a long time after. When she came to me some time after, she was full of it, and described it to me most graphically. She is almost like a sister to us, and I think discussed this affair more with us than with her own people. Her sister thought she was dreaming, but her father was rather astonished when she told him of the vision the next morning.

*September 15th, 1885.*

Some few years ago the occurrence took place which I am about to relate. I was lying awake one night, my thoughts fixed on no particular subject, when before me there seemed to rise the vision of the interior of a cathedral; the details which marked it from an ordinary church being clearly defined. In the open space before the chancel lay a coffin enveloped in its heavy black pall. After a few moments (as it seemed to be) it faded gradually away. I sat up and roused myself, as the whole scene was so real and strange, and I was convinced I had not been asleep. I had not lain down long before the same scene again repeated itself upon my brain, in every detail exactly as I had seen it before. The repetition of the vision (for such I firmly believe it was) filled me with presentiments of trouble, and rousing my sister, who was sleeping in the same room, I told her what I had seen; but as was natural, she concluded I had been dreaming. Next morning at breakfast I related what had occurred, and it was remarked that we knew no one in England whose funeral service would be likely to take place in a cathedral. Shortly after, we received news by telegram of the sudden death of my brother in the West Indies, and the day coincided with that on which I had seen the vision as related. When the letters containing all details arrived we learnt that he was buried the same day that he died in the evening, the funeral service taking place in the Colonial Cathedral. Allowing for the difference in time, it appears to have been as near as possible the same time that I in England saw the whole scene represented, the remembrance of which has remained indelibly printed on my memory.

J. D.

In answer to inquiries, Mrs. D. says :—

The date of my brother's death was February 21st, and as far I can remember I had the dream that evening, but it is so long since that as regards dates I do not like to be too certain. As regards the length of time between the death and funeral, it was, I believe, only a few hours, certainly less than 12. The news of his death reached us by telegram on February 28th, about a week later. I have never had anything in the way of a vision either before or since. I enclose the few lines from my sister on the subject, after having told her that I had written you an account.

The sister's words are :—

I corroborate the statement of my sister's dream of February, 1879, which she narrated to me the morning after it occurred.

S. G.

L.—817

Since this story was printed in the October number of the *Journal*, we have learnt further particulars about the accident from the Rev. W. A. Purey-Cust. He says: "It is possible that the position of the ship may not be quite accurate that day as I find [by reference to his diary] that it was worked by dead reckoning on that day, the sun not being visible. The course of the ship during those days, July 10th-12th, was very erratic, as we had to run before the gale." . . . "I find that July 12th, the day of Bale's death, was apparently the *only day* during the voyage in which the position of the ship had to be found by dead reckoning."

The error in time arising in this way could not, however, have amounted to more than a minute or two, and Mr. Purey-Cust gives particulars which make it almost impossible that he can be mistaken in stating that the accident occurred at 6 p.m. by the ship's clock. If, therefore, the accident and the apparition coincided, the error must be due to Miss Bale's observation or memory, or to the clock from which she took her time.

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#### RED LIGHT.

Miss Bramston, who is an Associate of the Society, sends us an account of an experience of a friend of hers, Miss G. Horner, which is interesting in connection with the story No. 2343, printed in the October *Journal*.

Miss Bramston says: "In your last *Journal* there is an account of a sympathetic dream about a red blaze in the room. It does not say where it happened, but the story I enclose makes me think there might be another explanation, and that it might not have been a dream after all. I have heard of these mine fires in Cornwall."

The story is as follows:—

October 21st [1885].

It was about five years ago, and I think in January, that I saw the light which you call a "mine fire." I was sitting by the window, in one of the lower rooms, when I saw a light suddenly pass, about the same height from the ground as one would generally carry a lantern. Hearing afterwards that no one had passed by, I considered it very remarkable. It was about a week later when I saw it again, at least, not the light but its reflection.

I was in bed, and about one o'clock at night the room became suddenly lighted with a bright red light, which was, to say the least of it, rather startling. It seemed to be in the same place, but higher up and much brighter and redder than on the previous occasion. It must have been very near the window (which was about 10 feet from the ground), for the marks and flaws on the glass were quite plainly reflected on the wall. I was very much frightened when I saw it, thinking that some burglar was about to enter my room through the window. But the light seemed to pass away as suddenly as it came, leaving the room in total darkness as before.

The only explanation I ever heard was given me by a servant, whose father was a miner in Zennor. She said that it was a kind of will-o'-the-wisp, which appeared over ground in which tin or copper were to be found. This seemed to be a natural explanation, as Zennor was full of old mines which had been worked many years ago, and stopped probably on account of insufficient capital to carry them on.

GERTRUDE HORNER.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## MR. SINNETT'S CIRCULAR.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

DEAR SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a leaflet entitled "The Society for Psychical Research and Madame Blavatsky," which appears to have been sent to many Members and Associates of our Society. It consists of a "letter addressed by Mr. A. P. Sinnett to *Light*," and "reprinted under the authority of the Council of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society."

Mr. Sinnett complains in this letter of the great delay in the publication of my Report concerning the alleged marvellous phenomena in connection with the Theosophical Society. No one is chargeable for this delay but myself, and I do not blame Mr. Sinnett for having considered it a just cause of grievance. The Report might have been ready in August had it not been that many documents in connection with the subject were forwarded to me by Mr. Hume, and these documents required a careful examination. The delay is chiefly due to my examination of these documents, and especially of a large mass of K. H. MSS., which they included. But while I regret this delay, which I could not foresee at the end of June, as the documents in question had not then reached me, I am unable to see that the general charges brought against Madame Blavatsky were not adequately supported by the statements made at our meetings. It is true that it was impossible for me then to go into detail concerning every single phenomenon which I investigated in India; and if Mr. Sinnett had merely complained that I had expressed my opinion concerning the phenomena in their entirety, whereas I had shown only that the most important of them were fraudulently produced, I should have had nothing more to say beyond the expression of my regret for the delay in the production of the full Report, and the explanation of it which I have given.

But Mr. Sinnett seems to forget that the main burden of the indictment against Madame Blavatsky was laid and supported at our first meeting, at which Mr. Sinnett himself was not present. One of the principal charges against Madame Blavatsky had been brought against her by the authorities of the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, who published in September, 1884, portions of a series of letters which, if genuine, distinctly proved that Madame Blavatsky had engaged in a conspiracy, which had extended over several years, for the production of spurious marvels. The editor of the *Christian College Magazine*, before publishing these letters, had obtained the best evidence procurable at Madras as to the genuineness of their handwriting, and the various gentlemen to whom the letters were submitted were unanimously of opinion that Madame Blavatsky had written them. Mr. J. D. B. Gribble, of Madras, wrote a pamphlet on the subject, giving his reasons for coming to the same conclusion. Mr. F. G. Netherclift, the chief caligraphic expert in England, had examined a large number of these letters, and had expressed his unqualified conclusion that they were unquestionably written by Madame Blavatsky. Mr. Sims, of the British Museum, expressed the same conclusion. The members of our Committee, including myself,

were also of the same opinion concerning them. At our meetings I gave accounts of various phenomena as described to me by the witnesses, and showed that there was clear evidence that these phenomena were fraudulently produced, and that abundant circumstantial evidence had been supplied by Theosophists themselves which corroborated the opinion of experts as to the authorship of the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters. Especially I went into considerable detail concerning the Shrine, and showed that it was manifest from the statements of Theosophists that the Shrine was fixed at the very spot on the wall most convenient for fraudulent purposes, that it had a sliding panel at the back, and that there had been a hole in the wall behind the panel, which communicated with Madame Blavatsky's bedroom. Yet Mr. Sinnett writes :—

“A series of charges imputing misconduct of the blackest dye to Madame Blavatsky have been made public on the assumption that they would ultimately be supported by certain testimony. But after more than three months this testimony still remains unpublished.”

Mr. Sinnett regards the evidence which I collected in India, “as far as this was foreshadowed” by my speech, as “worthless”; with this I in a certain sense agree, and it will be remembered that I gave instances at our meetings of the absolute unreliability of some of the native witnesses whose evidence I quoted. But if Mr. Sinnett thinks that the cumulative testimony which shows that the Blavatsky-Coulomb letters are genuine, and that the Shrine was, to use Mr. Sinnett's words, a “conjurer's box,” is to be regarded as “worthless,” it is difficult to see what sort of testimony he would regard as having any value. Mr. Sinnett himself has, in more than one instance, relied on evidence supplied by apparent identity of handwriting. The whole point of the “Jhelum telegram” incident recorded by him in “The Occult World,” turned upon the opinion—of Mr. Sinnett?—that the writing of a certain telegram was in the K. H. hand; and he has laid stress upon the fact that he has received almost immediate K. H. communications in supposed reply to his letters when Madame Blavatsky was at the other side of India,—where again the whole force of the incident must rest upon the fact that Mr. Sinnett recognised the writing as being in the K. H. hand.

I may take this opportunity of removing one or two misapprehensions which Mr. Sinnett has shown in his letter. He appears to think that I ought to have allowed Madame Blavatsky to see “the original letters alleged to be hers,” and he says that he cannot reconcile my neglect in this matter with my assurance that I conducted my inquiry “with an open mind.” Now in the first place I had no authority to show these letters to Madame Blavatsky, and Madame Blavatsky well knew that I had none. She frequently asked me whether I had seen the letters myself, and she knew that a considerable time had elapsed before I had an opportunity of doing so, in consequence of the absence from Madras of the Editor of the *Christian College Magazine*; and when I was first enabled to inspect them, I spoke to her of certain restrictions which were placed—I think quite rightly—upon my use of them. Several of them I had in my own possession for a day or two only, for my own examination. The remaining ones I examined in the house of a gentleman in whose custody they were at the time, and two groups of them were

eventually entrusted to me for the specific purpose of being sent to England for the judgment of the best caligraphic experts obtainable here (a fact of which I did not think it necessary to inform Madame Blavatsky), under the particular condition that they should be returned as soon as possible; and they were actually sent back to India before my arrival in England. Those which I had in my own possession for a short time I was requested not to take on my own responsibility to the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, the Editor of the *Christian College Magazine* being naturally apprehensive that Madame Blavatsky might seize an opportunity of tampering with them.\* In the second place, Madame Blavatsky had explicitly pronounced certain portions of them to be forgeries, when they were first published, and I should be surprised to learn that she had ever expressed any wish to see the originals while I was at Madras. Had she done so, I have no doubt that some arrangement would have been made according to which she would have had the liberty of inspecting them in the presence of witnesses. That I do not say this unadvisedly is sufficiently shown by the fact that some of the disputed letters were taken to the headquarters of the Society and shown to Theosophists, in September, 1884, in consequence of a request by Major-General Morgan to see the letter in which he was concerned. The editor of the *Christian College Magazine* writes in the number for April, 1885 :—

“We took with us to headquarters four of the disputed letters, and freely allowed all present to examine them. In return we asked to be permitted to see some of Madame Blavatsky’s recent letters to Dr. Hartmann, Damodar, or any one at headquarters. This request was complied with only to the extent of showing us a *portion* of a letter written from Paris. No THEOSOPHIST HAS EVER ASKED TO SEE ANY OTHER LETTER, or his request would have been, under proper precautions, at once complied with.”

Further, Mr. Sinnett speaks of my inquiries concerning the letters as “carried on behind Madame Blavatsky’s back.” This I am quite at a loss to understand. It was perfectly well known at the headquarters of the Society that I was taking the evidence of witnesses, that I had interviews with the authorities of the *Christian College Magazine*, and also with the Coulombs; that I was investigating all the circumstances in connection with every phenomenon so far as it was possible for me to do so. Mr. Sinnett must have been strangely misinformed about the facts of the case, and his misapprehension has already been once pointed out. In a letter to the *Journal* for July, he spoke of my evidence as “collected in secret” (p. 462), and Professor Sidgwick directed his attention to the fact “that we took care to make it known to all concerned that Mr. Hodgson had gone to India to collect this evidence on behalf of our Society, and that his unfavourable view of the evidence was communicated to the leading Theosophists at Madras before his departure from India” (p. 464). Yet, notwithstanding this explicit statement made by Professor Sidgwick, Mr. Sinnett apparently repeats the charge. If he will turn to p. 16 of the Official Report of the Theosophical Society for 1885, he will find that Colonel Olcott made the following state-

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\* I was allowed only a similar degree of liberty with certain documents which I obtained from Theosophists.

ment before the Convention, shortly after my arrival. Speaking of the officers of our Society, he said :—

“As an evidence of their sincere wish to learn the exact value of our Theosophical pretensions, they have sent a Special Commissioner to India to take evidence upon the spot.”

Another statement in Mr. Sinnett's letter seems deserving of notice here, as he made an allusion of a somewhat similar character at our meeting in June. He speaks of my “unfamiliarity with India and Indian ways” as having led me “into many serious mistakes.” Of course I do not claim the familiarity with India which Mr. Sinnett possesses, but I do not see how this fact can affect my investigation in the way Mr. Sinnett seems to suppose. He *may*, indeed, mean that I ought not to have been surprised to find that certain *chelas* told me deliberate falsehoods, and that had I been more familiar with Indian ways I should have known that such falsehoods were the natural outcome of “Occultism.” This I am not concerned to dispute; but if he means that my unfamiliarity with India and Indian ways rendered me incapable of taking down evidence correctly, of comparing documents and drawing reasonable inferences, of examining envelopes which had been surreptitiously opened, of carefully exploring the interstices of ceilings and other localities where marvellous phenomena were alleged to have occurred, I must simply join issue with him. It was, at any rate, not unfamiliarity with Indian ways that led the Parsee gentleman, Mr. K. M. Seervai, formerly Vice-President of the Theosophical Society at Bombay, to give up all connection with the Society, or that led Mr. S. K. Chatterjee, formerly President of the Lahore Branch, to declare that the Society was “a huge imposture,” or that led Mr. A. O. Hume, long before the exposures of the Coulombs, to the opinion that some of the *chelas* were morally untrustworthy—that the Shrine was a “conjurer's box”—and that many other of Madame Blavatsky's phenomena were fraudulently produced, or that led Pundit Dayanund Saraswati, the President of the Arya Somaj of India, to inform the public, in 1882, that “neither Colonel Olcott nor Madame Blavatsky knows anything of Yog Vidya (occult science) as practised by the Yogis of old,” and that “for them to say that they perform their phenomena without apparatus, without any secret pre-arrangement, and solely through the forces existing in nature (electricity), and by what they call their ‘will-power,’ is to tell a lie.”

It is to be hoped that Mr. Sinnett's eagerness in the cause he represents will not prevent his taking due steps to ascertain the actual facts of any other case to which he may refer; as I have no doubt that Mr. Sinnett would hardly have impugned the impartiality of my investigation on the ground that I did not show Madame Blavatsky the “original letters alleged to be hers,” if he had been aware that it was not in my power to do so, and that Madame Blavatsky might have seen them had she requested permission from the persons whom she knew to be the custodians. There has in truth been “blundering all along the line,” as Mr. Sinnett says, and I for one have been sorry enough to think that the blundering is so greatly chargeable to the enthusiastic carelessness of Mr. Sinnett, and his confidence in Madame Blavatsky.—Yours sincerely,

RICHARD HODGSON.

October 31st, 1885.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

DEAR SIR,—Some time ago I received, through the post, a small book entitled "Some Account of my Intercourse with Madame Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884," by Madame Coulomb. The book appears to have a truthful "ring" about it, and no reasonable man could question the evidence it contains. Several of the tricks by which this lady imposed upon her devotees were already familiar to me (especially that of the duplicate articles). In fact, I have performed some of them myself at evening parties for amusement. Many of the phenomena which will not come under the heading of "tricks," may be explained by mental impressions induced by the will of the operator, several cases of which I observed reported in your *Proceedings*, where persons have been forced to believe that they saw things which had no real existence. I would not have referred to Madame Blavatsky now, only that I received per last post a pamphlet or letter "addressed by Mr. A. P. Sinnett to *Light*, and reprinted under the authority of the Council of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society," which letter, after rejecting the evidence of Mr. Hodgson, proceeds thus: "Having during the past few weeks spent a good deal of time with Madame Blavatsky, and having minutely discussed with her all circumstances of darkest suspicion concerning her, I have returned from these interviews *entirely assured* in my own mind of her innocence of the offences imputed to her by Mr. Hodgson." Now, sir, if this be the same Mr. A. P. Sinnett, ex-editor of the *Pioneer*, mentioned on p. 33 of Madame Coulomb's revelations, it only brings Madame Blavatsky's remarkable words the more vividly before our minds: "*To force them to turn their back upon me will take more than the exhibition of a puppet. I have a thousand strings to my bow, and God Himself could not open the eyes of those who believe in me.*" ("Some Account of my Intercourse," p. 47.) I also give the extract on p. 33 alluded to: "In order that you may easily understand how the letter slipped through, I shall have to tell you that the opening of the trap was performed by the pulling of a string, which after running from the trap, where it was fastened, all along the garret above Mr. Sinnett's room to that part of the garret above Madame Blavatsky's bedroom, passed through a hole and hung down behind the door and the curtain of her room, which was adjoining to that of Mr. Sinnett."

It is painfully evident that Mr. Sinnett's eyes, at all events, have not been "opened," but that he still clings to "his illustrious friend, Koot Hoomi." Before I close I wish to observe that the letter of Mr. M. Theobald printed in this month's *Journal* is to my mind most unsatisfactory. What does he mean by saying "you must first develop clairvoyance among your delegates before they can see in our house either the actors or the phenomena"? If no one can see the alleged "phenomena" even (leaving the actors out of question) except a person in an abnormal condition, then the whole matter is at once placed beyond investigation; but surely the spiritual tea could be tasted, the celestial water examined, and the marvellous kettle put under scientific tests before we are asked to swallow such statements.—Yours truly,

JOSEPH W. HAYES.

1 and 2, George's Street, Enniscarthy, Co. Wexford.

19th October, 1885.

## OLD PHYSICAL PHENOMENA COMMITTEE.

*To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.*

SIR,—I have seen with much regret the letter of Mr. Frank S. Hughes, published in your last issue, in regard to the old Physical Phenomena Committee of the Society for Psychical Research. I hold it as a general principle, which it is mostly right and wise to observe, that the work of a committee should not be publicly discussed except on its report to the Council; but as Mr. Hughes has given his version of this Committee's proceedings, and as his statements are in my estimation seriously misleading, I must ask you to be kind enough to allow me to offer some remarks on the subject.

I was one of the members of the old Physical Phenomena Committee, and entered upon my duties in connection with it with considerable interest. Mr. Hughes was the secretary—not appointed by the Committee, who were left no choice in the matter, but by the Council. Like Mr. Hughes, I was under the impression that the Committee was not permitted to spend the funds of the Society in the employment of paid mediums. Professor Sidgwick says that no express resolution to that effect was ever passed by the Council. That is so no doubt—but the views of a body of gentlemen can often be readily gauged without an express resolution, and there can be no question, I think, that Mr. Hughes' understanding of the views of the Council was in strict accordance with fact. "The consequence was," Mr. Hughes says,

"that we were compelled to have recourse to the assistance of friends of a member of the Committee who were supposed to possess mediumistic powers. Results—table tilting, raps, &c.—were obtained, which, if they could have been obtained under satisfactory tests, would have been conclusive; but as such tests could not be applied, I myself and other members of the Committee were not convinced that these phenomena were not the result of fraud, conscious or unconscious."

I cannot for a moment believe that Mr. Hughes would intentionally misrepresent; but the statements I have quoted are at variance with the facts nevertheless—a circumstance which appears to me to be explicable only on the supposition that the writer was incapable of correct observation, or that he was the subject of a strong reluctance to be convinced by any evidence whatsoever.

At the first meetings of the Committee we had no mediums present, and there were no results. In consequence of appeals that were made to me, I took some members of my family to subsequent meetings, but as they are not mediums for anything more than slight table-movements, the results were again valueless.

Having had so little success hitherto, I was pressed to try to induce my friends, Mr. and Mrs. E., to attend at the next meeting, and they very kindly agreed to do so. Mrs. E. is a lady of whose excellent mediumistic powers I have had abundant evidence, on hundreds of occasions, during a course of several years. Without fee or reward of any kind whatever, and often at great personal inconvenience, she has always been ready to assist candid inquirers, in private séance, and it has never even been hinted, until Mr. Hughes did so, that she could be guilty of fraud "conscious or unconscious."

Of the phenomena which occurred at the Society's rooms in the presence

of Mrs. E., I speak only of those which occurred in good gas light. The table used was of peculiar construction. It was a circular table made for the purpose—with the top and bottom exactly alike; the large, flat surface on the ground making it impossible for any of the sitters to tilt it by pressure without the exercise of so much force as to be plainly observable, it being also impossible to insert the toe of a boot beneath the bottom edge. After sitting a few minutes frequent raps were distinctly heard on the table and on the floor, the vibrations on the table being plainly felt by the hands of the sitters. On the occurrence of these raps Mr. Hughes expressed himself both surprised and gratified.

Again, we had clear and undoubted tiltings of the table while the hands of all the sitters were in full view. Mr. Hughes says that satisfactory tests could not be applied! But they were applied—though not at his suggestion, but at the suggestion of Mr. E. After we had had several tiltings of the table it rose quite off the floor, and Mr. E. suggested, in order that there might be no room for doubt as to the genuineness of the phenomena, that the members of the circle should all stand up and place the tips only of their fingers lightly upon the upper surface of the table. This was done, and the table was not only lifted off the floor, and gently put down again, but was moved in jerks along the floor a distance of from 15 to 18 inches.

Mr. E. proposed another experiment. He said that in his own house, if the leaves of the table were drawn a little apart, what appeared to be fingers, and felt like fingers, were often pushed up from beneath, under the cloth; and he suggested that if a hole were cut in the table we were using, that experiment might be tried at the next meeting of the Committee. It was tried and succeeded; and various members of the circle, if not all of them, not only saw the movements, but felt the fingers or what they declared to feel like fingers. Was this the result of fraud, as Mr. Hughes seems to hint, either "conscious or unconscious"? All the hands of the circle were visible. Did one of the members, without the use of his or her hands, take off a boot, and thrust up his or her toes from beneath to the level of the table top, while we all sat in full light and close together—and that without being detected by Mr. Hughes or any body else?

Mr. Hughes says that satisfactory tests could not be applied, and therefore he himself "and other members of the Committee were not convinced that these phenomena were not the result of fraud, conscious or unconscious."

But I have said enough to show that there was the fullest disposition to submit to every possible test; and certainly Mr. Hughes never expressed during any of these sittings the slightest doubt about the genuineness of the phenomena, and never so much as hinted that the conditions observed were in any degree unsatisfactory.—Yours faithfully,

E. DAWSON ROGERS.

I agree with Mr. Rogers in regretting that the phrase "fraud conscious or unconscious" was used in Mr. Hughes' letter. If I had noticed it when the JOURNAL was passing through the press, I should certainly have asked the writer to alter it: and I am glad to be able to state, after conversation with Mr. Hughes, that he had no intention of implying anything more than that the evidence for the agency of extra-human intelligences was, in his opinion, and in the opinion of other members of the Committee, inconclusive. I may take this opportunity of making a similar explanation with

regard to a phrase of the same kind used by Mr. Hughes in reference to the séances held with Mr. Eglinton. In neither case had he any intention of suggesting that there was any *positive* evidence justifying a charge of fraud.

H. SIDGWICK.

### MR. BARKAS' MEDIUM.

*To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.*

SIR,—In your *Journal* for August, 1885, I observe two communications, one from Mr. G. D. Haughton, to which is a reply by Mr. Myers; in the former is a paragraph referring to experiments conducted by myself, and in the latter are remarks on Mr. Haughton's suggestions. As the remarks in each case are brief I quote them, and ask your permission to reply to the observations of Mr. Myers.

Mr. G. D. Haughton says (p. 28): "There is, however, quite enough to interest and engage them at home, if their hearts are in the cause. Why do they not investigate the case of Mr. Barkas, of Newcastle? He is a credible witness—the people of Newcastle know him well, his antecedents would satisfy even Mr. Davies. Now I want to know why the Barkas case, and the source of the replies made by an indifferently educated person to the abstruse questions propounded, as recorded in the columns of *Light*, are not thoroughly and exhaustively examined? I suspect that a similar motive rules here as in the Eglinton case. Is it not at all events apparent that the Society is evading difficulties, not meeting them?"

To which Mr. Myers replied (p. 31):—

"The automatic writing of an indifferently educated person (otherwise known as Mrs. Esperance), said to be inspired by Humnur Stafford, and recorded by Mr. Barkas. I have known Mr. Barkas since January, 1875, and, through his introduction, sat with this medium on October 16th, 17th, and 18th, 1875. I have also studied all her printed answers. I consider the case curious and interesting, and I am not surprised at Mr. Barkas' view of it, but unfortunately the gross want of comprehension of the subjects inquired about, and the palpable blunders which the replies contain, seem to me to preclude us from regarding them as affording evidence of the guidance of a scientific spirit.

"The fact, moreover, that the same medium, under the name of Mrs. Esperance, was afterwards detected in personating a materialised spirit, tended to discourage me from seeking further evidence through that channel."

I desire very briefly to reply to the unintentionally unfair and illogical criticisms of Mr. Myers.

The first has reference to the alleged "palpable blunders" in the written communications, and the second to the alleged detection of the medium "in personating a materialised spirit."

I simply wish to say in reference to the last charge that intelligent and experienced investigators, who were at the séance when the supposed detection took place, deny the assertion utterly, and I personally affirm that if the alleged personation really occurred it is not beyond experience that it took place automatically and unconsciously so far as regards the medium. I was not present at the séance, and cannot speak from personal observation,

but if outsiders are to put the worst construction upon all the reported occurrences in this world, few will pass unscathed.

Passing from this very doubtful alleged exposure, I now proceed to consider Mr. Myers' criticisms of sances at which I was present, and verbatim records of which I have preserved.

Mr. Myers says: "Unfortunately the gross want of comprehension of the subjects inquired about, and the palpable blunders which the replies contain, seem to me to preclude us from regarding the case as affording evidence of the guidance of a scientific spirit."

There are two methods of testing the accuracy of the inferences deduced by Mr. Myers from his, as yet, limited knowledge of the facts.

He asserts that the answers indicate a want of comprehension of the subjects, and that the erroneousness of some of the replies precludes us from regarding them as being dictated by a scientific spirit.

All comprehension is relative. No human being, either in or out of the flesh, fully comprehends any subject, and imperfection therefore may be looked for in the opinions of all.

Mr. Myers will find, on referring to *Light* of February 21st, 1885, that his recognition of erroneous replies is not original; I there point out the fact of the occurrence of errors, and had Mr. Myers been more familiar with the investigation he might have known that I devoted an evening to the correction of the supposed errors, with and by Humner Stafford himself.

I would remind Mr. Myers that books carefully written, revised and printed by eminent scientific men, on their own specialities, are not free from error. If he doubts this I shall have pleasure, when next he visits Newcastle, in showing him a book written by one of the most eminent scientific men now in the world, in which there are records of many alleged original discoveries, and many alleged new genera named and figured, not one of which is new, and not one of which is correct. Did this learned scientist not write the book? Mr. Myers, to carry out his theory as applied to the unpremeditated replies of Humnur Stafford, should answer, "No," and he would be as likely to be right in the one case as in the other.

I shall be glad to submit the questions I asked through the uneducated lady medium to any learned member of the Society for Psychical Research, or to any man or woman whom they may nominate, and I venture to affirm that he or she will not be able to answer them so quickly and correctly as they were answered by the hand of a very partially educated woman. Of course I expect the answerer to cover the entire field, and not confine himself or herself to a portion of the questions only.

I am, yours truly,

T. P. BARKAS.

Newcastle-on-Tyne,

October 3rd, 1885.

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SIR,—As the report which follows this letter may seem to dispose of the "indifferently-educated" lady and Mr. "Humnur Stafford" in somewhat trenchant fashion, I should just like to say that I do not think that there is any reason to be astonished at the fact that some intelligent persons have been disposed to attach value to these sadly erroneous responses. The

phenomena of automatic writing are so multiform and perplexing that we need hardly call Mr. Barkas' view wholly unwarrantable.

It is, of course, possible that a veritable Humnur Stafford may have so far abused his medium's imperfect education as to inspire her with answers bearing this perilous similarity to misquotations from a superseded text-book. And it is *possible*, also, that when the same medium was caught (as some at least of the Spiritualists present admitted) in the act of personating a materialised spirit, it may still have been Humnur Stafford, or some similarly injudicious "control," who placed her, without her knowledge, in this equivocal position. But I fear that neither of these hypotheses is sufficiently strong in itself to be used to support the other.

It would be difficult to find out (as Mr. Barkas suggests) to what extent an ordinary well-educated person could answer the questions here proposed. One characteristic of an educated person is to decline to talk about what he does not understand, and I am afraid that where "Humnur" has rushed in most of my unscientific acquaintances would fear to tread. As to myself, I do not claim to be a "musical oracle"; but my friend Mr. Mathews, a Senior Wrangler and Professor of Mathematics, has kindly supplied some criticisms on "Humnur," which may, I think, form a fitting conclusion to the controversy.—I am, sir, &c.,

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

#### REPORT ON "IMPROMPTU REPLIES THROUGH A LADY PSYCHIC OF VERY LIMITED EDUCATION."

I have been asked to express my opinion of the answers given by Mr. Barkas' medium to a series of questions on scientific subjects, principally acoustics and the theory of music. My opinion is that they exhibit just that amount of knowledge, or rather of complicated ignorance, which would probably be acquired by a person of limited education, but fairly good verbal memory, after reading an old-fashioned treatise on acoustics, and supplementing the perusal by a hasty glance or two at some more modern popular text-book.

A good many sentences in the answers appear to be more or less unsuccessful attempts to reproduce passages out of the text-books read, the quotation, in each case, being generally irrelevant to the question, and probably suggested by some catchword occurring in the latter. Having but few books on the theory of sound, and those not of a popular kind, I have not been able to refer these passages to any particular treatise; but the internal evidence is fairly convincing, as I think the following examples will show: In séance No. 5 (*Light*, March 14th, 1885), a question was asked about the small hole made in the "boot" of certain reed organ pipes in order to bring them into tune. The explanation is: "Because in organ pipes the sound is made to, I mean the air is made to vibrate by issuing from a small slit and striking on a sharp cutting edge." The "small hole" referred to in the question is mistaken for the aperture through which air is forced into the pipe by the bellows, and we have a quotation, nearly a ludicrous misquotation, of a description of the action of the mouthpiece of an organ pipe. This is quite irrelevant to the question, and it is followed

by the imbecile comment of the scientific intelligence himself: "This should be done in every case: I don't know why in reed organs alone, since it would be an advantage in every case." Again, in the same séance, the question, "What, in your opinion, is the origin of harmony?" is declared to be vague, and "reverted" into "What is the difference between harmony and noise?" The term "harmony" is then taken to be equivalent to "music" or "musical sound," and we are treated to an explanation of this entirely different question, the passage which follows being, in my opinion, an obvious quotation, which is more accurate than usual.

It would be tedious, as well as superfluous, to examine all the answers in detail; they abound in wrong ideas, erroneous statements, and gross misuse of scientific terms; some of them are, to me, absolutely unintelligible jargon. Any one acquainted with the subjects discussed has only to read the answers for himself in order to be convinced of the truth of the assertion; but for the sake of readers unacquainted with acoustics, I will examine a few of these communications, and point out, as plainly as I can, some of their inaccuracies.

1. *Question.* What are harmonics? (4th séance: *Light*, February 21st, 1885.)

*Answer.* By harmonics are meant those sounds caused by the nodes or ventral segments of stringed instruments which occur in succession.

*Comment.* The term "harmonics" is not understood, and the answer is absolutely worthless; moreover, since a node of a string for any particular form of vibration is a point of the string which does not share in that vibration, we are in effect told that sounds are caused by parts of stringed instruments which are vibrating, or by those which are not vibrating. Finally, harmonics are not confined to *stringed* instruments. What is meant by the concluding relative clause, and to which of the preceding substantives it refers, I am unable to say.

2. *Question.* If in a stopped pipe a hole be made at half-length, would it affect the pitch, and to what extent? (5th séance.)

*Answer.* The pitch would not be affected, but the length of the wave would be shortened by half.

*Comment.* This amounts to saying that the pitch would not be altered, but the note sounded would be an octave higher than before.

The remaining examples will be taken from the séance of August 30th. (*Light*, April 18th, 1885.)

3. The first question recorded asks for an account of the method by which the ratio of the specific heats of air for constant volume and constant pressure respectively may be found from the observed velocity of sound, and the velocity calculated by Newton's formula.

Mr. Barkas and the guiding spirit both mistook "heats" for "beats," in spite of the context, which ought to have set them right: the result is the following answer:—

"The ratio can only be calculated in this manner. Suppose two chords to be struck, or two forks tuned at the same time: if the intensity of the sound be the same, or nearly the same, the beats will occur in this manner: Suppose one pulsation beats at the rate of 228 per second, and the other at 220, the beats will reach the ear at the rate of  $228 - 220 = 8$  per second; this

will give you eight beats per second, and is the utmost that can be carried to the ear."

Evidently the word "beats," supposed to belong to the question, has been the only one to suggest any familiar passage of the text-books; so we have an attempt to reproduce an explanation of the beats of jarring chords, that is, the intervals of comparative silence produced by the interference of the vibrations of two bodies nearly in unison. This, of course, has nothing to do with the question; and, taking the answer on its own merits, there is a blunder in every sentence. For "chords" I suppose we must read "strings" or "notes," and for "tuned" substitute "set in vibration"; to say that "one pulsation beats" at such and such a rate is mere nonsense; and the crowning absurdity is achieved in the last sentence, where "beats" have been confounded with "vibrations," and the eight beats per second have imperfectly recalled the lowest rate of vibration necessary to produce the impression of a musical sound.

4. *Question.* When a musical note is vibrating at 300 per second, and another at 200 per second, they produce a fifth. If the note which was sounded at 200 be raised to 201, at what number will the beat occur for the first time?

*Answer.* At exactly the same number as in the first case, but a beat over the original number will be sounded, but that beat would be one octave lower than the first ones.

*Comment.* Utter nonsense from beginning to end. In the last clause, pitch, which depends on the time occupied by each of a set of isochronous vibrations, is here actually attributed to an interval of silence, or if "beat" be taken to mean "vibration," to a single vibration.

Then come some questions on musical intervals, and here, as might be expected, Mr. — Humnur Stafford — completely breaks down. The only fragments of correct information I have been able to discover are "From C to D is a majortone," and "I do not understand the terms you use." To illustrate the truth of the latter statement, take the explanation of a comma (the difference between a major and a minor tone): "That cessation of all sound caused by the coincidence and interference of sound-waves." What suggested this extraordinary answer I cannot say, unless the ordinary meaning of the word, as a mark of punctuation, suggested that it ought, in music, to denote a pause of some kind.

So much for the amount of knowledge of sound and music possessed by this disembodied intelligence. It is only fair to add that he is conscious of its imperfection, and desirous of improving it. Thus we read: "I am not so well acquainted with optics as you imagine, and will have to study a little more, or rather to rake my memory over, to be able to answer your question," &c.; and again: "I best understand the organ, piano, and harmonium; the conversation can be on these or optics. I have been getting up that, so if you have any questions, I shall be glad to answer them."

Mr. Barkas seems to be afraid that clever unbelievers, such as Messrs. Proctor and Lankester, will try to make out "that the medium is clever, and well acquainted with the topics introduced." I do not think he need be in any fear on this point. He also asserts that most educated people would miserably fail, in comparison with the controlled hand of the medium, in answering these questions impromptu. They might do so, I grant, in picturesqueness and piquancy, scarcely in accuracy, especially if they enjoyed the privilege, accorded to Mr. — Humnur Stafford —, of receiving due notice beforehand, so as to be able to get up the subject.

Finally, I cannot refrain from asking why the opinion of the eminent professor of music, who proposed the questions, has not been recorded.

G. B. MATHEWS.

University College, Bangor.  
October 20th, 1885.